WE ARE SPIRIT HAVING A HUMAN EXPERIENCE

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Lorne Whorley
B.Ed. University of British Columbia 1976

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APPROVAL

Name: Lorne Christopher Whorley
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: We are Spirit having a Human Experience
Examinining Committee:
    Chair: Yaroslav Senyshyn

Robert Walker
Professor
Senior Supervisor

Robert J.C. Harper
Professor Emeritus

Allan MacKinnon
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University
External Examiner

Date Approved: June 9/77
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We are Spirit having a Human Experience


Author:

(Signature)
Lorne Christopher Whorley

(Name)

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ABSTRACT

WE ARE SPIRIT HAVING A HUMAN EXPERIENCE

As eternal spirit, we bring with us into life gifts that are spiritual in their nature. Some people call these gifts psychic abilities. Others call them imagination and superstition.

Since the age of scientific enlightenment and its subsequent myths about science (Scientism), Western consciousness has turned away from these gifts that the shamans and some others still possess.

Orthodox religion calls personal exploration of consciousness or psychic research, witchcraft, the occult, and demon worship, etc. and has in conjunction with Scientism also caused Western humanity to turn away from any personal exploration of consciousness that might bring forth these natural psychic abilities.

I and many others have experienced phenomena that exist beyond what most people think of as normal cause-and-effect reality.

I have presented, in this thesis, evidence to support my experience and knowledge. I argue that educators must recognise the insular nature of Western belief and education.

I have included a significant body of my students' art work to illustrate that the content of the arts is essentially spiritual. The content of the arts is life itself and spirit in life. Therefore the arts must be given core educational status
to encourage more people to look within, where happiness costs nothing but a little effort to dance or sing or paint.

The evidence and argument of scientists, anthropologists, theologians, consciousness researchers, as well as the testimony of shamans, and myself indicates that we are indeed spirit having a human experience and that we could and should explore our psychic potential throughout our education system. As matters stand, these abilities have been forced to atrophy to the point of near nonexistence in most of us because of the beliefs and taboos of science and religion.

I have been short-changed and taught wrongly by my culture and the education system that supports it.

To those whose first reactions to my presentation is total disbelief, I would certainly value the opinion of any serious scholar who spends as many weeks as I have years in exploring these truths. I conclude that only those brave enough to explore their own consciousness will ever understand the true nature of their being and potential.

Most importantly, I argue that if there are indeed other ways of acquiring knowledge than through traditional Western academic methods, then it seems incumbent upon us as educators to learn their nature and applicability.
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PROLOGUE

There are significant research data available today to suggest that the human mind is not a simple function of the physiology of the brain. This thesis presents what I consider to be compelling evidence of the reality of reincarnation, as well as documented testimony that consciousness can leave the body as a result of near-death experiences. The evidence suggests not only the existence of the soul, but that the soul also transmigrates to other lifetimes.

Testimony is offered from artists and shamans who claim to move their consciousness into other objects and life forms. As well, I present testimony of Eastern mystics, of their experience of Satori or Nirvana, the conscious enlightenment believed to be what the Buddha experienced while meditating under the Bodhi Tree.

Mahayana Buddhism never loses itself in abstract speculative thought. As always in Eastern mysticism, the intellect is seen merely as a means to clear the way for the direct mystical experience, which Buddhists call the 'awakening'. The essence of this experience is to pass beyond the world of intellectual distinctions and opposites to reach the world of acintya, the unthinkable, where reality appears as undivided and undifferentiated 'suchness'.

This was the experience Siddhartha Gautama had one night, after seven years of strenuous discipline in the forests. Sitting in deep meditation under the celebrated Bodhi Tree, the Tree of Enlightenment, he suddenly obtained the sudden and final clarification of all his searches and doubts in the act of 'unexcelled, complete awakening' which made him the Buddha, that is 'the Awakened' (Capra 1975. p.100).

I know this condition of consciousness to be true because I have experienced Satori, and I wish to make it clear that the experience of Satori is
the main impetus behind my motivation to write this thesis. The experience of
Satori changes one's worldview completely. It is indeed an awakening from this
dream we call reality. This experience was so profound in its impact that it has
compelled me to a life of personal research in an effort to not only understand it
from the limited focus and limited cognitive potential of the brain and body, (in
Satori, everything, including the brain and body essentially disappear) but it has
left me with the knowledge that all aspects of the universe are inseparably
connected: time and space are illusions and constructions of human
consciousness, and that individual consciousness does survive the death of the
body. Satori has ultimately led me to study both science and religion, not so
that I could vindicate its existence (I am unshakeable on that account), but
because to live in a culture so ignorant in regard to the nature of this word (a
word that labels the most important experience anyone could ever have) has left
me, in one sense, quite alone for many years. Though I cannot prove it to
anyone through language or argument. I can honestly say that I know and have
experienced myself as all-of-the-universe, not through imagination, nor
hallucination, and not by logic, but as the underlying true reality that not only
supports the physical realms, but binds all existence and probable existence's
into one inseparably infinite being that is the self.

I am aware that only persons who have experienced Satori can completely
understand the preceding paragraphs. For those who question the reality of
Satori, my research indicates, both historically and in the present, that there
are many who have also experienced this state of conscious being. In the
process of doing this research with a careful but open mind, I have come to realise that some profound fissures exist in Western thinking and in Western education.

Though it is beyond the scope and possibility of this thesis to prove beyond any doubt the existence of spirit, and/or nonphysical realms where spirit might reside, there is nonetheless considerable evidence from many credible sources that seems to indicate that we are indeed spirit having a human experience. In the first seven chapters I have presented what can only be described as an introduction to the many areas of research where present data contravenes what we might think of as normal cause-and-effect reality.

For example, quantum physics suggests the physical universe is not made of tiny little isolated building blocks, but that it is inseparably connected, and possibly a construct of consciousness. Reincarnation suggests that an individual consciousness can travel to lifetimes and bodies other than the present life and body. Both hypotheses are significant to this thesis in that they contravene what we think of as normal reality, but neither supports the possibility of proving the existence of the other. It has therefore been necessary to compile what may seem on the surface, a body not so much of unrelated chapters but of ideas that do not necessarily follow sequentially.

Personal experience is the only route to concrete knowledge of these matters. Beyond actual experience there is only testimony, but this thesis argues that there is now a substantial body of evidence and testimony that supports the idea of disembodied spirit or consciousness.
Public education is challenged to pursue the truth of the above matters and in light of the evidence, re-examine its purposes and goals. In a universe of spirit, should the main goal of public education be to prepare children for a job to better serve the market forces, or to help them explore their truer natures and discover the unlimited ability of their spirits?

Quantum physics is now seen by many people to support claims of a "mystical" or spiritual reality. I attempt to illustrate the reasons some individuals make this connection. I present views of theoretical physicists who argue that, at quantum levels, the universe seems to blink in and out of physical existence, and that the inseparability of quanta suggests that the physical universe is not predicated on the idea of things being separate but rather, undivided wholeness, as the Eastern Mystics have maintained for over five thousand years. Physicist David Bohm further argues that the physical realm, what he calls the “explicate order”, is somehow existing on or in an infinitely more immense “implicate order” that is made up of energy but has no mass. This “implicate order” suggests the possibility of other universes (nonphysical universes) that could house what we might think of as the spiritual realms.

The physicists argue that science can produce only a limited understanding of the nature of reality, since theoretical physics provides us with nothing more than symbols in the form of mathematical equations. They insist that the “thing in itself” cannot be experienced firsthand, as an aspect of personal being, in the way that mystics claim they can and do experience other
Some physicists maintain that consciousness has to be included in the equation as it appears that consciousness may affect the outcome of their experiments.

The Eastern Mystics understand the physical universe to be Maya or illusion, and that enlightenment is the sudden awakening from this dream into the reality of Satori where the entire universe out there is experienced as the self.

The Yogis maintain that Yoga is a science because personal investigation of the truth of Satori can be tested and repeated. Through persistent meditation and guidance, serious pursuants will eventually experience Satori.

...these Eastern disciplines such as Vedanta or Zen are not theories, philosophies, psychologies, or religions—rather, they are primarily a set of experiments in the strictly scientific sense of that term. They comprise a series of rules of injunctions which, if carried out properly, will result in the discovery of the Level of Mind. To refuse to examine the results of such scientific experiments because one dislikes the data so obtained is in itself a most unscientific gesture. In the words of Ananda Coomaraswamy:

It would be unscientific to say that such attainments are impossible, unless one has made experiment in accordance with the prescribed and perfectly intelligible disciplines...That this is so [i.e. that Mind exists, or that mystical awareness is possible] cannot be demonstrated in the classroom, where only quantitative tangibles are dealt with. At the same time, it would be unscientific to deny a presupposition for which an experimental proof is possible. In the present case there is a Way [i.e., an experiment] prescribed for those who will consent to follow it... (Wilber, 1977. p.23).

This thesis agrees with the Yogis that personal experience of the spiritual realms of being is the only route to knowledge of the matter.
The paranoia implicit in the dogma of the Christian Church, which purports to be the correct representative of Christ, has fractured Western thinking and made a taboo of the personal pursuit of the spirit. The Church has done this by taking approximately six hundred years to edit the contents of its Bible to include only the scriptures necessary to maintain its hold to the claim that it is the gateway to salvation and by damning the innocent at the moment of their birth, insisting that original sin is inherent in human nature. Only continued lifelong repentance—through the Church—can guarantee salvation of the soul. This sets the stage for lifelong service and dedication to an institution and not to the self. Salvation comes through the Church first and the individual second.

How does the Church know the Bible is right? It says so in the Bible, and the interpretation of this most important book is preached all too often by people who have never set foot into the spiritual realms in which they claim to be experts. For most believers of the Bible, knowledge comes to them secondhand, through someone else's interpretation of Church-edited and translated scriptures.

The shamans of the indigenous cultures of this planet, as well as some other great religions, e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, experience the spirit realms firsthand. Ironically, Western science and technology have given us the weapons to support our convictions about the spirit world. Christianity has maintained its hold on Western consciousness through the fear of God and Satan, and by threatening the hell they can inflict on anyone opposed because
we in the West have had the technology to enforce our views; in the name of God. Science and technology and the dogma about science (Scientism) have been the unwitting ally of Western Orthodoxy.

I wish to qualify at this point, that in my research I have found no reason to deny the possibility of a Christian Heaven and spiritual hierarchy. On this point I have little to say except that my findings do not support the way most people translate and understand the meaning and content of the Bible. My arguments present evidence that could indeed suggest the possibility of nonmaterial dimensions of pure energy where consciousness and spirit could conceivably reside. My argument is, that “we” and our consciousness can transcend the physiology of the brain and body, thus indicating the likelihood of a spiritual dimension.

In Chapter One I discuss some of the differences and ramifications of following either the Eastern or Western way exclusively, and I argue the value of studying both, as well as keeping in touch with “primitive” beliefs and current science. They are beginning to support each other in some interesting but not blatantly apparent ways.

Throughout this thesis, I argue that we are spirit in the body, and that this has profound implications for a public education system that all but ignores this essential component of humanity. Further, I argue that the arts can and do (in some elective programs) address the spirit very well in a secular system of education, suggesting that perhaps we should re-evaluate what we consider to be the core subjects of public education. If the arts are about living
and how to live, and the present core subjects are about getting a good job then it seems that we have truly lost touch with ourselves "as spirit" in our quest to meet the materialist agenda.

I acknowledge that my hypothesis, beliefs, conclusions, and knowledge of the spiritual experience might easily be looked at by novices to these ideas as the writer's opinion, in which case I would simply request that the material be approached with an open mind. I must remind the reader that one basic premise of this thesis is that personal investigation of one's consciousness is the only route to real personal proof of the matters in question. The spiritual realms can be accessed through the inner self. These matters are not easily provable using outerworld data. Unfortunately, Western thinkers are extremely insular in only acknowledging and assigning credibility to what the Western academic mind accepts as viable evidence of truth or fact. For example, testimony is acceptable evidence used to establish truth and fact in Western courts of law but it finds far less credibility in much of the Western academic community.

I therefore forfeit the claim to positive (without question) outerworld proof of much that is in this thesis because printed words cannot bring about a genuine transcendental experience. Those who would hope to find proof only from the words on these pages will likely never know the truth and will continue to scoff and turn away from exploring the unlimited potential and nature of their consciousness. My personal experiences of past life regression and Satori have changed my view of life and reality. These experiences have resulted in a
teaching style that might also contravene what is thought of as standard teaching techniques in an art classroom. I have come to hope, through what my students experience there, that they will appreciate and begin to think, see, and perceive like artists, and to feel the magic inherent in every moment of their lives.

The final chapter presents some of my past students’ works and argues that the content of the works themselves are inherently spiritual. I purposely chose not to indulge in explaining or pointing out archetypal symbolism in these student works because I think that such logical explanations would deter and distract the reader away from an intuitive response. The intuitive feelings one has when viewing these works helps the viewer to feel their spiritual content.
CHAPTER ONE

EAST VERSUS WEST; PARADIGMS OF REALITY

It is important to this thesis to examine the impact and effects of the two most powerful paradigms of thinking that are at the basis of Western culture; Christianity and Science. Orthodox religion, as well as the faith that many Westerners place in the scientific method to eventually explain all worldly phenomena, has dominated the evolution of Western society and education. The successes of science have overshadowed its failures and tragedies. Despite the threat of nuclear annihilation, and other world catastrophes perpetuated by the use of science and technology, most of humanity has an unbending faith in science to provide a better world in which to live. Because of the power and success of Western ways and beliefs, the West has been, until very recently, somewhat insular and unwilling to explore other belief systems that might upset its worldview. It seems now though, that both Western science and the West's dominant religious beliefs are meeting some serious challenges from research being done in many areas of academic pursuit. The (not necessarily new) ideas are just now beginning to be explored in earnest by more and more of the Western populace through the pioneering work of some courageous researchers who have risked their reputations in publishing their works and conclusions. Much of the "new to the West thinking" has come from the ability of some Western scientists and researchers to explore beyond the boundaries of Western beliefs to incorporate philosophies originating in shamanic traditions.
and in Eastern spirituality. As a result, Western culture is in a transition out of and away from traditional Christian dualist doctrine, whereby humanity is separate from God, its lord and judge, as well as the (so called Newtonian Cartesian) mechanistic worldview (scientism) that God does not exist and humanity is a machine. It is unfortunate that the dogma espoused in scientism has distorted the intent and meaning of both Newton and Descartes' work.

Newton was a devoutly religious man who argued that the order to be found in nature could only be explained by invoking a creator. Descartes did not espouse the notion that God did not exist. In fact, he tried to prove the existence of God in terms of a "clear and distinct idea". That he failed is beside the point. It is only in the crudest sense that Newton and Descartes could be called mechanistic (Harper, 1995 interview).

Whether we recognise it or not, the West is in a spiritual crisis that is forcing a spiritual transition. We are entering this transition for a number of reasons. Transportation and information technology have imported Eastern ideology at a time when quantum theory, in a rudimentary form, is available for consumption on television. At last the masses have an opportunity, in a very general sort of way, to make a connection between science and mysticism.

The new concepts in physics have caused a profound change in our world view. From the mechanistic conception of Descartes and Newton to a holistic and ecological view, a view that I have found to be similar to the views of mystics of all ages and traditions (Capra, 1982. p.15).

Because many of the new theories coming out of physics seem to be
consonant with significant aspects of Eastern religious beliefs, I feel it is necessary to discuss what those beliefs are and to compare them to Western religious beliefs, as well as to theories put forth by some Western psychologists and philosophers.

The essential differences between Eastern and Western concepts of spirituality lie in the belief that humanity is either separate from God, or that humanity is a part of what we think of as God. Western Christian doctrine would have us accept that God is our lord and that He will one day judge whether we are fit to be with Him in heaven. Implied is the idea that, in life we are not yet one with God, because otherwise God would be judging himself, either fit or not fit, to be with himself on the Day of Judgement.

Within the dualist context where humanity is separate from God, the earth too is separate, and the body is a gift, much like a car. Since these are gifts from God, and not essentially God Himself, they are less sacred, to be used but not appreciated in the same way as many Eastern mystics tend to see reality, where *being* is a primordial infinite presence in all that is (a divine essence), and all aspects of *being* are God. Significant differences might well be expected between the great religions, but within the Christian West there is much controversy as to the translation of Christian doctrine. Christianity is split into numerous factions, simply because the factions disagree or are indecisive regarding translation, interpretation, and meaning of their scripture in the Bible. Because of this problem of correct interpretation and translation, these numerous factions of Christianity clearly illustrate the difficulty, and
probable impossibility, of finding one sure correct translation. A case in point is the word *redemption*, which in English implies having sin and guilt.

Western Christian doctrine is posited on the concept of original sin, i.e., we are "born" as sinners and spend the rest of our lives seeking "redemption" from this and other sins. You may quote me as describing this as the salvage Paradigm of the soul. This however is not what Christ taught. You must distinguish clearly at this point the difference between Christian Church Doctrine and Christ's teaching. This paradigm is to be distinguished from the Paradigm of Transcendence where the concept of repentance, "metanoia" in Greek, really means change of consciousness, that is, to a higher level. This is what Christ taught (Harper, 1995).

To *change one's consciousness* implies neither sin nor guilt. This one difference of opinion in translation alters considerably the general intent and meaning of the Bible. Such inconsistencies seemed to become increasingly acute during the age of Scientific Enlightenment in the West. However, the West's secular answer to the question of salvation has not been science really, but scientism, and the dogma of logical empiricism.

Scientism is essentially the belief that the world and our selves can only be expressed in scientific terms. It is essentially a materialistic point of view, objecting to the idea of a Creator or Divine Intelligence. Although many scientists adopt this notion it is not espoused by most of the great thinkers in the field. It is, in fact, rejected by them on both scientific and philosophical grounds (Harper, 1995. Interview).

Scientism has, in many ways, become the new religion of those whose only faith lies in human logic. Yet, the rational minds of those scientists whose
mandate it is to study the mind (psychologists), have yet to even show exactly what mind is. Am I my mind? Or do I use my mind?

"I think therefore I am," may prove that I am, but it does not prove how, or who, or what exactly, I am. If I am nothing more than the neural circuitry of my brain and body, then I have little doubt that computers, our brothers, will soon develop I complexes and declare human rights.

I am not just the circuitry of my brain. I believe my brain is responsible for filtering out the greatest part of what I am. (I am not alone in this theory.)

Reflecting on my experience [Huxley wrote], I find myself agreeing with the eminent Cambridge philosopher, Dr C.D. Broad, "that we should do well to consider much more seriously than we have been hitherto inclined to do the type of theory which Bergson put forward in connection with memory and sense perception. The suggestion is that the function of the brain and nervous system and sense organs is in the main eliminative and not productive. Each person is at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and of perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The function of the brain and nervous system is to protect us from being overwhelmed by this mass of largely useless and irrelevant knowledge, by shutting out most of what we should otherwise perceive or remember at any moment, and leaving only that very small and special selection which is likely to be practically useful (Campbell, 1972. p.272).

Campbell then interprets this to mean:

According to such a theory, each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But in so far as we are animals, our business is at all costs to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us to stay alive on the surface of this particular planet....
Most people, most of the time, know only what comes through the reducing valve and is consecrated as genuinely real by the local language. Certain persons, however, seem to be born with a kind of by-pass that circumvents the reducing valve. In others temporary by-passes may be acquired either spontaneously, or as the result of deliberate “spiritual exercises,” or through hypnosis, or by means of drugs. Through these permanent or temporary by-passes there flows, not indeed the perception “of everything that is happening everywhere in the universe” (for the by-pass does not abolish the reducing valve, which still excludes the total content of Mind at Large), but something more than, and above all something different from, the carefully selected utilitarian material which our narrowed, individual minds regard as a complete, or at least sufficient, picture of reality” (Campbell, 1972. p.272).¹

This hypothesis is reflective of a good deal of Eastern religious doctrine and indeed suggests the kind of consciousness known as Nirvana, sought by those seeking Buddhahood. Nirvana, the goal of Indian Buddhist doctrine, is similar to the Satori consciousness of the Zen Buddhists of Japan.

The inner, intuitive experience of Enlightenment; Satori is said to be unexplainable, indescribable and unintelligible by reason and logic. It is comparable to the experience undergone by Guatama Buddha when he sat under the Bo Tree and, as such, is the central Zen goal. Satori is analogous to the conversion experience of spiritual rebirth from other religious traditions in that it constitutes a complete reordering of the individual in his relation to the universe. Satori usually is achieved only after a period of concentrated preparation and may occur spontaneously as a result of a chance incident, such as a sudden noise (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1986).

Logical Empiricists cannot deal with such matters adequately, because for them the expanded consciousness has no ground in the physical universe per se. Also, logic, as stated in the above quote, is a useless tool not only in trying to describe Satori, but also in arriving at Satori. Logic in fact inhibits the
onset of this state of consciousness. Buddhist masters know this and often give their students a Koan to use during meditation. A Koan is an impossible riddle, intended to "exhaust the analytic intellect and the egoistic will, readying the mind to entertain an appropriate response on the intuitive level" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1986). An example of a famous Koan is, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"

These concepts and ideas have been at the foundation of Eastern philosophies and psychology centuries before the birth of Christ. By contrast, Western humanity, since the Age of Enlightenment, has had little time to digest such notions. Both the mechanistic school of thinking, Scientism, which is totally dependent on logic, as well as the long-standing myths of God\Man separation inherent in orthodox Western religion, have left, until recently, most Westerners in the position where it would be unthinkable to even contemplate such possibilities of consciousness as Satori or Nirvana. However, Westerners do now accept that the mind does bridge the gap from our waking conscious world to our unconscious inner world as Sigmund Freud first hypothesised. But psychology has modelled both theory and research in accord with Western beliefs in classical science not on contemporary scientific world views. Freud is a case in point—he tried too hard to work within the accepted Western medical model.

The strictly rational and mechanistic approach made it especially difficult for Freud to deal with religious, or mystical, experiences. Although he showed a deep interest in religion and spirituality throughout his life, he never acknowledged mystical experience as their source. Instead he equated religion with ritual, seeing it as "an obsessive-compulsive
neurosis of humanity" that reflected unresolved conflicts from infantile stages of psychosexual development. This limitation of Freudian thought has had a strong influence on subsequent analytic practice. In the Freudian model there is no room for experiences of altered states of consciousness that challenge all the basic concepts of classical science. Consequently, experiences of this nature, which occur spontaneously much more frequently than is commonly believed, have often been labelled as psychotic symptoms by psychiatrists who could not incorporate them into their conceptual framework (Capra, 1982. p.187).

Among psychologists there nonetheless emerged theories that tended to encompass the mystical. Carl Jung’s theory of the collective unconscious, with its universal archetypes in both the myths and the symbols that find their way into the stories and images of seemingly unrelated societies, seems to agree with Plato, for whom art is divinely inspired by the muses. Likewise, his theory complements that of the Australian aborigines who believe art is snatched into existence from the dreamtime.

For Plato and his muses, and for the aborigines and their dreamtime, art is the result of a connection to some nonearthly source. Carl Jung ventures to postulate in his theories of the collective unconscious that there is empirical evidence, in the form of universal archetypes, which could serve to validate that source.

I must emphasise yet again that the concept of the collective unconscious is neither a speculative nor a philosophical but an empirical matter. The question is simply this: are there or are there not unconscious, universal forms of this kind? If they exist, then there is a region of the psyche which one can call the collective unconscious. It is true that the diagnosis of the collective unconscious is not always an easy task. It is not sufficient to point out the often obviously archetypal nature of unconsciousness products, for these can just as well be derived from acquisitions through language and education. Cryptomnesia
should also be ruled out, which is almost impossible to do in certain cases. In spite of all these difficulties, there remain enough individual instances showing the autochthonous revival of mythological motifs to put the matter beyond any reasonable doubt (Jung, 1968. p.44).

My thesis, then, is as follows: In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we take on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents (ibid. P.43).

Jung argues that the existence of the collective unconscious is empirical "beyond any reasonable doubt". The word "inherited" however does not clearly define the real nature and source of this realm of the psyche. When considered in conjunction with his theory of synchronicity (and as he states, that "Cryptomnesia should also be ruled out which is 'almost impossible' to do in certain cases"), it seems that he is leaving the door open to a type of heredity beyond what we normally think of as traits passed in the genes.

Jung uses synchronicity to explain that apparent coincidences of events in time, space, and matter seem to sometime have psychic connections. He called this unexplainable phenomenon "An Acausal Connecting Principle."(Jung, 1964. p.291) Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace's independent but synchronistic discovery of the theory of evolution is a case in point:
In each case a creative scientist had independently arrived at a hypothesis that was to change the entire development of the science. Each had initially conceived of the hypothesis in an intuitive “flash” (later backed up by documentary evidence). The archetypes thus seem to appear as the agents, so to speak, of a creatio continua. (What Jung calls synchronistic events are in fact something like “acts of creation in time.”)

Similar “meaningful coincidences” can be said to occur when there is a vital necessity for an individual to know about, say, a relative’s death, or some lost possession. In a great many cases such information has been revealed by means of extrasensory perception (Jung, 1964. p.306).

Jung did not negate the early experiments in “parapsychology”, but instead incorporated the results into his work. He linked the theories in psychology, the data in parapsychology, and the information he obtained in discussions with quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli on the implications of quantum physics that might explain the Acausal Connecting Principle. Likewise, Pauli suggested it might also be time to incorporate psychology into physics.

Because of the implications of this point of view, Wolfgang Pauli and other scientists have begun to study the role of archetypal symbolism in the realm of scientific concepts. Pauli believed that we should parallel our investigation of outer objects with a psychological investigation of the inner origin of our scientific concepts (This investigation might shed new light on a far-reaching concept to be introduced later in this chapter—the concept of “one-ness” between the physical and psychological spheres...

Matter therefore would contain the seed of spirit and spirit the seed of matter. The long-known “synchronistic” phenomena that have now been statistically confirmed by Rhine’s experiments point, to all appearances, in this direction. The “psychization” of matter puts the absolute immateriality of spirit in question, since this would then have to be accorded a kind of substantiality (Jung, 1968. P.109).
Could the existence of the collective unconscious provide empirical evidence for a realm of the psyche that all humanity shares, and that is inherited not so much in our genes, but in matter itself? Could this be why it is possible for some individuals to bypass the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system and experience the entire universe as the self, what Joseph Campbell calls Mind at Large? Could it also be that consciousness is not only a fundamental aspect of matter but that it influences matter in "acausal" synchronistic ways; or could it be that consciousness is responsible for the very existence of matter? Does consciousness create matter? Jung's theory of the collective unconscious opens the door to many questions but clearly Jung is convinced that there is a universal aspect to human consciousness to which individuals can have access. Finally, could the collective unconscious be what the Australian aborigines call the *dreamtime* or the home of the Plato's muses; where there exists essences of perfection out of which the material world is brought into being?

Take, for instance, the word "idea." It goes back to the *ειδος* concept of Plato, and the eternal ideas are primordial images stored up (εɲερονάνως τόπος (in a supracelestial place) as eternal transcendent forms. The eye of the seer perceives them as "images et lares," or as images in dreams and revelatory visions (Jung, 1968 p.33).

Despite the fact that Platonic theory suggests the idea of perfect essences as the building blocks of absolute truth "primordial images stored up in a supracelestial place as eternal transcendent forms", Plato's universe is nonetheless
subject to the God's and muses, who are beyond and above the physical. Plato precludes the Christian dualist concept of mankind being separate from his deity.

In contrast, Eastern ideologies, like that of Zen Buddhism or the Sufis', accept as a basic tenet, the eternity of the soul. This eternity ultimately binds one to the great One, the "All That Is."

AS A SELFLESS LOVE BETWEEN TWO HUMAN BEINGS
WILL ALWAYS TEND TO DRAW ALL BEINGS INTO ITS COMPASS
ONE EXPERIENCES ALL BEINGS
WITHIN ONE'S BEING
UNTIL ONE REALISES
THAT IT IS GOD WHO EXPERIENCES ALL BEINGS
THROUGH ONE

Pir Vilayat Inayat-Khan--Sufi
(Inayat-Khan, 1974. P. 511)

The ancient mystical secrets of many Eastern ideologies have been related to the ways and means of finding one's way back to the "One-ness" in Nirvana or Satori, the total universal consciousness. This has had a profound effect in their art. In fact, Eastern art tends to ignore the individual ego altogether. For instance, there is no tradition of portraiture.

Such ego-oriented thinking is alien completely to Eastern life, thought,
and religiosity, which are concerned, on the contrary, precisely with the quenching of ego and of all interest in this evanescent thing that is merely the “I” of a passing dream (Campbell, 1972. p.108).

It is this “I” I should now like to draw attention to.

I find it interesting that not only in art circles but in the Western public mainstream, the arts are often spoken of, more or less, as the “soul” of education. We say that within a quality work of art, be it a painting, or a dance, that it elicits the very “spirit” of its creator. And when a work of art is said to “move” an audience, just exactly what is it that is “moved?” Could it be the “soul,” the “spirit,” the “self”? Are these what “I” am?

Art in the modern context strives to chip away the layers of illusion surrounding the inner self, that the artist may strike the very core of his/her own being, in the hope of discovering some kind of truth that, once exposed, would radiate the beauty and transcendence that is absolute truth, the “immortal presence” Campbell speaks of when he says, “masterworks of consummate art do indeed render to mortal eyes the knowledge of an immortal presence in all things” (Campbell, 1972. p.108). Yet, for all the talk about the spirit of a work of art, or of it being timeless or transcendent, most people, and unfortunately most scholars as well, avoid the most critical question concerning all artistic creations. That is, what is the essential nature of the individual spirit that created the work? What is its purpose of and for existence? For unless educators can discern what mankind’s purpose is, how can we be sure we are educating toward that purpose?
I think it is safe to say that very few art educators that I know are cognizant of just exactly why art is as important in the school system as math or science. Nor can they easily verbalise and defend the value of art. They just know on an intuitive level that it is important. But here again we face one of the all important links to understanding and meaning that has yet to be properly addressed. What is intuition? How does it work? What are the mechanisms of intuition? Is art intuitive? Could intuition be a link to the collective unconscious suggested by Carl Jung? Are aesthetics perhaps, also connected to the collective unconscious? Does metaphor solicit intuition through aesthetics? Is the Aesthetic experience therefore a window to the collective unconscious? Is there a collective unconscious? The questions facing art are as fundamental as; what is the meaning of life?; because we are slowly coming to understand that art is not so much about the idea of beauty, the Platonic Western myth, but that art is as much about meaning.

We see a haystack by Monet, an iris by Van Gogh, or an asparagus spear by Manet and marvel at their presence and spirit and think that these works were about haystacks, irises and asparagus. Not at all! Monet, Van Gogh, Manet employed haystacks, irises, asparagus to speak of the symphonies of light, the glory of God's creations, the life force residing in all form. We care about those paintings more than we care about stacks of hay, flowers, and vegetables because we care more about light, God, and life than we do about any of their particular manifestations. Meaning, not beauty is what we are after. Big, deep, wide meaning (London, 1989. p.15).

These statements are of crucial importance to arts educators because it is becoming apparent that what we teach, and likely the way we teach, would
be affected if we accept the idea that meaning in art is derived from a
connection to the “other worlds.”

In the past, art education has focused its attention on the development of
technique and an understanding of the principles of design. These techniques
and principles have almost always been concerned with whatever was the
accepted norm of the day within the context of the given culture. In the West,
the type of art that was traditionally produced was usually backed and
endorsed by the tastes and preferences of the state-sponsored academies and
schools. As well, whether or not Western public schools included art in the
curriculum and how it was taught, was also a matter of state endorsement.

Until the 1950s, or there about, art has been included in the public
school system, more as a matter for ensuring that industry would produce
functional products that would also have some kind of aesthetic value, not
because aesthetics were seen to have value in themselves, but because they
helped to sell the product. The market is really what has motivated most
Western states to include art in the curriculum. The pressure from our own
government and my recently retired principal (and I can’t blame him) to expand
from our present government mandated “Art Careers” course, to also include
two “Career Preparation” courses in Graphic Communications, and Fine Arts
Career Prep, are contemporary examples of state preferences. If we make the
“necessary adjustments,” the school has another sizeable source of money
made available to it for the implementation of such programs. But the message
is art for money, not art for art’s sake or for spiritual enrichment and personal
growth, or even art aimed at defining individuality. It is art for careers. We seem to have our priorities reversed. Instead of teaching people how to live, we teach them how to make a living. In our classrooms, the intrinsic value of art is supplanted by the forces that drive our Western economy.

By contrast, primitive societies simply live what we call “art.” For instance, the Cree Indians of North America do not even have the words art or music in their language system. Pictograms etc. are images of spiritual necessity and are not produced for the purpose of beauty or trade. Songs are also spiritual in their purpose and are sung as “methods” of connecting one to the spiritual realms, comparable, I believe, to the realms of the collective unconscious suggested by Jung.

To the Indians, songs are the most important means of communicating with the powers they consider significant to their existence. There are songs for performance at almost every event in their lives. Just as they believe that supernatural power could exist in humans if they manage to fuse their being with that of the natural world around them, so they also believe that this power is also manifest in songs. As Halpern (1967) puts it,

"The pacific Northwest Indian believed that supernatural power resided in man, as well as in nature, and that to be one with nature meant a fusion of power into one being, resulting in the creation of a song" (Walker, 1990. P. 189).

High school teachers can learn from the primitives in this regard. The joy and wonder of life itself is expressed in the actions of any child immersed in the process of making art. For the child is not making art: the child is living. What we call art is the byproduct of human engagement of self with materials of
the earth in a way that bares similarity to the so called “primitives.” However, regarding the child, art making may be interpreted by us, more as a form of play than a process leading to personal empowerment that binds one to the other realms. A teacher could take a stance more in accord with primitive belief systems; that life is essentially a spiritual endeavour, and art, a creative vehicle. Then, through focus and empathy, the ego self is absorbed, opening the doorway to the other realms, and the art classroom becomes a place of magic. The magic that art brought to primitive society can again enrich, fulfil, empower, and give meaning back to us and our children.

Art lived in communion with the other realms is an idea that more closely follows the spiritual undercurrents of Eastern theologies, where humanity is not separate from God, but more or less an aspect of God. The problem for art in the East, is that it is almost always in the service of the idea of absorbing the individual ego, and the idea of trying to identify the core aspects of the “self,” (the common quest of much contemporary Western art) is basically nonexistent. What is lost is the uniqueness of the individual. Those who seek to define the personal self, are seen to be collecting bad karma, because the preoccupation with personal self, or ego self, as we might term it in the West, is seen as a preoccupation with the body and the material world. This preoccupation with a finite world that is both an illusion and a distraction from the real truth of cosmic consciousness in Nirvana will, according to the laws of Karma, extend one’s sojourns of earthly existence until one realises the truth of one’s existence. That truth is, that each one of us is a part of the all that is and not,
a separate self. In the West we tend to believe that our personal differences should be celebrated, and that, in some sense they contribute to some aspect of the divine plan itself.

In the East, the ego self is absorbed into all the universe where it becomes, in a sense, selfless in inseparable communion. In the West, for many at least, self is truly alone, until for those who believe it, God judges in their favour and then and only then, at the end of their life, may they become one with their creator.

The separation of the self from the other realms, or God, be it via the Christian orthodox view, or by the somewhat atheistic belief that there is no other world, has fractured Western humanity and it has rendered a culture where each individual is until death, essentially alone. His/her spirit is separate from all other spirits. The typical Western cure, the magical purchase of something material, is but only a temporary antidote, as ownership is a poor substitute for communion.

Teachers with a spiritual understanding of the arts need not try to supplant children's religious beliefs but can and should teach art in a way that is nonetheless spiritual and not so much mechanical. Art should be an explorative, joyful, (need I say) spiritual process. It should not be forced, but rather, encouraged when readiness of the child is indicated.

Meaningful discussion about works of art and how they relate to life can and should occur whenever interest is sparked by any individual student. From that point of genuine life experience, students discover and learn from the point
of power at which they are at in the present moment. Therefore the discussion has real life meaning, in that it is not presented and prescribed by the teacher whose life experiences are his or her own and likely detached from the experiences of the child.

The concept of teaching from a spiritual base is however more a matter of teacher understanding concerning the arts, and their relationship to the spiritual realms, than that of devising and prescribing "lessons" aimed specifically at children becoming cognisant that what they are doing may be spiritual. For the teacher, what is important is that children demonstrate that they feel something special is happening as they create. The rewards of this kind of thinking are that art and the arts become re-established as life activities that are in themselves meaningful and important.

In conclusion to this introduction, I would like to emphasise that our school systems should be less concerned with training our young people in how to make a living, and more concerned with educating them in how to live. Creative exploration and aesthetic enrichment through arts education can re-establish, in our children and in our selves, a sense of spirit, beauty, and meaning in all of life's activities, including those concerned with making a living. The marriage of the individual ego of the West with the infinite self of the East, lived in sacred communion with the earth and the spiritual realms of the primitives is one of the great projects of the arts.

As Robert Hughes said in his art history television series *The Shock of The New*, the purpose of art is "to restore life back to us in all its wonder and
mystery, and occasional nastiness, in the way that only children can experience (Hughes, 1979-80).

Arts education is about life and how to live it. I believe we, in our new technological age, have the opportunity now, more than ever, to reunite the differing spiritual belief systems of the world with that of the indigenous peoples to foster a society that lives each moment to its fullest, in union and communion with all the here and now, as well as with those spiritual realms where the primitives glean meaning to the point that life itself becomes an art. Or if you prefer, where art becomes life.
Chapter One Summary

The essential differences underlying the East/West dichotomy are such that in the West, God is completely separate from humanity, and in the East, God can be experienced as the self.

Philosopher C.D. Broad is favourably quoted by Aldous Huxley, "The brain and the nervous system and sense organs is in the main "eliminative" and not productive. Each person is at each moment capable of perceiving all that has ever happened to him and of perceiving everything that has happened in the Universe" (Campbell, 1972. p.272).

Campbell interprets this as each one of us is essentially Mind at Large. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funnelled through the reducing valve of the brain...some people are born with and some can acquire with specific methods, such as through drugs, meditation, or sometimes spontaneously, a way to temporarily by-pass the reducing valve.

Satori is explained as what the Buddha experienced in experiencing the universe as the self. It is indescribable and unintelligible by reason and logic.

Carl Jung postulates that there is empirical evidence in the form of myths and symbols--universal archetypes coming out of the psyche, to conclude that there is a Collective Unconscious.

The Australian Aborigines believe the Universe is dreamed into existence from the dreamtime.

Joseph Campbell, "The immortal presence of masterworks of consummate art do indeed render to mortal eyes the knowledge of an immortal presence in all things" (Campbell, 1972. p. 108).

Logical empiricists have tended to avoid the perennial questions related to the origins of man as being spiritual because science believes it cannot measure the intangible.

The question is raised...Do aesthetics and metaphor open a window to the collective unconscious and/or other realms or universes?

Art has traditionally been included in the Western school curriculum to bolster sales of functional products by imbuing them with aesthetic qualities. Art is not recognised for its potential to transcend individuals into the spiritual realms which happens in "primitive" cultures.

Public education should be more concerned with teaching people how to live and less concerned with teaching them how to get a good job. This over-
emphasis is anti-education because the self is trained into a box rather than liberated to an open mind, heart, and spirit.


2Jacobi, Jolande. “Symbols in an Individual Analysis”. See *Man and His Symbols*.

3von Franz, Maria L. “Conclusion: Science and the Unconscious”. See *Man and His Symbols*.

4ibid.
CHAPTER TWO

BEYOND VISUAL LITERACY: SHAMANS AND WAYS OF SEEING

There is a world that is beyond ours, a world that is far away, nearby, and invisible. And there is where God lives, where the dead live, the spirits and the saints, a world where everything has already happened and everything is known.

That world talks. It has a language of its own. I report what it says.

Mazatec curandera Maria Sabina

Living fully in our visually dominated world may be what most people believe they already do. Because we can see, we assume that what we see with our eyes represents reality in its immediacy and that is all there is, but we can actually be misled by our senses that seem to operate so precisely. We become so involved with the vision of reality we see through the lenses of our eyes that we subordinate our other four senses and negate almost completely our sixth sense, intuition.

We can learn to see with our inner intuitive eyes, or the "third eye" as the Hindus call it, by practicing seeing in a way not usually considered in the Western vision of the world.

In this chapter I argue that prolonged looking at objects, used as subjects for art, can result in a different kind of seeing. Further, that this kind of seeing is similar to, or the same as, the kind of inseeing described by
shamans throughout the world. Indeed, there is a profound link between the
outer visual world and the inner being and its total perceptual experience.

Modern artists are visually literate, and very much aware of the
importance of the visual on the psyche. Modern commercial artists use their
visual awareness and knowledge all too often to the detriment of others. They
make their forays into the minds of the masses through the images they project
into the urban environment. The urban environment delights, insults,
educates, and commands the psyche, and most of us are completely unaware of
the politics of control used in urban development and advertising design.

The archetypal symbols and images of the big media, inculcate to the
deepest levels of our being, and we do not know we are being influenced.

The study of the visual world—that is, learning literally to read “into” the
deepener meanings of the language of art and design, symbols and myths,
through the study of art, art history, and media studies can help us to become
more autonomous in our personal and political decisions. Visual literacy is as
important in our postmodern world as is the written word, lest we continue to
be unconsciously controlled by the purposeful will of others through the visual,
in our image-based, image-conscious society. Visual literacy should be a core
component of public education but it is not. Most educators are truly ignorant
of its necessity and even its true meaning. Becoming visually literate allows
individuals to see into the hidden messages of the propaganda of our urban
world. However, the market that supports the public system of education relies
heavily on psychic suggestion and deceit, and would certainly feel threatened if
it were fully exposed to a visually literate public. It is little wonder that the visual arts are not core subjects in public education in a capitalist economy that is heavily dependent upon subliminal and psychic deceit in advertising.

The losses of human potential in not affording the arts core status in public education are enormous. It is truly a tragedy that so few understand the potential power of the arts to either misdirect or nourish the spirit (and to access other "worlds"). The public generally does not know what it is missing. Instead of exploring ourselves through the arts we use the arts to distract ourselves from our selves with carefully designed suggestive and subliminal advertising in our efforts to meet the materialist agenda.

The shamans of the indigenous cultures of this planet do not suffer from terminal distraction and have learned to see in ways that we in the West can no longer fathom. Indeed, there is another aspect of learning to see that can take us beyond the superficial outer world that meets our eyes. It can even take us beyond interpreting meaning through symbolism and language, beyond the experience of the visual, beyond separateness. It can take us to the point of communion, where the subject and the object blend as one consciousness. The shamans learn to see in this way, and perhaps so do some artists. Learning to see the way shamans see begins with sincere looking and merges into seeing.

At first we look deeply at an object, we inspect slowly, objectively, then subjectively, then we forget ourselves and merge into the vision of our perception. We experience the feeling of being one with the object. We become the object of our contemplation and the contemplation becomes lost in the
beingness of itself. Zen Buddhists ascribe to the necessity of becoming one with the object of contemplation; not as an act of imagination, but as an actuality that is a real experience of consciousness, and that is most definitely not a hallucination.

In the West, many of us still cringe at the thought of even trying to open our minds to the possibility of accepting that anyone could actually experience their being as something other than or more than what it is confined within the parameters of their own skin. We prefer to be separate from others. We worship, begrudgingly sometimes, and glamorously at other times, our egos. For many of us it is almost too humble, for others, too risky to even try to set our egos aside long enough to experiment with our consciousness in a personal way that might involve something as simple or controversial as meditation. We tend to try to understand and control all things from a distance. In Eastern thought, strength comes in the tranquil knowing that the ego is isolated and must merge to really know itself. The drop must fall into the ocean of understanding in order to see and feel itself from all sides, all points of view. It must merge to experience its greater self. A strongly isolated ego does not intuitively see its inseparability with the universe. The dissolution of the ego is therefore an important goal of Eastern mysticism.

Art historian and self-professed shaman Mark Levy speaks of seeing as an aspect of consciousness that requires sincere effort at first, and then slowly evolves to real understanding and meaning. Levy states that seeing is far more than merely looking at something. Seeing goes beyond physical visual
perception. If we are to become Seers we must learn that Seeing is a way of merging our life force (our Chi) with the object of our contemplation so that we may see it from the inside, so to speak, and know it from the point of view of being the thing in itself. The life force that is the force that sustains our body and being is called Prana in Hindu belief, and Chi in some Chinese belief systems. The Chinese understand Chi and use it to heal themselves and each other. Chi travels along meridians in the body that do not correspond, for the most part, to either the vascular or nervous systems of the human body. Chi is mapped and understood in Chinese medicine and it is with Chi that the Chinese acupuncturist attempts to heal. The needles are used to block or open gates of the life force so that it may travel freely through the body to places the acupuncturist deems necessary.

Traditional Chinese medicine, too, is based on the balance of yin and yang in the human body, and any illness is seen as a disruption of this balance. The body is divided into yin and yang parts. Globally speaking, the inside of the body is yang, the body surface is yin, the back is yang; the front is yin; inside the body, there are yin and yang organs. The balance between all these parts is maintained by a continuous flow of chi, or vital energy, along a system of ‘meridians’ which contain the acupuncture points. Each organ has a meridian associated with it in such a way that the yang meridians belong to yin organs and vice versa. Whenever the flow between the yin and yang is blocked, the body falls ill, and the illness is cured by sticking needles into the acupuncture points to stimulate and restore the flow of chi (Capra, 1976, P. 114).

In the West we simply do not understand Chi, it does not fit into our scientific medical model. We cannot see it nor trace it with our technology yet
when acupuncturists treating patients use the needles or acupressure, patients report feeling the energy moving through the body.

In the television documentary *Healing and the Mind*, (1993) host Bill Moyers reported feeling *Chi*, or something, moving up his forearm in response to acupressure applied by a traditional Chinese doctor. In the same program a Ti Chi Guong Grand Master demonstrated his apparent ability to extend his life force a number of meters beyond his body with the result that eight or ten people lined up and pushing with all their combined might could not budge this little old man, but at will, by sending his *Chi*, his life force in their direction, they were thrown in unison backward. To Western eyes it looked unreal, because people just touching this man would lose control of their bodies and fall to the ground.

Levy understands seeing as an almost religious experience and proclaims that inanimate objects too have their own kind of *Chi*. He says that an artist (and he cites Van Gogh in particular) can charge and imbue an image to have a spirit or force of its own. At the level of metaphor, art, or aesthetics, we in the West can accept this type of notion, but we tend to blindly accept it without questioning the mechanics of how or what metaphor, art, and aesthetics really are. We would scoff that they might actually have their own spirit or life force.

The kahunas of the South Pacific speak of universal threads, known as Aka threads, that shamans knowingly, (and others unknowingly) send out to connect themselves to other objects or individuals.
Aka, or etheric substance, is also called ectoplasm and is a very fluid, sticky and versatile substance. It can be extended outward in a thread or rod. It clings to all it touches, drawing out a fine thread between itself and that object. We might be compared to spiders in the web of universal life connected to all we have ever touched or focused. We have woven webs of relationships with objects and people ever since we were born. Thoughts and energies can flow along these threads of Kino-aka substance, allowing us to silently communicate with others (Hoffman, 1976. P.18).

Aka is a Hawaiian word meaning “essence” or “shadow,” and also refers to the idea of a nonphysical web of threads connecting everything in the universe. Frequently made connections with emotional content are sometimes referred to as cords or even cables. One could say that, whereas most people are bound by cords to their outer life on the planet Earth until the moment of death, shamans seek to be connected by threads to every thing all the time. Using the web metaphor, we can say that the connections of the web always exist, but specific threads are only activated by conscious attention. That is, intuition occurs—information is transferred—whenever you think or become aware of something (King, 1990. P.105).

Superstring theory, a theory that has been given serious attention in the physics community and may one day find scientific acceptance, correlates to what the Kahunans have been saving for centuries in their lore. Superstring theory basically states that the fabric or the universe is bound or gridded together by an infinite web of strands of quantum energy.

Newton's deterministic machine was replaced by a shadowy and paradoxical conjunction of waves and particles, governed by the laws of chance rather than the rigid rules of causality. An extension of the quantum theory, known as quantum field theory, goes beyond even this; it paints a picture in which solid matter dissolves away, to be replaced by weird excitations and vibrations of invisible field energy. In this theory, little distinction remains between material substance and apparently empty space, which itself seethes with ephemeral quantum activity. The culmination of these ideas is the so called superstring theory, which
seeks to unite space, time and matter, and to build all of them from the vibrations of submicroscopic loops of invisible string inhabiting a ten-dimensional imaginary universe (Davies/Gribbins, 1992. P.14).

Attempts to treat particles such as electrons as little spheres, instead of mathematical points, go back almost a hundred years. These early ideas were not successful because they were inconsistent with the theory of relativity. The novelty of the more recent suggestion is that particles are extended in space in only one dimension. They are not point particles, nor blobs of matter, but infinitely thin strings.

Such strings would be the fundamental building blocks of the Universe, replacing the old idea of particles, but resembling particles in that they can move about, while having a much richer dynamical repertoire because of their ability to wiggle as well as to move bodily in space (Davies/Gribbin, 1992. P.254).

If this theory could be shown to be fact, it is conceivable that one could hypothesize that we could validate kahuna belief that consciousness or perhaps Chi could travel along or into an object created by another entity. Dr. Serge King, a self-professed “Urban Shaman,” trained in the kahuna shamanic tradition, discusses the concept of “grokking.” He uses the term to describe what the kahunas do when they engage in something they call Shapechanging or shapeshifting. The process requires the shaman to move his focus of being into the object or entity to be “grokked.”

The name I have chosen to represent this delicate position is “grokking.” This is a word from the book by Robert Heinlein, Stranger in a Strange Land, in which the hero has ability to merge with the pattern of something, know it from the inside, and change it from the inside by direct intent.
Grokking implies the ability to remember your original pattern and your purpose in grokking. I also call this “keeping the 1 per cent shaman.” This means retaining at least 1 per cent (an arbitrary metaphor) or your self-awareness no matter how deeply you grok. Our purpose in grokking is to bring about healing and harmony. If you were to grok a sick tree 100 per cent, you would simply feel like you were the tree and forget to do any healing. You wouldn’t turn into a tree however. Most of the time you would just snap back into your original self awareness without having accomplished anything, or you might fall asleep and wake up later. A complete change of pattern requires consciously applied skill of a level that most humans will never reach (King, 1990. P.152).

Via superstring theory, or perhaps via connections linked by what the kahunans call Aka threads, it is possible to hypothesize that the spirit of Van Gogh is threaded and entangled into the very beingness of his work. The work may indeed have its own kind of Chi as Levy says it does. He believes that we can learn to see more and more by immersing our being, in varying degrees, into the beingness of the object of our attention. We can blend our Chi with that of the object and learn to experience firsthand, the real nature and meaning of its beingness. The degree to which we can do this is the degree to which we can see.

What Levy calls seeing could well be what the kahunans refer to as shapeshifting, or what Serge King refers to as grokking. Levy’s thesis however, suggests that artists can and do learn to “see into things” the same way that shamans do, as a natural result of sustained looking, with an extreme focus of attention to the object being observed.

There is strong evidence in Van Gogh’s work to suggest that he saw beyond utilitarian reality. In his painting of a pair of old peasant shoes, for example, he appeared to have uncovered the essence of “shoeness"
that is not revealed by ordinary looking. The painted shoes radiate with an energy that the Chinese would call Chi--the particular underlying life force (Levy, 1993. P.14).

Fig. 1 Vincent Van Gogh (A Pair of Boots, 1887)

Levy claims himself to be an Urban Shaman and refers to his experiences in seeing.

In my own development of the process of seeing, I have learned that the first stage is to look at an object for an extended period of time. It is easiest to begin with objects of lesser complexity such as inanimate things, and then progress to plants, animals and humans, in that order. After a period of looking at an object daily for a short duration of time in
a meditative frame of mind, a shift from looking to seeing gradually takes place.

As Van Gogh implied, seeing has a religious aspect. Not only does one see the inner structure of the object but one can actually have a dialogue or merge with the object and its environment... (Levy, 1993. P.11)

Levy is definitely not alone in his claims and he quotes the German poet Rilke in a letter to his friend Magda von Hattinberg.

Can you imagine with me how glorious it is, for example, to see into a dog, in passing--into him (I don't mean to see through him, which is merely a kind of human gymnastics, where one comes right back out on the other side of the dog, using him as a window to whatever human concerns lie behind him, no, not that)--but to ease oneself into the dog exactly at his center, the place of which he exists as a dog, that place in him where God would, so to speak, have sat down for a moment when the dog was complete, in order to watch him at his first predicaments and notions and let him know by a nod that he was good, that he lacked nothing, that no better dog could be made....If I were to tell you where my greatest feeling, my universal feeling, the bliss of my earthly existence has been, I would have to confess: It has always, here and there, been in this kind of in-seeing, in the indescribably swift, deep, timeless moments of this divine seeing into the heart of things. You see, and when one loved, this was the first thing that fell away--the dog would come along; an inexpressible pain would arise, one no longer had the prodigal freedom to merge with him. There was someone in the background who called you "mine" (that irresponsible word), and the dog would have to introduce himself to that person and ask permission to let you enter him for one imperceptible, secret moment (Levy, 1993. P.29).

Painter Willem de Kooning talks about what he terms, the slipping glimpse: "It is when I am 'slipping into that glimpse' that I am in the real world. It is when I am standing upright that I am concerned for my health. It is then that I am not doing so well."(Hughes, 1979-80)
I believe de Kooning's slipping glimpse metaphor is similar to, or is what artists, musicians, and writers experience on a fairly regular basis, in varying degrees, as the dissolution of the ego. The ego, the conscious limited self, gives way to a kind of sharing of consciousness with the unconscious self, into a kind of transcendental expanded awareness. The ego, or the little self, discovers its unlimited potential in its own subconscious as it accesses, possibly the collective unconscious. It discovers that the subconscious is not inaccessible and is in fact a reality of its own being. The two forms of consciousness do not have to be separate as often as they are accustomed to being in most of our everyday lives. I believe that for the sake of expediency, safety, and habit we have focused on the outer world as if it were all there really was to the universe while we blindly pay little or no quality attention to the universe within ourselves. Artists explore the very nature of their consciousness in the active process of doing their work. The reason art is considered good therapy is simply because it is. Art does indeed bind us to the other realms of our being, the other realms of the universe; perhaps the realms of the collective unconscious. This may explain why so many artists seem to be almost addicted to their work. The feelings of transcendental interaction invoked by ego immersion into the creative process can be ecstatically fulfilling. Continued disjuncture from these other realms is not only unhealthy, but lonely and perhaps even dangerous as our present crime rate seems to indicate.

If I can increase the sensitivity of my "soul," i.e. "psychic," so that I can really feel what you feel, and know what you know because of some mysterious psi faculty in me, then that psi faculty will become one of the
real bases of my ethics, or of my concern for you. I am not as likely to hurt you if I really feel you to be part of myself. This experience of psychic sensitivity, in fact, seems to be behind the great doctrine of “ahimsa” found in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions....We can never attain to an ethical society unless each person can learn to empathize, or feel that him or her, and all other living persons, are internally related to one another somehow, and connected to the very source of the universe itself (Rossner, 1989. Introduction xxxix).

Contact with our own inner self through art and the arts establishes a continuity between waking consciousness and our other conscious strataums.

The profound sense of well-being experienced by artists at work could not be better summed up than by artist/therapist Joseph Zinker:

Art is prayer--not the vulgarized notations handed down to us in the scriptures, but a fresh vital discovery of one's own special presence in the world. Marc Chagall was once asked if he attended a synagogue; he answered that his work was prayer.

In the process of making any thing, a person not only illuminates and illustrates his inner life, but moves beyond personal expression to make something which stands by itself. The work acquires its own internal validity, its own integrity. It is in this process of making something which stands on its own integral structure that the creator contacts a concrete reality outside his subjective life and moves into the realm of the transcendent (London, 1989. P.13).

The idea that art is closer to prayer, than to mindless busy work as far too many Westerners (and educators) emptily perceive it, has long been the truth of primal peoples everywhere. Indigenous peoples around the globe have not thought of their work (be it dance, drumming, or carving, etc.) as art, but as necessary rituals that bind them closer to the underlying forces responsible for the reality in which they reside.
“For the (primal person), truth does not lie in the insignificant appearances of the everyday world but in the great cosmic forces which course through this world, in the exemplary events recounted in myth and repeated in ritual, and in all that gives meaning to appearances rather than receiving it from them. The same can be said about totem poles of the Haida Indians (of the Northwest Coast of America), the painted ancestors of the New Hebrides, or the bronze figures of the Steppes. Such works attempt to render the invisible visible.” The artist has used his body—his cumulative sensory being—to transform something mysterious into something tangible.

For Indians, images are a way of celebrating mystery and not a manner of explaining it. For Kandinsky art was essentially the same thing: “To speak of mystery in terms of mystery. Is that not content? Is that not the conscious or unconscious purpose of the compulsive urge to create?” (Highwater, 1981. P.65)

Levy likens the activities, rituals, and ceremonies used by so-called “primitive” shamans to similar modes of lifestyle, habit, and sometimes ritual practiced by contemporary modern artists.

As mentioned earlier, Levy speaks of the concept of seeing as something very different from looking: One sees not only inward to insight, but outward at the same time to experience completely the true nature of self in relationship to the universe. He points out that habits both good and bad of modern artists from Van Gogh—just before the turn of this century—to the present, pose striking similarities to shamanic practice.

The shamanic techniques of seeing do not only include hallucinogenic drugs but also solitude, and sensory deprivation. All of these techniques can strengthen the perceptual faculties.

The use of drugs is a traditional shamanic technique for entering non-ordinary reality and drugs have been employed by nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists for similar purposes (Levy, 1993. P.1).
Not all artists have necessarily been consciously unaware of the purpose of their practices. Many have employed alcohol and drugs such as opium and hashish, as well as sex to invite altered states of consciousness so that they might examine the condition they managed to achieve.

To have a vision of non-ordinary reality, Rimbaud used hashish, opium, alcohol, and sex. He wanted to circumvent the ego and the rational mind. Pierre Petitfils, in his recent biography of Rimbaud, attempted to build a case of circumstantial evidence to show Rimbaud had no inclination for debauchery. Petitfils concluded that Rimbaud "had agreed to it in the interest of the 'the rational deranging of all the senses' which was one of the seer's 'keys'" (Levy, 1993. P.2).

The allure of drugs, alcohol, and sex is obviously not confined to just artists and shamans, but the use of drugs as a form of recreation or escapism is not the purpose of artists and shamans who seek to examine and explore the effects of these methods on human consciousness. Indeed, most shamanistic traditions abhor the use of drugs except during ritual ceremonies to the sacred and often only the shaman or selected individuals have been permitted to partake in the use of mind-altering substances.

Artists can fairly be compared in this respect to shamans in that many artists have in the past and in the present used drugs and alcohol to free the mind from its normally fixed deductive mode to something more intuitive in an effort to circumvent the power of conscious logic.
Self-imposed isolation and silence are also techniques both intentionally and unintentionally employed by artists that bare a resemblance to shamanic practices. Often coupled with food deprivation, shamanic traditions and rituals frequently involve sending initiates into the forest or to some secluded place for a number of days. The initiate is always alone, usually naked or near naked, rationed or without food and sometimes water, and must stay in this situation until such time as they have a vision or some type of spiritual experience. The experience of seeking a vision and becoming a seer was at one time, for many North American Indians, a necessary obligation as a rite of passage into adulthood.

In the initiation from childhood to maturity, no experience is as important...as the gaining of a spirit-helper in a vision quest. Without it a person would surely fail in every major activity of life. So Indians do not usually await the appearance of some aspect of the orenda (a spirit guide), but actively seek it. This is the basis of the vision quest....

In the old days, a young person traveled to some remote area where it was known that many powers dwelled--often a mountain top, or the shore of a remote lake, sometimes in the depths of a deep forest. There the youth remained for several days and nights, alone and in utter silence, fasting from both food and water, humbly naked except for a loincloth since for most Indians the body is all a person owns...

(Highwater, 1981. P.84)

Levy argues that many artists have voluntarily endured isolation and food deprivation at the same time. As an example, he cites Van Gogh who chose to spend his money on paints, art supplies, and alcohol, over a good diet,
which he often neglected simply because he would lose himself in his painting for twelve to fourteen hours at a time. In one of his letters, Van Gogh wrote:

If you are well you must be able to live on a bit of bread while your are working all day, and have enough strength to smoke and drink your whack at night—-that's all in the bargain--and at the same time feel the stars--the infinite high and clear above you. Then life is after all most enchanted. Oh! those who do not believe in the sun here are the real infidels (Levy, 1993. P.12).

However, Van Gogh’s powers of heightened perception and ecstatic vision were often offset by immobilizing bouts of depression, very likely in part due to the same habits that helped to serve his visionary insight. Levy points out that most shamans "counterbalance" those activities that might also tend to be harmful.

Van Gogh's poor diet may have contributed to his abilities as a seer but it also hastened his death. Without the grounding mechanisms that traditional shamans cultivate to counterbalance their visionary states so that they do not become fixed in extraordinary reality and self-destruct, Van Gogh could not sustain the level of intensity that he brought to his life and work. He eventually committed suicide after a frenetic painting career that basically lasted only five years—from 1885 to 1890. (P.17)

That some artists have either consciously or unknowingly employed unhealthy methods or habits to induce altered states of consciousness resulting in insight, is not here a moral question, but a testimony to the fact that altered
states of consciousness do seem to play a role in artistic insight. There are also much safer and more socially acceptable methods of experiencing inner vision.

Rilke, in his *Letters To A Young Poet*, places great importance on the need for solitude as a kind of meditation in itself. "The necessary thing is after all...solitude, great inner solitude. Going-into-oneself and for hours meeting no one--this one must be able to attain" (p.23).

That mankind has in a sense been cowardly has done life endless harm; The experiences that are called "visions," the whole so-called" spirit world," death, all those things that are so closely akin to us have by daily parrying been so crowded out of life that the senses with which we could have grasped them are atrophied. To say nothing of God (p.23).^x

Rilke was not convinced that Orthodox Religion has the power to any longer have an effect. He believed, "along with the German Romantic painters that the conventional symbols of Christianity had lost their effectiveness and it was the task of the sensitive artists to create new metaphors for the spiritual (ibid. P.24).^x

Rilke placed little faith in the beliefs of those whose religion was learned from "secondary sources." To him it was possible to experience the other realms directly as do the shamans, who also prefer direct contact.

Rilke's negative attitude toward secondary sources is paralleled in shamanism. Not only does the direct experience of the spiritual preclude intermediaries, but this experience transcends conventional ethical categories. Shamans maintain a mode of life which, like Rilke's is conducive to having spiritual experiences over a long period of time. It is not the primary goal of a seer to determine what is good or bad. And, in
the case of the shaman/seer who is also an artist, the tasteful is beyond categorizing what is good and what is bad (p.25).

Rilke argued:

It is not only the hearable in music that is important (something can be pleasant to hear without being true. What is decisive for me, in all the arts, is not their outward appearance, not what is called the "beautiful," but rather their deepest, most inner origin, the buried reality that calls forth their appearance (p.25)."

A number of important issues are brought forward in the above quotes. First, that the ability to contact the spirit realms directly was at one time not only possible for many people, but that the senses we once possessed to experience them have been crowded out by the rigors and distractions of life in the age of science and technology. This is not the only cause of lost human powers. The point is made that the Church robs individuals of their right to access divinity directly; to have a direct personal communion with the forces of the universe that transcend this world and life. Finally, and not of least importance, it is the "task of the sensitive artist to create new metaphors for the spiritual."

The evidence does seem to indicate that many artists do indeed transcend into the spiritual realms, and it is for this reason that their works seem to be imbued with spirit. Artists can fairly take their place among the spirit guides of history.

Unfortunately, most modern systems of education within Western cultures and traditions have, either for religious reasons or because of the
dogma of scientism, tended to avoid educating to the inner truth about the 
nature of reality cited earlier in both the Eastern and the shamanic traditions. 
Western ideology denies these levels of consciousness that may indeed help 
individuals reach their true potential in regard to what some mistakenly 
understand and derogate to be the paranormal or occult.

The implication with this choice of words, is that the paranormal or 
occult is thought of as rare and somewhat mysterious, perhaps even sinister, 
but it is really just atrophied human abilities that are in fact natural abilities we 
have either feared or chosen to ignore; or out of ignorance we have forgotten in 
our quest for material comforts and self-aggrandizement in our egos.

If it is indeed possible to “grok” a tree or another human being; why can 
some cultures do it and not ours? If telepathy is real and occurs along aka 
threads, as the kahuna shamans claim, why are we not looking more closely at 
the issue? Could we learn to do this?

Another implication of Rilke’s statement is that there is indeed another 
realm of existence to which we can access, learn from, interact with, and benefit 
from in general. This other realm is likely connected to each consciousness and 
therefore everyone is entitled to such access.

In our modern culture we have been so successful with camouflaging our 
real goals with our egos and distractions, that we have succeeded almost totally 
in isolating our selves from our own potential, a part of our divine right that has 
until very recently only been accessible through means other than the scientific.
Western education is antispirtuality and therefore antitruth. It goes so completely against itself, that although we know the materialist agenda is our ultimate demise, we treat "our" bottomline myths (progress, money, technology, and power) as if they were Gods. Money and the Materialist agenda support and at the same time undermine Western education. Unwittingly, every educator in the West who supports total secularity in public education, as well as the unconscious routing of the arts by refusing to give them "core status" denies the search for self, where humanity and spirit literally become the subject matter. This attitude reminds me of Nazi Germany's Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, when he said, "When I hear the word culture I reach for my gun." Liberal thinking is tolerated so long as it does not undermine the status quo of the materialist agenda and its bottomline myths.

Indeed, our real goals are inner goals. All that happens on the outside, so-called, "real world," affects and is affected by what happens on the inside real world. It is the inner self that makes choices. It is the inner self that reacts and directs the body's actions in the outer world. It is the inner self that interprets action, feeling, morality, and truth, and that lives, interprets, and acts out its own beliefs. It is that inner self that alters beliefs, learns, and is educated. It is the inner self that determines the state of its beingness, be it happy, sad, or indifferent. No one can deny that this inner unmeasurable self exists, although no scientific instrument to date can detect it. We know it is real because it is us, and we are here!
It is this inner self (spirit perhaps) that needs to evolve toward "self realization" and recognize that it can disengage from the myths and traumas that bind it into psychic entrapments devised by social and parental conditioning.

Running through the work of R. D. Lang, Carl Jung, Maslow, and others, the mature self is inner directed rather than conditioned into someone else's (parents', peers', society's) definition of reality (Harper, interview 1995).

But what is it that we truly are? What is this inner self?

With the help of quantum physics in the chapters ahead I present a fundamental argument of this thesis; that the inner self is not dependent on the body for its existence, and that consciousness may be a fundamental aspect of matter, not in the sense that consciousness has evolved out of the human brain, but that perhaps consciousness may actually create and sustain matter. Matter is as the Hindus tell us, *Maya*, an illusion constructed by ego consciousness. This may explain why matter can be manipulated by the will of those who are trained to do so. Further, that outside of the material realm, time does not exist because time is only necessary to align the slow movement of gross physical matter in space. Matter is an aspect of Einstein's space-time continuum. Time, space, and matter are interwoven necessary aspects of each other.

In a dimension where matter does not exist, time does not exist. It is, I believe, for this reason that some individuals can predict future events. Their
consciousness disregards the material and wanders through time (or
timelessness) at will.

There is also other evidence available to argue fairly conclusively, that
the inner self, or soul, or spirit, or whatever one chooses to call it, is not
dependent on the body for its survival, and that it survives the death of the
body. This evidence comes as “personal testimony” of phenomenological
experiences of those realms where science now admits its limitations in its
potential to investigate. For this reason it is clearly time that researchers adopt
a more anthropological stance when it comes to collecting and evaluating this
kind of data. Real life testimony of spiritual/mystical accounts has become so
overwhelming, that it now demands serious attention from the scientific
community. Yet when significant percentages of persons recently surveyed
(Rossener, 1989) claim to have had at least one experience of contact with a
“spirit” the statistic is ignored.

The survey was conducted under the supervision of Richard Kalish and
David K. Reynolds of the School of Public Health, UCLA, and the
Scientific Analysis Corporation, San Francisco.

The present study queried 434 respondents in greater Los Angeles,
divided approximately equally among black, Japanese, Mexican and
European origins, whether they had experienced such an encounter.
Approximately 44 per cent responded positively, with over 25 per cent of
these persons indicating that the dead person actually visited or was
seen at a seance, while over 60 per cent of the incidents involved a
dream. A sufficiently large proportion of all population categories have
experienced the presence of a dead person to make this phenomenon
worthy of further investigation as being subjectively important.

*Personal encounters with individuals who are known to be dead are
rarely mentioned in behavioral or medical scientific literature, and when
they are mentioned they are treated in terms of the pathology of the
individual describing the encounter. Yet, in a very real sense, these experiences have philosophical and psychological meaning both to the person having the experience and to others in his social milieu. Except for anthropologists studying primal preliterate communities and for a handful of others, serious research into such meaning has been virtually unreported in the literature (outside of those journals devoted to psychic phenomena)."[Rossner, 1989. p.6-7]

Many scholars reluctantly shy away from researching such matters because science does not allow testimony as evidence and because of religious and social taboos. There appears to be a grand fissure in Western thinking here. Western science opposes Western courts as to what constitutes empirical evidence beyond any reasonable doubt.

As an educator interested in epistemology, I am deeply concerned with all aspects of knowledge: how it is obtained; why it is necessary; how it is used and why. What are its sources, and the meanings, emotions, and actions it invokes?

If there is knowledge available, other than from the traditional sources found in public education, then it would seem to me that our public education system is biased and limited. If there is a possibility that there are sources of knowledge not seemingly of this world, and methods of accessing those sources, should not at least some educators research the potential of those sources? If it is true that "psychic" abilities are really natural to humanity, but that we have, by "daily parrying," caused them to atrophy to the point of near nonexistence, then perhaps we should be examining why and how we have lost
these abilities. If indeed these abilities can be learned, then it would seem incumbent upon us to teach our children to exercise their true potential.

The potential cure for cancer may not only be hidden in some obscure, yet-to-be-named plant in the Amazon rainforest, but it might also be found hidden within our psychic abilities—as may be the causes. There are many medical doctors, even in the West, who suspect many cancers are caused by or related to stress. If that is true, then the mind too, may be able to cure the body. What do we as educators know of these qualities of the mind, or are these qualities not the jurisdiction of public educators?

I have no doubt that we are spirit and that we can transcend our normal “consciousness.” We must begin to make room for expression of those latent natural abilities that most people ascribe to the occult; abilities we hide from, and in so doing, we hide from ourselves. In public education we keep our spiritual heads in the sand denying, and denying lest we upset the fundamentalists, or those who see the writing on the wall when they hear the word “culture” and the potential effects on the world order they think they have a grasp in understanding. I contend that a mind unaware of its psychic/spiritual potential is dangerous to itself and others, in that a spiritual balance in life is necessary for a truly healthy perspective of life’s meanings. By accessing the inner self through contact with “spirits,” out-of-body episodes, past-life regression, etc., and by experiencing shifts in personal consciousness, young people will be aided in clarifying the truth of existence of other realms. When people become clear and knowledgeable from such experience they tend
to adopt a worldview more in keeping with the great spiritual masters, and at the same time, they become less devoted to the materialist agenda. They examine the difference between their needs and their market-induced wants, lessening the likelihood of the need for power, wealth, and ego aggrandizement. Thus, self-abuse through drugs or the need to commit crimes also tends to make less sense to their worldview.

The health of the mind and the “spirit” is well within the jurisdiction of public education and should be every bit as important as the dissemination of facts, concepts, and ideas related to traditional subjects. What the mind learns is of little use if the mind is hurting or deluded regardless of the reason. Mental and spiritual health should be a priority in public education. Therefore, the nature of the mind and spirit, what they are, how they work, and what they really need, as opposed to what they are conditioned to want, is of paramount importance in public education.

The arts address all of the above, both directly and indirectly, usually without people being cognizant that they are engaged in the education of the body, mind, and spirit. Many contemporary artists today know that the real value of art and the arts is in its spiritual content, in its ability to bind its maker to those realms of existence that literally course through life rather than at the surface where only the eyes can see. The arts help us to see with intuitive eyes those inner realities that sustain the outer world of appearances.

To this I would like to add that I have little problem in saying that science, math, and chemistry usually do not have the same therapeutic value
as subjects in the arts, especially in situations where the students are blessed with learning disadvantages and simply cannot grasp the concepts. The arts offer everyone a place for exploration, growth, and success.
Chapter Two Summary

The distinction is made between looking and seeing. Looking is done with the eyes and sees only the surface--of objects and the environment. Seeing is a communion with objects and the environment, and is practiced by shamans and some artists.

Chi--the life force within each living creature, and perhaps in nonliving objects as well, is described by Mark Levy. It can be passed from artists to their works to imbue the works with a force of their own. This could be the "immortal presence" in consummate art works that Joseph Campbell speaks of. The traditionally trained Western mind would scoff at what it cannot "see."

The kahunas speak of Aka threads that persons can silently communicate along and ultimately connect to each other and to the fabric of the universe. This concept is likened to both Chi and Superstring theory--an infinite web of strings of quantum energy that make up the fabric of the Universe.

Serge King--a kahuna shaman discusses "grokking" or shapeshifting as the consciousness of the shaman becoming one with a tree or a rock or a wave in almost complete communion with the object so that it is experienced as the self.

The poet Rilke describes an experience of seeing into a dog that is remarkably like the shapeshifting of shamans. (I believe it is unlikely that Rilke was aware of such shamanic practices.)

Willem de Kooning speaks of an altered state of consciousness he experiences as the "slipping glimpse."

Dissolving the ego and its armour of logic and control is a necessary step toward intuition and seeing in the manner of shamans.

When asked if he ever visits the synagogue Marc Chagall replies that his "Art is Prayer."

"For the primal person truth does not lie in the insignificant appearances of the everyday world but in the great cosmic forces that course through the world--in all that gives meaning to appearances rather than receiving it from them. [Dufrenne cited in Highwater, 1981. P.65]

Levy likens the habits, techniques, and practices, i.e. food and sleep deprivation, alcohol, sex, etc., for the purpose of experiencing altered states of consciousness, to the practices of shamans and some artists.
The senses by which we were able to grasp the spiritual have by daily parrying been atrophied and crowded out of modern life. (Rilke, cited in Levy.)

Like the shamans who experience the spirit realm directly, Rilke disdains secondary sources of the spirit realm preferring direct personal contact.

The inner self is not dependent on the body for its existence, implying that somehow it may be that consciousness creates matter and therefore matter can be manipulated by consciousness.

A significant percentage of Americans polled say they have made contact with a spirit.

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2 Rilke, Ranier Maria. (1987:77-78)
5 Dufrenne, Mikel. ibid.
10 Rilke, Ranier Maria. (1977:16-17).
11 ibid. (1922:164).
CHAPTER THREE
THE HOLOGRAPHIC PARADIGM

Ken Wilber has produced an anthology that explores many recent ideas in science that seem to point in the direction of mysticism and religion. The Holographic Paradigm is a collection of essays taken from an ongoing three year dialogue/debate that took place in the pages of the "ReVision Journal." The central thesis of most of the contributors revolves around a theory put forth by Stanford neurosurgeon Karl Pribram and British physicist David Bohm.

The theory, in a nutshell: Our brains mathematically construct "concrete" reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension, a realm of meaningful, patterned primary reality that transcends time and space. The brain is a hologram, interpreting a holographic universe (Wilber, 1985: Holographic. p.5).¹

I am at a loss to speak about how Bohm speculates that this other domain is patterned, but I am drawn to the idea that, "Our brains mathematically construct concrete reality by interpreting frequencies from another dimension". Bohm uses the holographic model to argue that the brain may operate like a hologram, in that the whole may be contained in each of its parts, and that the brain could conceivably experience the entire Universe at once because it too may operate like a hologram. This would make Satori possible.

What then, exactly is a hologram?
Holography is a method of lensless photography in which the wave field of light scattered by an object is recorded on a plate as an interference pattern. When the photographic record—the hologram—is placed in a coherent light beam like a laser the original wave pattern is regenerated. A three-dimensional image appears.

Because there is no focusing lens, the plate appears as a meaningless pattern of swirls. Any piece of the hologram will reconstruct the entire image (Wilber 1985: Holographic. P.6).

For example, if you make a holographic image of a horse, and then try to cut out the section of the plate containing the head you would be unsuccessful because all the information about the whole horse is contained on every part of the plate. In other words, when you try to cut away the head section you will still have an image of the entire horse. Holography became a model of the idea that the whole is really the sum of its parts, and that the parts contain within them all the information of the whole. Transposed to quantum theory or human consciousness the holographic process helps us to postulate new possibilities in the way we think about these areas of investigation. Here could be a link between science and the mystical experience of one-ness with all being that many of the world’s great mystics and sages have tried to recount throughout the ages. David Bohm and Karl Pribram see the connection:

...if the brain did function like a hologram, then it might have access to a larger whole, a field domain or “holistic frequency realm” that transcended spatial and temporal boundaries. And this domain, reasoned Pribram, might very likely be the same domain of transcendent unity-in-diversity described (and experienced) by the world’s great mystics and sages.”
It was approximately at this time that Pribram became aware of the works of English physicist David Bohm. As we will see, Bohm’s work in subatomic physics and the “quantum potential” had led him to the conclusion that physical entities which seemed to be separate and discrete in space and time were actually linked or unified in an implicit or underlying fashion. In Bohm’s terminology, under the explicate realm of separate things and events is an implicate realm of undivided wholeness, and this implicate whole is simultaneously available to each explicate part. In other words, the physical universe itself seemed to be a gigantic hologram, with each part being in the whole and the whole being in each part.

It was at this point that the “holographic paradigm” was born: the brain is a hologram perceiving and participating in a holographic universe. In the explicate or manifest realm of space and time, things and events are indeed separate and discrete. But beneath the surface, as it were, in the implicate or frequency realm, all things and events are spacelessly, timelessly, intrinsically, one and undivided. And, Bohm and Pribram reasoned, the quintessential religious experience, the experience of mystical oneness and “supreme identity,” might very well be a genuine and legitimate experience of this implicate and universal ground.

In some ways, this paradigm seemed to mark the culmination of a discernible historical trend: ever since the “quantum revolution” of fifty years ago, various physicists have been finding intriguing parallels between their results and certain mystical-transcendental religions. Heisenberg, Bohr, Schroedinger, Eddington, Jeans, and even Einstein himself all held a mystical-spiritual view of the world (Wilber, 1982: intro. 1985. Holographic. P.2-3).

Because the universe is in a state of constant flux, Bohm extends his theory of the universe being essentially holographic, a condition that would be as static and stopped in time as a photograph, to something that he describes more as Holomovement that allows for continuous motion.

Bohm discusses the potential energy of a cubic centimeter of empty space that could theoretically contain an infinite number of quantum waves. If one keeps in mind Einstein’s theory E=Mc2, (energy = mass times the speed of
light squared, where so much energy has so much mass potential and vice versa, so much mass has so much energy potential) then an infinite number of quantum waves could ultimately have an energy potential greater than that of the total mass of the universe. Bohm explains:

BOHM: Well, perhaps we should finish the business of the holomovement. If you follow the mathematics of present Quantum Theory, it treats the particle as what is called the quantized state of the field, that is, as a field spread over space but in some mysterious way with a quantum of energy. Now each wave in the field has a certain quantum of energy proportional to its frequency. And if you take the electromagnetic field, for example, in empty space, every wave has what is called a zero point energy below which it cannot go, even when there is no energy available. If you were to add up all the waves in any region of empty space you would find that they have an infinite amount of energy because an infinite number of waves are possible. Now, however, you may have reason to suppose that the energy may not be infinite, that maybe you cannot keep adding waves that are shorter and shorter, each contributing to the energy. There may be some shortest possible wave, and then the total number of waves would be finite and the energy would also be finite. Now, you have to ask what would be the shortest length and there seems to be reason to suspect that the gravitational theory may provide us with some shortest length, for according to general relativity, the gravitational field also determines what is meant by “length” and metric. If you said the gravitational field was made up of waves which were quantized in this way, you would find that there was a certain length below which the gravitational field would become undefinable because of this zero point movement and you wouldn’t be able to define length. Therefore, you could say the property of measurement, length, fades out at a very short distance and you’d find the place at which it fades out would be about $10^{-33}$ cm. That is a very short distance because the shortest distances that physicists have ever probed so far might be $10^{-16}$ cm. or so, and that’s a long way to go. If you then compute the amount of energy that would be in space, with that shortest possible wave length, then it turns out that the energy in one cubic centimeter would be immensely beyond the total energy of all the known matter in the universe.

WEBER: In one cubic centimeter of space?

BOHM: Yes. And therefore, how is one to understand that?
BOHM: You understand that by saying: the present theory says that the vacuum contains all this energy which is then ignored because it cannot be measured by an instrument. The philosophy being that only what could be measured by an instrument could be considered to be real, because the only point about the reality of physics is the result of instruments, except that it is also said that there are particles there that cannot be seen in instruments at all. What you can say is that the present state of theoretical physics implies that empty space has all this energy and matter is a slight increase of the energy, and therefore matter is like a small ripple on this tremendous ocean of energy, having some relative stability, and being manifest. Now, therefore, my suggestion is that this implicate order implies a reality immensely beyond what we call matter. Matter itself is merely a ripple in this background (Wilber, 1985: Holographic. P55-56).ii

The suggestion is that quantum physics takes us into a territory that is probably unexplorable via traditional scientific methodology. And further, that there is a strong implication by quantum theory that that territory is a nonmanifest ground of being that lies in the realm of energy itself. Bohm further speculates that there may also yet be other realms upon which energy too may be enfolded and so on. The idea that "Matter itself is merely a ripple in this background" challenges many aspects of our traditional modes of thinking about what is real. Bohm states that the implicate order could very likely be the truer reality, and that the material realm, what he calls the explicate order, is illusory by comparison. The Eastern mystics are clear and unanimous in their consensus that the material universe is "illusory" (Maya) when compared to the reality experienced in Satori, or cosmic consciousness.

That we cannot see quantum particles does not alter the fact that the material reality we do comprehend and perceive is nonetheless, in a sense the more real reality. The material realm is made of atoms and/or quanta but what
we experience is tables and chairs. Of course, both realities are true but it is also true that at quantum levels the reality expressed in the mathematics of quantum theory suggests the material universe is vastly different from what we experience in our sensory perception.

We interpret reality via our senses and it is our senses therefore that construct the illusion of table and chair and not quantum energy interference patterns. We have become so accustomed to our senses' interpretation of reality that we, in spite of our technological tools made for detection of such things as cells, molecules, and gamma rays, find it nearly impossible to accept what we cannot see. In quantum theory the truth may well be that the material universe is not really material at all but an illusion constructed out of consciousness.

Bohm: In present day quantum mechanics, in the ways we've already touched on and going a little further, we can say that quantum physicists, on the one hand, claim that there is reality, that particles are really real, and they have an intense conviction about this reality, which is behind their motive for doing their work. On the other hand they say that these particles have absolutely no reality whatsoever, that the only reality is our instruments, and that there is no way to describe this reality. They may have some faith that somehow there is reality there but it is confusing to say that (Wilber, 1985. Holographic p.61)

And the holomovement according to Karl Pribram is perceived, experienced, and created by the brain which he says also operates like a hologram.
Pribram, a renowned brain researcher, has accumulated evidence for a decade that the brain's "deep structure" is essentially holographic—alogous to the lensless photographic process for which Dennis Gabor received a Nobel Prize.

Pribram's theory has gained increasing support and has not been seriously challenged. An impressive body of research in many laboratories has demonstrated that the brain structures see, hear, taste, smell and touch by sophisticated mathematical analysis of temporal and/or spatial frequencies. An eerie property of both hologram and brain is the distribution of information throughout the system, each fragment encoded to produce the information of the whole (Wilber, 1985. *Holographic*. p.7).

John Shimotsu sums up Pribram's work:

Perhaps, like the hologram, our brain deals in decoding, storing and showing images. To see, hear, or use other senses, our brains, like the hologram, perform complex mathematical computations on the frequencies of information. And maybe as the light waves travel through the hologram, nerve impulses travel through a network of fine fibers in the brain.

Then Dr. Pribram stated that maybe the world is a hologram. If this is true, there is no such thing as solidity, and it is merely an illusion. That means that we see things as a child sees an animated cartoon, with illusions.

For a long time, man has been looking at things through lenses that change things so that we can see them. We wish to see a sample so that we can understand what it is. But in doing so, we are not viewing what is actually there. The brain may very well be our lens, and we may be viewing a reality that has been limited so that we can understand it.

Dr. Pribram also suggested that if we saw reality without our mathematical computations performed by the brain, we would know a world in the frequency domain, without time or space, just events. He says that our brains' computations construct physical reality by explaining frequencies from a dimension beyond time and space. The brain is a hologram explaining a holographic universe.

Because our brains are part of the big hologram, they have access, under certain conditions, to all the information in the principles of control. If
there is no time or space, there is no here or there; psychic occurrences and the supernatural can occur in nature.

Dr. Pribram explains paranormal actions in this way: things are really not solid, so when we think in a certain manner (as some Hindus and others do) we have the power to change what we think is real. People like Uri Geller have a reality that is different from ours because in his reality the things we think are impossible are possible (Wilber, 1985: *Holographic* p.126-127).

David Bohm and Karl Pribram speculate that perhaps the universe is interpreted through the lens of our brain into “concrete reality” and that if we could somehow bypass our brain’s normal function—Huxley’s reducing valve—“we would know a word in a frequency domain, without time or space.” An “implicate order” that could be the Aborigines’ *dreamtime* or the Zen Buddhist’s *Satori*. This theory of a holographic brain interpreting a holographic universe supports the mystics claim of other realms beyond time and space; realms that are comprehensible to human consciousness.
Chapter Three Summary

The holographic theories of Physicist David Bohm and neurosurgeon Karl Pribram suggest that the brain is a hologram interpreting a holographic universe. The brain constructs concrete reality.

In holographic photography any separate part of the picture can reproduce the whole picture.

Bohm and Pribram speculate that if the brain did function like a hologram then it might have access to a larger whole. A field domain or frequency realm that transcends spatial or temporal boundaries. Because a holograph is as static as a photograph, Bohm extends his theory to holomovement, which allows for change.

Bohm and Pribram reasoned the quintessential religious experience of "oneness" and supreme identity might very well be a genuine and legitimate experience of this implicate ground (Wilber 1982: intro. Holographic P. 2-3).

Because of the masslessness of quantum waves that maintain an energy potential Bohm postulates that theoretically one cubic centimeter of empty space could therefore contain more energy than all the known mass in the universe. This implies the possibility of an "implicate order" of reality immensely more powerful that is beyond what we call matter. Matter itself is merely a ripple in this background.

I postulate that Bohm’s implicate order may be the Aborigines’ *dreamtime* or the Hindus’ *Satori*.

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1 "A New Perspective on Reality." *The Special Updated Issue of The Brain/Mind Bulletin.*
The holographic model, of David Bohm and Karl Pribram, has been adopted by Stanislav Grof, the man often credited to be the father of Transpersonal Psychology. In recent publications Grof discusses experiments and findings of over thirty years of research in therapeutic hypnotic regressions, many of which were often coupled with the ingestion of such psychedelic drugs as LSD-25.

The similarities of subject responses during regression, to archetypal myths, experiences of cosmic consciousness, evidence of reincarnation, and other phenomenon, such as the experiences recounted by shamans as shapeshifting or grokking, have lead Grof to some astounding conclusions:

...starting with my appointment to a position at the Psychiatric Research Institute in Prague, I was able to study the effects of LSD on patients with various emotional disorders, as well as on mental health professionals, artists, scientists, and philosophers who had demonstrated serious motivations for such an experience. The research lead to a deeper understanding of the human psyche, the enhancement of creativity, and the facilitation of problem solving.

During the early period of my research, I found my worldview undermined by daily exposure to experiences that could not be explained in terms of my old belief system. Under the unrelenting influx of incontrovertible evidence, my understanding of the world was gradually shifting from a basically atheistic position to a mystical one. What was first foreshadowed in my experience of cosmic consciousness had come to full fruition through careful daily examination of the research data.

In sessions of LSD-assisted psychotherapy, we witnessed a rather peculiar pattern. With low to medium dosages, subjects usually limited their experiences to reliving scenes from infancy and childhood. However, when the dosages were increased or the sessions were repeated, each client sooner of later moved far beyond the realms
described by Freud. Many of the experiences reported were remarkably like those described in ancient spiritual texts from Eastern traditions. I found this particularly interesting because most people reporting these experiences had no previous knowledge of the Eastern spiritual philosophies, and I certainly had not anticipated that such extraordinary experiential domains would become accessible in this way.

My clients experienced psychological death and rebirth, feelings of oneness with all humanity, nature, and the cosmos. They reported visions of deities and demons from cultures different from their own, or visits to mythological realms. Some reported "past life" experiences whose historical accuracy could later be confirmed. During their deepest sessions they were experiencing people, places, and things that they had never before touched with their physical senses. That is, they had not read, seen pictures of, or heard anyone talk of such things—yet they now experienced them as if they were happening in the present (Grof, 1993, p.16-17).

Over three decades of systematic studies of the human consciousness have led me to conclusions that many traditional psychiatrists and psychologists might find implausible if not downright incredible. I now firmly believe that consciousness is more than an accidental by-product of the neurophysiological and biochemical processes taking place in the human brain. I see consciousness and the human psyche as expressions and reflections of a cosmic intelligence that permeates the entire universe and all existence. We are not just highly evolved animals with biological computers embedded inside our skulls; we are also fields of consciousness without limits, transcending time, space, matter, and linear causality.

As a result of observing literally thousands of people experiencing non-ordinary states of consciousness, I am now convinced that our individual consciousness connect us directly not only with our immediate environment and with various periods of our own past, but also with events that are far beyond the reach of our physical senses, extending into other historical times, into nature, and into the cosmos. I can no longer deny the evidence that we have the capacity to relive the emotions and physical sensations we had during our passage through the birth canal and that we can re-experience episodes that took place when we were fetuses in our mothers' wombs. In non-ordinary states of consciousness, our psyches can reproduce these situations in vivid detail.

On occasion, we can reach far back in time and witness sequences from the lives of our human and animal ancestors, as well as events that involved people from other historical periods and cultures with whom we have no genetic connection whatsoever. Through our consciousness, we
can transcend time and space, cross boundaries separating us from various animal species, experience processes in the botanical kingdom and in the inorganic world, and even explore mythological and other realities that we previously did not know existed. We might discover that experiences of this kind will profoundly influence our life philosophy and worldview. We will very likely find it increasingly difficult to share the belief system dominating the industrial cultures and the philosophical assumptions of traditional Western science.

Having started this research as a convinced materialist and atheist, I had to open myself to the fact that the spiritual dimension is a key factor in the human psyche and in the universal scheme of things. I feel strongly that becoming aware of this dimension of our lives and cultivating it is an essential and desirable part of our existence; it might even be a critical factor for our survival on this planet (Grof, 1993. P.17-18).

We are on the threshold of a new paradigm of existence. In fact, we are in transition now. Worldwide, science is being reallocated to its proper place with scientists' admissions that traditional science can only give us a picture of physical reality. It cannot replace life experience, the only true reality. Parapsychology, transpersonal psychology, cultural anthropology, as well as the science of Yoga, offer opportunities for examining real life experiences that delve into the questions proposed in this thesis.

The perennial questions of the greatest minds in history remain the most important questions of the present and we are on the threshold of discovering the answers to exactly what it is that we are, which is so much more than the neurocircuitry of our brains. I am sure--as a result--we will be in a better position to question our purpose for being. When more people begin to look seriously at the research already done in the above mentioned fields of investigation the tide of disbelief will begin to change more rapidly. More and more, we will come to accept, through personal investigation and experience,
that what we are is not confined to the body, and that what we can perceive and do is infinitely more vast than what most of us presently perceive as our limits. As individuals begin to engage in their own investigations, what was thought of as phenomenal, will become commonplace, and the other perennial questions related to our purpose will surface as paramount.

Closed minds on psi phenomena may result today from two mutually opposed positions: either religious “Fundamentalism” or rigorous, reductionist varieties of secular, rationalistic and materialistic “Scientism.” Both have been equally inhospitable to the idea of an “open-ended universe” and to the cultivation of the God-given subtle faculties of perception of the human spirit (Rossner, 1985. p. xli intro.).

If we do have these “God-given subtle faculties of perception of human spirit” and the potential to perceive ourselves “as spirit” by direct experience in personal explorations in consciousness, meditation, hypnosis, (dare I say) drugs, or whatever methods we can utilize, then who should direct the teaching? If these so called phenomena are really “natural abilities”, that as Rilke stated, “have by daily parrying been so crowded out of life that the senses with which we could have grasped them are atrophied”, then perhaps it is time to reconsider the underlying goals that will be the thrust of a public education system designed for the liberation of the human spirit in the 21st Century. Perhaps it is time that the monopoly of educating the inner being be shifted from the authority of religious organizations to the place where it begins--in the self. Perhaps it is also time that public educators begin serious investigation into the truths being discovered in the other fields of inquiry that suggest that
along with orthodox religion, the traditional education system has been one of the greatest detriments to "true" self discovery in the West.

This shift will likely be most difficult for those people whose personal investment of time, money, energy, and effort have been focused unquestionably to the traditions and philosophies of the Western way. It is for this reason that the greatest tide of opposition to this kind of investigation will come from those most entrenched in the old institutions of thinking.

Max Planck's comment in his scientific autobiography 1968;...a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it (Grof, 1985. p. 13).

If the kahunas can move their consciousness into other objects and experience the reality of those objects as "their" reality; if reincarnation experiments continue to reveal what I consider indisputable evidence that consciousness can access information not experienced in this life, relive "scenes" from past lives, and/or escape the body, then it may well be that people who claim to have out-of-body experiences are telling the truth. If that is so, then we can experience "reality" in other ways and dimensions while not really letting go of the body. Near-death experiences do suggest this possibility.

There is now an enormous body of compelling research in all the previously mentioned fields. As a result, the dogma of scientism no longer has any right in opposing the validity of these investigations as science now recognises its own enormous limitations in regard to spiritual matters. Mystical
knowledge must be "experienced" firsthand to know the truth. This is why the final frontier is not outer space but inner space. It is really research in personal consciousness and it must be pursued by individuals if results are to be attained. All that is, out there--stars, animals, galaxies, atoms, people, ideas, and emotions; all that is can be experienced in part as shapeshifting or out-of-body experiences, or fully where the universe is comprehended as the self through Satori. These experiences are not hallucinations, and in this regard the shamans of indigenous cultures and the gurus of the East are doing a much better job of real education than we are in the public schools of the West. The education system distracts and perpetuates the nontruth (to some extent by omission) about what we are, and more or less denies us access to that truth in its will to maintain the status quo. Alan Watts's book needs no other explanation than its title *The Book on the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are.*

Ignorance of present research is often preferred to the effort it would take to investigate the data that might necessitate a restructuring of personal and social beliefs that cohere with spiritual realities: realities that are the real truth. All human beings are eternal spirit. I believe that the evidence is available and undeniable to those who seek the truth in their own investigations, especially through the science of Yoga. It is unfortunate that in the West we have come to rely almost exclusively on mathematics or written words formed into logical arguments, or data collected by scientific apparatus, as constituting the only viable believable data.

Direct comprehension of all of the universe defies all logic. Still, mystics throughout the ages claim its authenticity.
When Christ was asked where the Kingdom of heaven was to be found, he replied "within." Where else could one begin to do what he asked us to do when he suggested we "redeem" ourselves and [translated from the Greek word "metanoia"] change our consciousness. Christ, it seems, was aware that humanity had become lost in its own band of consciousness and that only by turning inward to the investigation of personal consciousness could individuals wake up to see the light of truth of the worlds that are within. He knew what the Eastern mystics know, that the world is *Maya* [an illusion of consciousness].

Ken Wilber likens consciousness to the light spectrum in an interesting model that is the basis of his book *Spectrum Of Consciousness*.

Wilber suggests that consciousness can be experienced on an individual level, i.e. dreams versus waking consciousness, and at the same time, part of a larger shared domain, as in a school of thought, i.e. Christianity versus Hinduism.

The thesis of this volume is, bluntly, that consciousness is pluridimensional, or apparently composed of many levels; that each major school of psychology, psychotherapy, and religion is addressing a different level; that these different schools are therefore not contradictory but complimentary, each approach being more-or-less correct and valid when addressing its own level (Wilber, 1977. p. 11).

Wilber likens schools of thought and planes or levels of consciousness to bands of light in the light spectrum. When white light is refracted by a prism it breaks into its bands of colour. Each colour, though seemingly defined as different from the other bands of colour, is nonetheless still light. By focusing
our attention from one band to the next we experience individual colours. He suggests that consciousness could be likened to the radio spectrum in a similar fashion so that one might think of it as bands of radio frequencies. When we change our consciousness we change channels by (metaphorically) tuning-in to a different wave frequency. We change the “channels” of our consciousness. There is little doubt that we are subject to numerous invisible energy frequencies and that we also emit energy frequencies, i.e. the Kerillion energy aura that has been photographed as the energy discharge given off by living organisms. Could it be that the brain is indeed the lens or filter of universal frequencies of consciousness that could explain Huxley’s Mind at Large concept? Is the brain a reducing valve? Could we change our consciousness to other channels or dimensions and experience a reality called Satori which perhaps may be the Kingdom of Heaven that Christ said is within. Thousands of years of testimony from the past into the present, as well as considerable research into “other realms” based on testimony, should no longer be brushed aside. In education we must stay current with the latest research and adjust the curriculum accordingly.
Chapter Five

Parapsychology; The Science Beyond Physics;

The Truth Beyond Measure

Parapsychology essentially deals with two facets of three different kinds of phenomena. The three types of phenomena most studied are:

1. Clairvoyance; the ability to see and sometimes predict future events.
2. Telepathy; what is thought of as thought transference which results in a communication between two individuals (can also include human to animal or human to plant) without verbal, physical, written, or technical assistance. A communication takes place by some as yet unknown mental process.
3. Telekinesis; the ability to physically affect inanimate objects by apparent nonphysical (mental) means.

The two facets are:

1. Investigations of personal “empirical” accounts of phenomena that are related as testimony.
2. Actual experiments that are carefully devised to promote and document psychic abilities and phenomenological occurrences.

The most common problems in parapsychology are related to the perceived low incidence of phenomenological occurrences. Generally they are “noticed” only a few times in the average person’s lifetime. Such occurrences do indeed occur more often than most of us “believe,” but they are quickly ignored and/or are labeled as coincidence because of the taboos of taking such events seriously.
The psychiatrist, Jule Eisenbud, noted however, that many scientists show an unusual degree of irrational skepticism and hostility toward parapsychology in particular. He believed this to be an indication that they are emotionally threatened by this field and has coined the technical term, psi resistance, to refer to this interesting phenomenon in its own right (Eisenberg, 1977. p. 23).

Significant numbers of people I have talked to in regard to this subject have a private "story" related to phenomena that does not fit into the scheme of what we think of as normal cause-and-effect reality. Few people are willing to relate these personal experiences except on occasion to close friends in confidence or to someone like myself who is willing to listen without passing judgment upon their credibility.

...C.E. Tsiolkovsky (1857-1935), a Russian inventor and pioneer of space flight:

One cannot doubt the phenomena of telepathy. Not only is there a large accumulation of documents concerning these facts, but there does not exist a family whose members would refuse to testify to telepathic facts experienced by themselves. The attempt to explain these problems scientifically deserves our respect (Vasiliev, 1976. p. xiii intro.).

Unfortunately the issue of the possibility of coincidence generally overshadows even the most compelling statistical, seemingly empirical evidence. It therefore becomes difficult to devise experiments that are infallible vehicles of proof. When faced with no other explanation for seemingly valid experiments supporting phenomenological events, hardened skeptics invariably proclaim the experiment and everyone involved to be a hoax even though they themselves cannot validate a hoax. They often point to one or two famous cases of fraud in this field and, based upon these cases, they conclude all cases to be fraud.
Science has its own history of fraud. Fraud happens. And so parapsychology is the science that isn’t because, despite the best scientific efforts to eliminate variables and possible fraud, skeptics still proclaim trickery or coincidence. For these reasons the significant research in parapsychology is, for the most part, ignored.

Unless there is a gigantic conspiracy involving thirty university departments all over the world, and several hundred highly respected scientists in various fields, many of them originally hostile to the claims of psychical researchers, the only conclusion the unbiased observer can come to must be that there does exist a small number of people who obtain knowledge, existing either in other people’s minds or in the outer world, by means as yet unknown to science. (Hans J. Eysenck in Iverson, 1992. p. 35).

One of the issues most attacked by critics of testing techniques is the problem of replicability, yet ironically, this problem has in one respect been addressed in support of the issue by the critics themselves.

In the field of believers and disbelievers the nickname “sheep” for believers and “goats” for disbelievers has been adopted. It consistently appears that in simple card guessing experiments the sheep score consistently higher than the goats. Either the sheep’s positive stance somehow generates test scores that do indicate telepathic or precognitive ability, or the goats’ statistically lower scores also indicate that the sheep have the talent, or that the goats also have the talent, albeit in a negative form. If they can consistently skew the results lower than the expected mean then it would seem that they too are gifted. “The sheep/goat effect is only a single instance of parapsychology’s replicability record...” (Rogo, 1987. p. 19).
Serious investigation of telepathy was undertaken in Russia in the 1920's and 30's in an effort to determine a natural explanation. The issue of the reality of telepathy seemed to be secondary to finding the mechanisms by which it occurs. The Marxist mentality did not presuppose magic or spiritual sources and the official stance supported only those researchers concerned with discovering the electromagnetic or mental brain waves that might account for the phenomena. What came to be known as the Faraday Box was contrived to eliminate the possibility of radio waves from travelling from the sender of information to the receiver. It was found that under hypnosis particular individuals seemed more receptive to receiving telepathic information. The hypnotized subject would enter a specially designed boxed room, perhaps ten or twelve feet in width, height, and depth. The boxed room was covered with sheet metal (lead, etc.) so that radio waves could be counted out as a potential brain function. I should like to quote some of the documented experiments undertaken by Dr. L.L. Vasiliev and some of his colleagues that in part led up to the efforts to inhibit radio waves and therefore eliminate them as a variable.

In 1926, in one of the hospitals in Leningrad, these Joire experiments were repeated by a team composed of the medical hypnotist Dr. Finne, my colleague V.A. Podierny and myself. A chronic patient, Kuzmina, aged 29, was our experimental subject (Vasiliev, 1976. p. 49-50).

Kuzmina was undergoing treatment using hypnosis to alleviate a psychologically induced paralysis of her left arm. Because she was particularly susceptible to hypnotic states she was chosen as a test subject in the following telepathy experiments. She was always in a state of deep hypnotic sleep when
the experiments were conducted and unless she was given a direct command to
open her eyes they remained closed during all experiments. The experiments
generally involved various individual experimenters standing either in front of or
behind Kuzmina and mentally sending a command for her to do a simple body
movement, i.e. raise her right arm or put her hands behind her head.

Experiment 3. Same date as above. Task: Cross the arms over the
chest. Set by Vasiliev; the sender, Finne, in same position as in
experiment 2. Within 45 minute after the beginning of suggestion the
subject starts to make the movements with the right arm in the following
sequence: (a) she places her right arm on her chest in the direction
towards her left shoulder but then (b) she brings her hand to her mouth
and moves it as though wiping her lips with her fist; (c) she rubs her
forehead and nose with the back part of her hand; (d) puts her hand
under her head.

Dr. Finne asks the subject: "What do you want to do?" The subject
replies: "To make the sign of the cross on my face." Question by Dr.
Finne: "Why do you want to do that?" Reply: "Prof. Vasiliev made me
do it" (Vasiliev, 1976. p.52).

Experiment 5. 1. 9. 1926. Prof. Vasiliev, without prior notice to those
present, suddenly raises his right leg, mentally ordering the subject to do
likewise. The subject, almost instantly after the beginning of the
suggestion bends her right leg, then raises the lower part of her leg.
Question by Finne: "Who told you to do that?" Subject: "It was Prof.
Vasiliev's order" (ibid. p. 52-53).

Experiment 8. 15. 9. 1926. Task: "Place both hands under your head."
Her left (partially paralysed) hand twitches. She grasps her left hand
with her right (sound) one, places both hands behind her head with a
sigh of relief and remains in that position. Question by Finne: "What did
you do?" Reply: "I placed my hands behind my head. Prof. Vasiliev said
I should." Time taken: 4 minutes (ibid. p. 53).

Experiment 11. Same date. Vasiliev, without any preliminary
preparation and without notice to those present, stands behind the
subject's head at a distance of 2 m. He raises his right arm, mentally
instructing the subject to do likewise. After 2.5 minutes the subject
complies in the following sequence:...

Experiment 12. 6. 10. 1926. Task set by Prof. A.A. Kuliabko, invited to
watch the experiment: “Scratch your left cheek and the bridge of your
nose.” Sender: Prof. Kuliabko, sitting behind the subject's head. During
the experiment the sender raises his right arm and rubs his left cheek.
The subject bends her right leg. Raises her right arm to her left cheek
and lips. Scratches right cheek with the same hand. Question by Dr.
Finne: “What are you doing?” Subject’s answer: “The right side of my
face is itching.”--“Who spoke to you?”--“Not you.”--“Who was it then?”--
“Prof. Kulbashov.” (The subject had on that occasion met Prof. Kuliabko
for the first time; there were 12 people in all present in the experiment.)--
“What did he ask you to do?” --“He made the right side of my face itch
most horribly” (ibid. p. 54).

An analysis of the above records shows that out of 19 tasks in 15
experiments 10 were carried out quite correctly, 6 may be considered as
only partially correct and only 3 yielded either no results or a false
response. It is of interest that the subject not only carried out the
suggestion of those who usually experimented with her (Finne, Vasiliev)
but also those of casual visitors whom she had met for the first time
(Kuliabko, Schreiber, Reitz, Panov).

It is a pity that subjects as suitable as Kuzmina are rare (ibid. p. 55).

Similar experiments on other subjects produced similar results.

Thus, out of 13 tasks, 6 may be considered to have been carried out with
complete accuracy, 3 leave room for various doubts, and 4 were not
carried out at all (ibid. p. 60).

Commands to fall into a hypnotic sleep as well as to reawaken can be
given from a distance.

The first experiments of inducing sleep and waking up by means of
mental suggestion were carried out in La Havre by the celebrated
psychiatrist Prof. Pierre Janet and his colleague, Dr. M. Gilbert in 1886. At distances ranging from a quarter up to one mile it was found possible, by means of mental suggestion to induce in the percipient, Léonie B. (a healthy peasant woman 50 years of age) a condition of hypnotic sleep at any time selected at will by the experimenter who acted as sender. Out of 25 experiments 19 were wholly successful, the remainder being doubtful resulting only in drowsiness or had no effect. These findings were vouched for by an authoritative commission and were repeated in Paris by Charles Richet, with the same subject. The sender, (Richet), tried to put the subject to sleep by means of mental suggestion, while she was separated from him by a distance of 1 to 2 km. The experiment was successful in 16 cases out of 36: the subject fell asleep soon after the onset of suggestion. (for details see Appendix D). In more recent times Dr. S. Alrutz whom we have already mentioned, reported similar experiments, in his memorandum submitted to the First International Congress of Psychical Research. in 1921: “I can very easily, by means of telepathy, put my subjects into a hypnotic sleep, and find it particularly easy to wake them up again in the same way (ibid. p.108)

Vasiliev himself undertook to repeat similar experiments in 1933 using somewhat more sophisticated techniques for establishing the exact second the subject fell into or was awakened from hypnotic sleep

From 1933 to 1934, 260 experiments in mentally inducing sleep and awakening on the subjects Ivanova, Fedorova and E.S were carried out; of these 194 were accompanied by kymographic registration, of the rest notes only were made in the usual way. Out of a total number of experiments (260) the mental induction of sleep failed in 6 experiments, and mental awakening failed in 21. This amounts to 10.4 percent (ibid. p. 115).

The question of shared thought communication void of any other form of communication is strongly supported by this early Russian research. When considered in conjunction with shamanic, Hindu (i.e. Paramahansa Yoganada), aboriginal, and claims of "ordinary" people it would appear that telepathy should be taken more seriously than it is by most Westerners. Indeed, if
telepathy is a natural human ability then why are we not making the effort in public education to at the very least research the subject and at best to teach it so that it does not atrophy in our children?

Mind over matter, as a phenomenon, has recently become "in vogue" as people all over the Western world are learning to firewalk in the tradition of shamans. Some people do indeed get burned, nullifying the critics' claims of a physiological and scientific explanation for people not getting burned. From personal camping experience I know that if I place my feet too close to the fire they get burned. I once heard a physicist on television proclaim that a thin layer of sweat on the feet can shield skin from damage during the firewalk. But what about ankles and tops of feet touched by dislodged coals, etc.? Thousands of people worldwide now do this shamanic mind over matter (personal triumph) experiment each year and only a very small percentage get burned. A student in my grade twelve class, Jenna, took a week off school and travelled to San Diego with her mother to attend a week long study course in self-awareness and self-confidence. The program was offered by Dr. Wayne Dyer. Jenna and her mother walked over ten meters of red hot coals in their bare feet. Jenna did this in the springtime when her feet were not toughened by summer sandals and extended exposure to the hot summer ground. Her feet were therefore very soft and tender. Jenna did not get burned, nor did her mother. Of approximately 200 people involved only a very few were burned.

Mind over matter experiments of other kinds have also been tested by scientists in Russia. The famous subject Nelya Mikhailova has been tested and scrutinized by many of Russia's noted scientists.
...the list of scientists investigating Mikhailova read like a “Who’s Who” of Soviet science. Chairman of Theoretical Physics at the prestigious Moscow University and holder of the Laureate of the State Prize, Dr. Ya. Terletsky, publicly proclaimed on March 17, 1968, in Moscow Pravda, “Mrs. Mikhailova displays a new and unknown form of energy.”

Physicists from the Soviet Union’s Joint Nuclear Research Institute at Dubna had tested Mikhailova as had those from the Institute of Physics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The list included Nobel prize winners. The Mendeleyev Institute of Metrology also studied Nelya and stated in Moscow Pravda that she had moved aluminum pipes and matches under the strictest test conditions, including observation on closed-circuit television. They could give no explanation of the “phenomena of the movement of objects” (Ostrander, 1971. p.60).

There are indeed some people demonstrating abilities beyond what is considered to be the human norm; abilities that seem to defy the laws of cause and effect in the physical world. I contend that these abilities should be tested for and nurtured from childhood onward so that humanity may experience its full potential.
CHAPTER SIX
THE MESSAGE FROM THE EAST

A metaphor for the Eastern understanding might be that of a tree with each separate leaf becoming conscious of its own being. One leaf may be looking across the way to see other leaves when somehow it suddenly dawns on the leaf that those other leaves and itself are really a branch. Then, just as suddenly, its consciousness again expands to realise it is a tree. At this point of enlightenment it experiences the beingness of all the lives of all the leaves on the tree at once and it comes to comprehend the true nature of its being. It is not really a separate entity. It is really a single band of consciousness that can shift from the spectrum it normally receives and channels from to any other band of the spectrum it might learn to focus on. It could experience being the branch, or a leaf on the other side of the tree by accessing its greater self that is the tree.

That it is possible to make this kind of shift in consciousness, and experience firsthand more or even all of what we truly are, is the central message and goal of the Eastern mystics. The totality of all being can be experienced firsthand, as each leaf becomes aware of its truer, greater self.

According to Gopi Krishna, the spark of divine being, the real life force that sustains our being, is called Prana. It is through Prana that it becomes possible to experience the totality of divine being in the condition of cosmic consciousness known as Satori.
...there is another element in nature, imperceptible to our senses, which is at the bottom of all phenomena of life. We can call it by the name of life-energy. It is this force which is credited with magical or miraculous powers in all the occult systems of the past and is known by various names, such as astral light, odic force, psychic energy, orgone, supersolar force, chi, etc. In India it is known as prana, and has been universally held to be the lever behind mystical vision and paranormal gifts for the last more than three thousand years (Krishna, 1991. p.15-16).

Gopi Krishna argued before his death in 1984 that it is inevitable that science will sooner or later come to the realization that it will have to adopt the methods used by the yogis to experience firsthand the truth of the realities of which he speaks. He is aware of the advances in physics, but he too is aware that physicists would not understand the difference between mystical insight and symbolic mathematics unless they embark upon a path of research more akin to the yogic explorations of consciousness.

The Indian metaphysics is based on the experience of samadhi or mystical vision. In this state the subtle worlds of mind and prana become perceptible to the Yogi. In the time to come, science will have to adopt the same methods to reach these transcendent planes. There is no other way for man to find other areas of creation, not perceptible to our senses. It is only then that the true proportion of creation can be understood by the human mind. At present we deal only with the fraction perceptible to us (p.17).

In the impossible effort of trying to relate the full experience of Satori, it might be useful to use the analogy of our dream experiences. When we fall asleep and are dreaming, we often sense that what is happening is reality. We
react and act with the same emotions as we would in our awakened state. Often though, we can recognise that we are dreaming, and if necessary we can escape nightmares by simply forcing ourselves to wake up. In doing so we change our consciousness. In Satori, the fullness of the experience (which includes total knowledge) renders our present state of "wakefulness" to be just as much an illusion as our dreams now seem to us.

The experience reverses one's whole concept of creation. The sun, the stars, the earth and its oceans are not now perceived as material realities, but as images projected by an all-embracing Consciousness. In other words, the cognitive power of the brain is dramatically changed for the duration of the vision. A new channel of perception comes into operation. What was but a point of awareness before, inextricably linked to a body of flesh and bone, becomes an Ocean, enfolding the whole of the universe, while the body and the "ego" that made up the personality of the observer recede further and further away, leaving the way open for a Cosmic Intelligence to manifest itself.

It is important to remember that the experience is not of an impersonal kind. It is not as if we were witnessing an earthly scene. In the normal experience there always exists the duality of the "Knowier" and the "Known," of the subjective mind and the objective world. This distinction persists even in dreams. Except in deep states of absorption or intense embrace of love, this sense of duality is an inalienable part of human awareness. In the mystical ecstasy the very self is transfigured. It becomes the subject and the object both. The Titanic Presence that now dominates the scene is the whole universe and the soul of the individual at the same time. It is the sun and the atom both. This infinite Source of All dwells here in my heart with all the frailties or virtues I possess. This Cosmic Intelligence, this almighty Sovereign of all creation is, at the same time, the individual self of all the four billion earthly human beings, the actor in all the four billion dramas of life and billions upon billions of infinitely varied dramas on other planets in the universe, yet away and aloof from them all (ibid. p.26-27).
Gopi Krishna relates the experience of Satori to include the awareness of all other "dramas" in infinite existence. Satori can be compared to the leaf on the tree suddenly becoming aware that it is the tree, and the other leaves suddenly also become its awareness; the leaf accesses the being of any other leaf via the tree. In theory, it would likely be possible to experience the memory of the lives of all leaves ever to have experienced being the tree for they would be stored in the tree's memory. To recall other existences being experienced as one's self brings us to another notion central to much of Eastern ideology; the belief in reincarnation.

The concept of reincarnation is not as foreign to the West at present as it was even until this last decade. Hypno-regressions, though still not commonplace, are being experienced by more and more Westerners whose revived pioneering spirits have become less concerned with panning for gold and more concerned with the inner self as the final frontier; where inner peace related to a spiritual understanding, has become the ultimate prize.

The idea of reincarnation is prevalent in numerous indigenous cultures worldwide, nor was it a foreign idea in early Judaism or early Christianity. Early Christianity was, in fact, divided on the issue of reincarnation. Those Christians who called themselves "Gnostics" (coming from the root word "Gnosis" or "to know") favoured the idea, and it has not been until some rather recent archaeological discoveries of Gnostic texts that a revived interest in Gnostic teachings has come about. Unfortunately, it is nonetheless true that
most of the writings of the Gnostic Christians has, over time, been destroyed by their more orthodox brothers.

The New Testament was not recorded until long after Jesus died, and its books subsequently passed through the censoring hands of church councils. In the sixth and later centuries when the present bible was decided on, a number of differing gospels existed. Those deemed unacceptable were destroyed. By this time there was a strong antireincarnationist sentiment in the Church and it would be surprising if anything on reincarnation managed to survive (Head, 1977. p. 134).

Despite Christian Orthodoxy’s genocidal approach to heretical teachings that might undermine its interests, it nonetheless seems that the present New Testament contains passages that do support the idea of re-embodiment in individuals other than Christ.

In the ninth century B.C. the Hebrew prophet Elijah is supposed to have lived. Four centuries later, Malachi recorded this prophecy in the closing lines of the Old Testament: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” The first book of the New Testament, Matthew, refers to this prophecy on three occasions, and the remaining gospels speak of it seven times. In the verses that follow from the King James Bible, the Greek form of the prophet’s name is used. It will be noted from the remarks of the disciples of Jesus that there was much speculation among the Jews concerning not only the return of Elijah, but of other ancient Hebrew prophets (ibid. p. 135).

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some say Elijah; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Matthew 16:13-14

And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them saying. Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead. And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes
that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist [who had already been beheaded by Herod].

Matthew 17:9-13

Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John...this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist...And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 11:17, 10-11, 14-15

The foregoing statement from Matthew 16 is repeated almost verbatim in Mark 8:27 and Luke 9:18-19. The statement from Matthew 17 is also made in Mark 9:13, but the name of John is omitted (ibid. p.135-136).

Unlike most Christians whose faith is based entirely in scripture, many Hindus and Buddhists claim to have memory of past lives. Much of their faith comes out of personal experience, often with claims of proof that can be validated. Such claims might include the testimony of little children who speak of themselves as being someone else who lived a life in another village only fifty or a hundred miles away, perhaps only a few years before their present birth. In such cases, names, dates and circumstances of death have been found to be true and accurate. Yet the reluctance to attribute such testimony to reincarnation is based on the fact that it cannot be put under a microscope or mathematically deduced; neither of which could ever hope to “reproduce” the experiment because the experience is of real personal conscious life and not an equation.
Joseph Head and Silvia Cranston, in their research on reincarnation, cite impressive investigations:

The greatest contribution, perhaps, to reincarnation research has been done by Dr. Ian Stevenson, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia Medical School. He now apparently has over 1700 cases in his files of people, mostly children, from all parts of the world, who appear to have memories of past lives. He has found 90 percent of their memories to be accurate, and thus far four large volumes of his case histories have been published by the University of Virginia Press (ibid. Forward ix).

Reincarnation experiences strongly suggest that the spirit, or soul, or consciousness of the individual can recall past lives. Those who have had the experience are usually convinced that it is indeed themselves as the other individual in the past life they are regressed to. During regression many subjects experience their own death in their past life. In most cases, subjects describe how easy it is to die. They are somehow released from the body, rise above the scene to see the body they left behind and, without fear or pain, they often describe the experience as a relief. This final stage of past life regression is exactly the same as what people describe when they have had a near-death experience in this life. In the near-death cases, individuals, usually as the results of an accident or hospital operation that went wrong, experience “themselves” (spirit or soul, if you prefer) coming out of their body to find themselves floating in its vicinity.

Dr. Melvin Morse of Seattle has studied NDE’s (Near Death Experiences) in children and has a collection of wonderful colour drawings of the next
world, made by youngsters close to death. Dr. Morse is critical of scientific explanations that NDE's are either hallucinations in a dying brain or a reliving of the birth experience. He seemed to find support in the case of a woman, suffering a heart attack, who found herself floating around outside the hospital, where she noticed a tennis shoe on a distant window ledge. Her out-of-body experience might have been written off as an hallucination if a hospital social worker had not recovered the shoe from the ledge (Iverson, 1992. p. xi).

A middle-aged woman, apparently dead from a heart attack, found herself floating out-of-body near the ceiling of the ward and watched doctors and nurses working frantically to save her. She drifted out of a window and around the back of the hospital, where something odd caught her eye—a tennis shoe on a window ledge.

Almost as soon as she had revived, she told hospital staff—and the shoe was recovered! The patient was a stranger to the city, seriously ill in bed, wired up to various machines for the whole of her stay in hospital. She could hardly have put the shoe on the ledge herself even if she had wanted to (Iverson, 1992. p.67).

These two related phenomena of reincarnation and near-death experiences seem to support the claim of others who say they have OBE's (out-of-body experiences). Those who claim to have these experiences say that though it is rare, OBE's can occur anytime spontaneously, but that they can be consciously pursued and are more likely to be experienced in the altered states of consciousness we experience when we are falling asleep or waking up.

OBE's and near-death experiences have been researched and documented by a growing number of serious and dedicated investigators.

Today we know, from studies in near-death experience which have been pioneered by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Raymond Moody, Michael Sablon, Kenneth Ring and others, that these kinds of experiences generally leave those who have had them convinced of human immortality and of the
conscious survival of the individual personality after death. Such experiences seem to remain constant across religious and cultural traditions, and on many occasions appear to happen contrary to the tenets of the belief-systems and the expectations of the individuals who have had them (Rossner, 1989. p.3).

Both OBE's and NDE's support the theory of reincarnation, in that persons undergoing regressive hypnosis do describe leaving their bodies at the end of the past life experience. Interestingly though, hypnotic regression is a common technique used to recount past lives in adults, yet fully awake children seem to spontaneously remember past lives.

Much good evidence for Survival comes from a lifetime's work by Professor Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia. He has done thirty years of research into reincarnation cases and has files of 2500 children who claim to remember past lives. Stevenson always considers alternatives, like fraud and hallucination, before making a judgement. He has a nucleus of about twenty-five cases where reincarnation clearly seems to be the likeliest explanation... (Iverson, 1992. p. xi).

Western disbelief in reincarnation however, is slowly changing. George Gallop Junior, respected pollster and head of Princeton University's Religion Research Institute, conducted the first indepth survey into the belief in reincarnation in 1981. He published his findings in a book called Adventures in Immortality. The findings showed 23% of the population of the United States reported belief in life after death. However, the situation in other parts of the world is vastly different and so it would seem is the sentiment about reincarnation's purpose. In India alone, where the majority of the population is
either Hindu or Buddhist, 90% of the population accept reincarnation as a tenet of faith. The Western hope that reincarnation might be true is based in the longing for any kind of proof in the continuation of the ego self after the body dies. However, in Hindu or Buddhist belief, the whole prospect of reincarnation is usually met with regret.

One's emotional orientation to the problem of the future life is materially advanced when one realises that the two great religions of the East—Hinduism and Buddhism—assume that the future life is a fact. They teach that man is reborn into the world over and over again, and they view the prospect with much anxiety. Thus one major function of these religions is to teach men how to avoid being reborn. It is not "wishful thinking" from the Hindu or Buddhist point of view to expect to live again; rather it is stark realism. But it would be "wishful thinking" from their point of view really to believe that religion has found a way to get man off the "wheel of life" (Head, 1977, p.5).

The argument of wishful thinking, or that reincarnation is being used as a crutch, or that it becomes the opiate of the masses, weakens when one realises that the whole prospect of reincarnation from the Eastern perspective is viewed with considerable "anxiety."

Reincarnation is of interest to this thesis in that it does seem to indicate that human memory can extend back to personal experience not from the present life. It also, with the support of the testimony of those who have had NDE's and OBE's, suggests that consciousness can leave the body and exist in a universe independent of matter; perhaps in the plane or dimension physicist David Bohm calls the "Implicate Order." Throughout the world there is a growing body of evidence supporting the hypothesis that reincarnation is real;
that human consciousness may well indeed transcend the body. The vast number of credible “eye-witnesses” to this kind of memory demands that serious-minded scholars at least open up to the idea of not scoffing at others so inclined to investigation of the matter.

There are numerous cases of individuals having undergone hypnotic regression that has revealed evidence of lives, objects, and information in general, that could not have been known by the regressed subject previous to hypnosis. There are also documented cases of serious scientific investigation where persons under hypnosis can suddenly speak languages they have never spoken or learned previous to the experiments. The phenomenon is known as xenoglossia.

In the documentary videotape *Reincarnation; Coming Back* (1988), Dr. Peter Rampster of the University of Sydney in Australia, conducted an experiment in which he hypnotically regressed three Australian subjects. Each session was carefully documented live on videotape. All subjects in the documentary were able to recount names, dates, and places from past lives in other countries, often a century or more ago. Unless the entire experiment is a lie and a hoax, the circumstances of the subjects’ hypnotic recollections could have in no way been known to them through the experiences of their present lives. I am including in this presentation, only two of the three very fascinating cases.

In the second case study of Dr. Rampster’s experiment,
Cynthia Henderson, a housewife who had never been out of Australia, revealed a past life as an eighteenth century French woman, Emily De Chauville. Under hypnosis she could suddenly understand and speak the colloquial French of the Normandy area (Rampster, 1988. Video transcript).

Henderson was also able to describe a cathedral with a very distinct tower that she, as Emily De Chauville, was married in, in the 18th century. When the experiment was taken to France, Cynthia Henderson's directions to the village she lived in, as well as the descriptions of the cathedral, were accurate.

That a housewife who had never been out of Australia could accurately describe names of French towns, dates, and descriptions of buildings are in itself worth further investigation. I believe that her sudden ability to speak a foreign language, and more specifically the colloquial dialect of the 18th Century in the area she recounted, is more than extraordinary. It would seem clear that this woman is accessing memory from another level of consciousness, perhaps her subconscious, or the collective unconscious, and bringing it into consciousness. If this phenomenon is not a past life regression it is, nonetheless extraordinary, and indicates human ability beyond what is usually understood to be normal. As an educational researcher I submit that any aspect of human consciousness, be it a method of retrieving memory, or an ability that the evidence suggests could well be past life experience, such as xenoglossia, deserves investigation.
The third subject in Dr. Rampster's experiments was a woman who also had never been out of her native Australia. Her name is Helen Pickering but under hypnosis she claimed to be Dr. James Archibald Burns.

Dr. James Burns, according to Helen Pickering had been a successful medical practitioner living in Scotland in the 1800's. He had been a man of substance and education. And her account of his life led us to the northern Scottish town of Aberdeen. This is the city in which Helen claimed she had been a student of medicine, as the young James Burns. With us in Aberdeen were two impartial witnesses, Anne Gordon from the history department of the University of Aberdeen and Joan Butkin a young reporter from the city's FM radio station, North Sound Radio (Rampster, 1988. Video transcript).

Ms. Pickering was blindfolded at first, so that she had no clue as to where she was. Then she was taken to a section of "Dockland" in Aberdeen that has not changed so significantly that it would be totally unrecognizable today from the time Helen Pickering claimed to be James Burns. The area still contains some of the flavour of the past, and indeed, Helen Pickering did find the area memorable.

She remembered the harbour in detail, and was able to point to a corner where she said the "old seamen's mission" once stood. It is not there now, but upon checking historical data, her information was precise in locating something that very few people living in "Dockland" Aberdeen today would know. None of the independent witnesses who lived and worked in the area knew of the "old seamen's mission".
From the harbour, she led the group directly to the old College of Medicine, Marshall College, that she claimed to have studied in as the young James Burns, in the early 1830’s.

The team had brought with them an elaborate and talented drawing by Helen Pickering of the front facade of the old Marshall College. She had drawn it in Sydney, weeks before the experimental team went to Scotland. Although many alterations to the building had been done since the 1830’s there is no doubt that the drawing is accurate.

Once inside the building, Helen Pickering was able to describe in detail, and accurately, the rooms and what they were used for in the 1830’s, even though they are not used for the same purposes today. She was able to describe structural alterations that the independent witnesses knew nothing about.

The only truly knowledgeable witness to the history of the building was given the opportunity to quiz Helen Pickering as to her knowledge of the building in the 1830’s.

David Gordon is the only man in the world who knows what the old College of Medicine was like. He is a very practical man who works in the field of oil sciences, but his passion is local history. He wrote a postgraduate paper on the history of the College and meticulously collected every existing plan and drawing from the building’s conception to its last restoration. He is the expert! (Rampster, 1988. Video transcript).
In the documentary, David Gordon listened to Helen Pickering as she reported the details of what the building was like. He then produced maps, architectural drawings, and floorplans, that proved her to be correct. At one point he asked her to guide him through the floor plan from a room on the second story to a place where she would go if she wanted to wash her hands. She guided him through the floorplan, along a corridor, and to the right, directly to the men’s washroom.

DR. RAMPSTER: Are you satisfied that she knows more about this building than a person is likely to know who has never seen the building?”

DAVID GORDON: It would seem more than coincidental, quite frankly, and maybe inexplicable in my terms, you know, but certainly...ah...from what she has discussed with me before she saw these plans, or even knew these plans existed.

JOANNE BUTKIN: Your paper on this, David, was never published? There’s no way anybody could walk into a library and pick up a copy?

DAVID GORDON: No, the only place there would be a copy of my work would be in the open university archives. And I don’t think that Helen would know of any open university archives.

DR. RAMPSTER: She’d need long arms coming all the way from Australia. (laughter)

DAVID GORDON: That’s right, especially never having been out of Australia (Rampster, 1988. Video transcript).

The television documentary then shows in the original volume of the Marshall College registry, the signature of Dr. James Burns.

I am sure that skeptics will insist this documentary and the entire experiment must be a hoax because the evidence otherwise is not explainable.
However, I believe it is just too simple to say that, especially when one considers the sheer amount of evidence of this sort that has been collected by numerous scholars in university settings throughout the world.

I myself have undergone a hypnotic regression. Under hypnosis I saw and described a life in Greece in the 11th century on the Island of Theresia just off Santorini. I described living in a village called Santos. The village had a population of not more than 250 people. I described much of my life to the age of thirty-two when I died in battle defending the village against those who would now be known as Turks. I was able to describe the long lances, sixteen to eighteen feet in length which supported metal spearheads up to a foot long.

The regression is a story in itself, but the real reason I choose to mention this “personal experience” is that during hypnosis I described something that I could never have known, or at least that I cannot account for in any part of my education or memory during this present life.

Under hypnosis I described the dwelling I lived in the 11th century as a cave dug into the side of a cliff, or a very steep hill. I remember that as I presented the description, my present consciousness was skeptically criticizing the foolishness of what I was saying, but nonetheless the dreamlike visions were before me and I described that my family’s house was dug out of the rock. I was somewhat perplexed because I could not be clear about whether to use the word cliff or steep hill, so I interchanged them at different times. The part that my present conscious mind had trouble accepting was that my subconscious mind was presenting a house/cave apparently dug out of pure
rock. I knew we had some metal in the village but not sufficient tools to carve a substantial cave out of pure rock. I was almost laughing at myself because I was thinking, "How could we have carved out a rock cave? With other rocks?"

I stated that the houses had arched wooden doorways flanked by two windows, one on each side. Directly to the back of the cave was another smaller cave that was like a fireplace. It had a chimney cut through the rock above to allow smoke to escape. On each side of the cave was what I described as a bed/couch also carved out of the rock.

The floor I described as dirt with straw and mats thrown down. Outside and above the doorway was a wooden thatched awning that hung out and slightly over the road. The road switchbacked down the hill to the aqua blue ocean below. During the regression I was particularly adamant to stress that the road was between six to ten feet wide; and perhaps as much as fifteen feet wide at the corners where it switchbacked. Having never seen roads so narrow before, my conscious mind was again skeptically trying to reject my subconscious projections, but my subconscious seemed to want to emphasize this fact.

The houses were dug into the cliff wherever possible but usually only at the points at which the height of the switchback would allow.

For expediency I will confine this part of my biography regarding my hypnotic regression to the above description of the houses.

I was regressed in June of 1987 and did not travel to Greece until 1989. Due to the closed-mindedness of most people and not wanting to risk criticism,
and perhaps embarrassment, I chose to be very selective as to whom I might relate the story of my past life regression. However, I did tell about seven individuals the complete story in all the detail I could remember. Everyone who heard the story before I went to Greece is a credible witness to the details of which I recounted at that time. All seven of these people are university graduates, and therefore used to formal analysis. I mention this at this point because these people had heard the story, and specifically descriptions of the houses and the cliffs, before I ever travelled to Greece to find evidence supporting the regression.

I did travel to Greece, and luckily with one of the people who was aware of the regression story. When my friend Terri Fleming walked into the first cave that matched my regressed description of the house I had lived in it was he who first looked around and said, "This is it, isn't it?" He knew from my description what I was looking for, long before we went to Greece. He knew the story so well that he too could see it in his mind.

I was able to take photographs of the caves in the side of the hill and the roads that switchback down the hill.

It is interesting to note that the reason we were able to dig out a rock cave with rocks was due to the geographical history of Santorini; a history of which I knew nothing about even for the first few days we were on the island. We then took a boat cruise and the captain explained that the island had once sustained what was likely the greatest volcanic explosion in history. Much of the island is now made up of layer upon layer of volcanic ash that has
compressed into a kind of pumice sandstone that can indeed be carved with
primitive tools.

How I was able to know this information is unexplainable, especially to
myself since, as I stated earlier, I had no conscious recollection of having ever
learned about the caves of Santorini. There are a number of other aspects of
the regression that are also true that I could not have known, or would ever
have had the occasion to even have thought about otherwise. However, the
caves are of significance because I now have pictures of the ancient site. It is
likely that none of the original caves exist any longer but the present caves and
roads are remarkably like the visions I experienced in the regression. The
experience was very much like having a strong memory but it was accompanied
often with clear visual images that were much like dream images. At times,
when the images became cloudy or faded into blackness altogether, the story
continued to unfold freely, like one simply talking about one’s last vacation. It
was very much matter of fact from the subconscious point of view. Even though
the conscious mind was observing, it was like it was just standing by.
Sometimes it was amazed and sometimes it was critical to the point of almost
laughing. In fact, for the first twenty minutes or so, my conscious mind was
actually quite upset with the forty dollars being charged and all I could see was
blackness.
Figure #2 taken while on a boat tour of the volcano, depicts the striated layers of volcanic debris that made it possible to dig out the "rock" caves with crude tools.
This is the city of Thera on Santorini.
Figure #4 is Monolos on the Island of Theresia (not quite connected to the main part of Santorini). They both hang on the tops of the cliffs, hundreds of feet above the ocean, exactly as I described it in my regression.
Figures #5 and #6. These photos were taken in the city of Monolos on Theresia. These figures provide a closeup and a more distant view of the caves on the hillside, with roads six to ten feet wide that switchback down the hill.

Fig. 6
I think of having subjected myself to this process as an experiment that would provide me personally with evidence on the question of reincarnation. Having done the regression, I strongly recommend that others who are interested in personal consciousness research try it to see for themselves. I am aware that not all regressionists are as experienced and as capable as the person who regressed me, but I think most people will nonetheless have an interesting experience of viewing their own subconscious while still conscious.

I am suggesting this as a part of this thesis because the thesis is in regard to educating the self about its own levels of consciousness. Meditation and hypnosis are becoming more socially acceptable as methods of exploring personal consciousness without the danger of drugs. It is also important to this thesis that personal experience is the best mode of knowing anything, and that since your own mind can only be experienced by yourself it is therefore incumbent upon individuals to pioneer their own explorations. No one can do it for you.
Chapter Six Summary

The metaphor--The leaf on the tree is also the tree, hence we are the Universe.

Gopi Krishna--The Indian metaphysics is based on the experience of Samadhi or Mystical Vision.

Gopi Krishna--The experience reverses one's whole concept of creation and can make it possible to experience all other dramas of creation in infinite existence.

Having lived other lives, is reported by people who undergo hypnotic regression.

Reincarnation was a tenet of faith of early Western religions, including the Gnostic Christians whose writings were censored and destroyed by the Orthodoxy's.

The present day Bible contains passages suggesting re-embodiment in people other than Christ. "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist....and if ye will receive it this is Elias, which was for to come. He that has ears to hear let him hear." Matthew 11:17, 10-11, 14-15 (Head, 1971. p.35-136).

Most Christian faith is based in scripture, not personal experience.

OBE's and NDE's are now well documented by Raymond Moody and others, making it possible to see the parallels in reincarnation and out-of-body experiences, as subjects often claim to "leave their bodies" in the dying segment of the past lives they experience while under hypnosis.

Scant eyewitness testimony is often enough to convict people as criminals or worse, even to death, but volumes of testimony of eyewitness or personal accounts of "spiritual experiences" are shrugged off by dogmatic scientism as superstition, hallucinations, or lies.

Reincarnation is not the opiate of the masses of Hinduism and Buddhism, but is in actuality viewed by them with considerable anxiety.

Dr. Peter Rampster of the University of Sydney in Australia conducts hypnotic regression experiments where Cynthia Henderson can suddenly speak the colloquial French of the Normandy area of 18th Century France and Helen Pickering knows intimately the life of James Archibald Burns in the 1830's. She can recount in vivid detail the College of Medicine in Aberdeen, Scotland.
and the building and its renovations since the time she claimed to be James Burns. Independent witness Peter Gordon says there is no way she could possibly have known such information.

I recount my own hypnotic regression. This personal experience, followed by an investigation made two years later, confirms and validates, for me at least, the ability of my consciousness to experience itself in 11th century Greece, on the island of Theresia just off the larger island of Santorini.

Personal investigation of consciousness is the only route to the knowledge of the truth that consciousness can transcend time and space.

CONCLUSION

Reincarnation, or at least, memory of past lives is possible—and provable if people will only do their own investigations.

Testimony throughout history as well as current scientific data supports past life memory.

The self can experience life beyond the present body and time.

Why do people have to explore such important truths outside our present education system?

CHAPTER SEVEN
WHAT I DO IN THE CLASSROOM

So how do I translate the underlying philosophy that we are essentially "eternal unlimited spirit" into the teaching of art?

When one's worldview is influenced by the "knowledge" (please note I am not using the word "belief") that an aspect of what we are is eternal spirit, the nature and purpose of education alters away from that of teaching people how to make a living, to a philosophy of educating people how to live. From the point of view of being an eternal spirit, it would seem rather silly to think that the main purpose for being incarnated on this planet is to get good a job. It would seem that our purpose would be rather to do a good job at living.

The philosophy of "materialism" has been called into question by every great spiritual master the planet has produced. Not because it is wrong to own a nice house, and a car, and so on, but because of the way we do it. We know that the indigenous, or so called "primitive" peoples of the earth are right in telling us that what we take from the earth must always be replaced. That is their bottom line. But it is unfortunately not our bottom line. We strip the earth of its wealth and then move on. We teach our children that we have no other choice. It is unfortunate and wrong to cut the last stand of big trees, but to be realistic, we have to do that. Why? Because, to be realistic, we are in competition with other countries for more and more material wealth, and if we want to pay off our debts and put food on the table for everyone, we have to
take more than we can give back to the earth. We are taught that competition and greed are human nature, and the real thrusts underlying the materialist philosophy. Of course, along with these beliefs, trust in others is diminished, and love becomes suspect as an illusion, or at best, becomes isolated to a few friends and relatives, instead of to all of Humanity and Creation itself.

It is very subtle, but all of the above is what happens when we teach our children that the most important aspect of their education is to prepare themselves for the job market.

I think there is an alternative to this educational philosophy that focuses too much of an emphasis on serving the market forces.

The purpose of life on this planet is to educate the spirit within, and the lesson to be learned is unconditional love.

Educating to the materialist agenda is therefore, in this context, antieducation, unless it is significantly tempered with a curriculum that does more than intellectualize the value and need for love. What is needed is a curriculum that has real love built into it. Love, and life itself, are the content of the arts, and therefore should be core in the curriculum throughout all twelve years of public education.

There are aspects to ourselves that do not need to be taught--they are inherent in our spiritual nature and need only love and encouragement to grow and flourish; as well as the freedom of choice to be realised. Overdirection, indoctrination, propaganda, and protocol are often unconsciously inherent in the public curriculum in education and too often to the detriment of the
students. Arts courses provide a curriculum that has the potential to allow teachers and their students to become closer than in the traditional core subjects where rigorous course content does not allow as much time for personal exchange. When a teacher is more like a big brother or sister, school seems less like an indifferent institution and feels just a little bit more like home, a place of living that is not so artificial.

Lessons that are forced on people are seldom learned with joy. The process of education therefore becomes less than joyful. But when students like what they are doing, when they feel they can learn on their own, and become confident in self learning, they naturally produce.

In the teaching of art, I try to instill in my students the idea that it is their right, and to their benefit to take back the responsibility of their education from the system, and thrust it directly onto themselves, and I strongly suggest that they teach themselves in a nonjudgmental way.

Personal curiosity increases when criticism and judgment in all its forms are eliminated. Here, I should like to emphasize that there is no such thing as constructive criticism. All criticism is destructive and assumes that one person is in a position of superiority. I therefore, make a point of never saying anything is bad, or not very good. Instead, I encourage brainstorming alternatives, in a way that does not carry with it the message that the work in question is not already moving in a valid direction. Students come to understand that the process itself is the goal, and that the products of the process are merely the result. The process is in itself, a joyful, meaningful act
of life and creation. One does not need to dream of the future, when one will be an artist. When we are in the process of creating anything, we are artists. It may or may not be true that a virtuoso gets more pleasure from doing her art form because her expertise provides glorious results but I do remember the first few times I tried in earnest to “make sounds” on a guitar, and I can say that to this day, when the sounds I make are now much more pleasing to others, they are not really more pleasing to myself. When I first discovered that I could coordinate sound, the very fact that it was me doing it somehow was very exciting, for it was I who was creating the music, and “bringing it into being.” Not someone else.

I encourage my students to be themselves. To a large extent they design their own curriculum with loose parameters that are more related to the restrictions of the small size of my classroom, with its lack of storage space and no ventilation. Physical restrictions and ventilation bylaws therefore dictate what processes can take place there.

The lack of storage space, has made it very difficult to keep the art “studio” clean and uncluttered. I insist that my students paint fairly large paintings and since there is no storage space the paintings are literally all over the place.

There is colour and chaos throughout the room and I must admit that each September when I return from summer vacation to find that the janitors have scoured the room I always feel very uncomfortable. The energy has been
cleaned out. The *Chi* of the work is gone. My returning grade twelve students notice this as well and often complain that the room feels wrong.

Inadvertently, a chaotic versus sterile atmosphere experiment has also taken place in my art room. My observation is that when the room becomes cluttered with colour and chaos the students' energy picks up and the quality, quantity, and uniqueness of their work accelerates. I believe my students do become charged by the *Chi* energy of the artwork. I believe, as well, that this could be similar to the lack of *Chi* energy in an unlived-in house. Could it be *Chi* energy that makes it feel like a home? Though I have, from time to time, complained to administrators that my art classroom room is inadequate I have secretly felt blessed for the excuse to have a messy room. The *Chi* energy makes the room breathe with an excitement of its own.

I began experimenting with different teaching methods in my second year of teaching and continued to experiment for five years after that. In all but one of my classes I structured the curriculum very tightly, teaching skills, techniques, and the elements and principles of design in neat little units, defining what it was that I was looking for and what *my* expectations for “their” learning was. Basically, I stuck to the methods forced upon me by the system and upon which I was “marked” in my practice teaching.

During each year as well, I would choose one class and give it “almost” unlimited freedom to design their own projects, time allowances, etc.

My basic requirements were that they keep a personal journal, that in the beginning was to be used for doing automatic writing. Students were asked
to write 300 words per week. Because the journals were personal, I did not read them, but only counted the pages to see that the effort was made.

Because they were teenaged art students, there were always wails of complaint in regard to the journal writing. They were there to learn art, not write.

I explained that art was a way of living and establishing meaning, not an isolated skill or activity like drawing or painting. I explained that some immensely obscure individual hiding in their bodies was doing the living and using the body to do it; and that art could provide a way of discovering who that individual was. I also explained that writing to one's self can be very revealing when one rereads it.

I usually chose a senior class for doing these experiments, feeling confident that grade eleven had prepared them with sufficient skills for me to gamble, allowing them the right to participate in the making of their own curriculum. Consistently, I observed that in the beginning, students wasted a lot of time wondering what was going on. They were lost.

That convinced me all the more that self-direction and creative conviction were something that was lacking in them and that the cause, in part, might be our education system itself. Students had always been told what was important in their education. They had consistently been given what I call a recipe education. Just follow the directions and everything will be O.K. We tell them what it is they are going to learn. We give them a lesson geared to teaching "that" as exactly as we can with very clear objectives as to what "we"
are looking for. Students then regurgitate the same information back to us for marks, and those students capable of giving back to us the information most like what “we espoused” are deemed to be the best students. They are given more praise than their peers, and in the end get all the scholarships and other kinds of recognition, love, and positive attention.

Philosophy became the game, and while they worked on projects that they designed themselves, we discussed almost anything that any student felt needed to be addressed. Between discussions I played my guitar and sang songs. Mostly soft rock and folk songs, but the songs often contained lyrics that provoked thought and imagination. I also wrote songs, so that my students might witness my sense of freedom and experience the joy I felt as I created. I ventured to live art in front of them, not by design, but to live it in the moment. I modelled what I hoped they would do, but it was up to them to take the hints. I became a student of life and a learner in loving. I let them witness my life honestly, not only as their teacher, but as their peer. I cannot possibly relay the most significant results of the experiments, because I always felt that I was the greatest recipient of the free flow of love that always came to me. But the secret of the “magic” (as one of my principles, Doug Grant, once described it) that worked in my free classes is that time was left over for real sharing and love. Philosophy and open honest discussion, often as a class, in smaller groups, or one to one, resulted in real communication that travelled from heart to heart. Socratic teaching? I call it inner teaching, and I listen
when my students are doing the teaching. As they assume the role of teacher
my heart soars.

To teach in the way that I have has not come without opposition from
time to time, but always that opposition falls away when the students display
their work. I would not profess that others should try to teach my way. I do
suggest however, that after the initial years, beginning teachers should do a
serious personal assessment, and do it outside the parameters set by the
system. They should personally brainstorm to the very limits of what might be
possible to achieve within their circumstances. New teachers should step
outside themselves for a while and examine whether they think they could
enrich the lives of their students by exploring methods that they might “invent,”
that may or may not fall within what has always been the status quo. There is
room for change, challenge, and newness always in education.

All people, and all teachers, should know that love is the real message;
that painting, math, historical dates, marks, judgment, measurement and
evaluation are secondary at best.

The primary objective of life is love, and the degree to which one learns to
live the unconditional nature of this word is the degree to which they have
spiritually advanced.

Sometimes it takes great courage to love honestly and openly, especially
in a culture fractured by mistrust in general and paranoid about child abuse.

We, as teachers, are very much aware of the legal ramifications we can
innocently find ourselves in if we are not careful in keeping a professional arm's length from our students.

My response to this is that teachers need not fear anything so long as they are pure in their thoughts and hearts. People who know they are not pure in thought and deed should certainly stay at arm's length, for their own and everyone else's good. But those who know that they are advanced enough to get close to their students can only benefit them. By being closer to my students many of them tell me their deepest secrets, and from there, I teach. If a particular student has a problem with theft, I teach from there. If they have a problem with confidence I teach from there. If they feel unloved at home, I teach from there. Knowing the inner experiences of my students can also be beneficial to my understanding and my appreciation of their artworks that are often expressions of their inner conflicts and searchings.

It is not uncommon for me to have six or seven students who report to me every day to tell me how much and what kind of drugs they have done in the last twenty-four hours. They feel confident in doing this because they know it will remain privileged information. I ask them to do it so that they can simply become conscious of how much they consume and how often they are "not with the rest of us." Of course, there is always counselling that goes with this and sometimes they have to face some hard and difficult choices, but the kids often refer others to me. Usually referrals come from students who do drugs themselves but perceive that their friends are getting beyond control.
One significant notion central to this thesis is that art and the arts offers opportunities for education that there simply is not time for in subjects where the course material takes precedence over people. For whatever the reason or circumstances, most teachers teach courses first and believe within their process that the spirit or inner being is nonetheless addressed appropriately. I believe that all too often the latter is not achieved. I teach people. The course is secondary to that primary goal. I believe and sometimes say that the teaching of art is a wonderful excuse for what I do. For me the art room is a place where young people can truly explore the inner nature of their being. I try to provide an environment where past beliefs about what art is, and why it is important, are put aside. I try to free my students from the damage done in the past by the opinions and criticisms of significant others in their lives. I want my students to be free of all notions of what others deem to be art so that they can in a sense be the world's first artist. From there they can explore, unencumbered, the idea of freedom of expression.

Students come into my classes so boxed into ideas like right and wrong that they are in no position to attempt an honest personal exploration in their work. In art there is no right or wrong. As Peter London suggests, "Are our dreams right or wrong?" (London, 1989) No, they cannot be, nor can art be right or wrong. Furthermore, art can be analyzed noncritically much the way dreams can be and the best interpreter of both is the inventor of the work or the dream. We can benefit by someone else describing what they see in our work because sometimes we create unconsciously. Notice that I do not suggest that
teachers attempt to offer some form of deep psychological analysis for their students' works. All too often the teacher would be dead wrong and even if the teacher was right it would not allow the students the time or opportunity to become enlightened on their own terms in regard to their work and its subconscious intimations. It is better that the teacher simply help describe the work so that the student is consciously aware of the elements and principles of design as they relate to how the teacher interprets them, and in a way that is not a criticism but simply a personal account of how the piece affects the teacher. The student may have painted the work with completely different intentions as to what he or she hoped it might say but nonetheless something is said. The student is free of leading or damaging opinions that might try to appease her ego or corral it into some other direction that is really the teacher's wish; then the work becomes the teacher's work, and the student an apprentice in labour rather than an artist of free personal expression. Like dreams, art works are creative adventures that may or may not have a significant story to tell.

In summation, the art room is a perfect atmosphere for the free exchange of ideas. It is a place for philosophy, counselling, exploration of self and others, exploration of materials, physical activity, music, poetry, prose, meditation, friendship, sharing, and love.

Art classes can be so much more than the teaching of craft and skills. In the following section I will discuss some of the skills and methods I use. I am including a significant entry of photographs of past student works so the reader
may see the results of consciously guiding spirits rather than just teaching art in the traditional fashion. In guiding spirits, I simply mean providing a haven from all the imposed restrictions, deadlines, and outside expectations that most of us are more than familiar with as the things we hated most when we were students. My art room is a safe sandbox in which free spirits can play.

The photographs, I believe, will quell anyone's concerns about the "skills" which they might suppose are not being taught or learned.
Chapter Seven Summary

Knowledge of the spirit realms alters one's sense of the purpose of education. How to live clearly begins to take precedence as the primary goal in education. This opposes what most schools are presently doing. It is clear in my school's philosophy, that technology and the workplace are the primary objectives.

The philosophy of materialism has been called into question by every great spiritual master the planet has produced. The purpose of human life on this planet is to educate the spirit within and the lesson to be learned is unconditional love. Criticism is destructive.

I experimented with my classes for five years to discover that a free environment is better than one of teacher goal setting for others' creativity, as well as judgment, criticism, and "evaluation and measurement" which bottle up creativity, self-direction, and self-assurance.

Most teachers teach courses using the recipe method of education. I prefer to teach people first and the course second.

Teaching at arm's length models mistrust and thwarts true teaching to the inner being.

Getting closer to students allows for real and relevant communication between teacher and student.

I challenge everyone's prelearned (programmed) beliefs about what art is. Artworks can be springboards for discussion, sharing, and learning about many things.

The art room can be much more than a place for the teaching of art history, craft, and skills. The art room can be the perfect atmosphere for the free exchange of ideas, philosophy, counseling, exploration of self and others, exploration of materials, physical activity, music, poetry, prose, meditation, friendship, sharing and love.

The art room could be the most important place in the school.
CHAPTER EIGHT
PROCESS--AND THE PROBLEM OF ASSESSMENT

I teach at a senior high school in the Canadian Pacific Northwest. Students range from sixteen to eighteen years old, with a small percentage of adult students, most of whom do not exceed twenty years of age.

There is no prerequisite for entry into grade eleven art classes therefore there is a wide range of innate ability, experience, skill, and maturity among the students. Students come predominantly from three junior high schools ranging from grade eight to ten. Many of the students in my classes have never been exposed to a course dedicated totally to art.

So that I might develop some sense of continuity between the junior highschools and myself, on the first day of class in September, I ask my students to complete an informal questionnaire. On the questionnaire students are asked what previous art experience they have had. What art courses have they taken since grade eight, including courses they may have taken at summer school or at night out of personal interest? I have done this because in part I am interested in the kind of structure to which they have been exposed. After my first year of teaching in 1977-78 the kids related to me this kind of information (unsolicited) as they discussed their previous art teachers' styles and methods of teaching. What I found very interesting back then was that those students who came from a very unstructured environment were easily more creative and openminded in their approach to art. They were less
inhibited and did not come to the class with as many preconceived ideas about what constituted good or bad artwork. Consequently, those students coming from the less structured environments were far better self-directed because they had little other choice. Often, when confronted by me with plans for their artwork, they would rebel in any number of ways, from simply ignoring direction and going ahead and doing their own thing anyway, to doodling, doing next to nothing, handing in blatantly uninspired work, or even skipping classes.

It seemed to me that students coming from the much more structured environments did not display any noticeable superior skills or abilities in drawing, painting, or ceramics. They did seem to have a slight advantage in using the “verbal language” of art, the art jargon, but that was not internalized and was used in a rather mechanical way. Their inner freedom seemed bound by outer structure and they did not begin to work without my approval and instruction to do so.

I did not care or judge what the junior high teachers were doing. I saw good students coming from both styles of teaching. But the senses of freedom and the apparent equal skill abilities coming from students used to an unstructured environment was intriguing. So, in my second year of teaching, I started experimenting with my classes. I began with the seniors, grade twelve students, thinking that I could do less damage if my hypothesis of freedom versus structure proved to be incorrect.

As stated earlier I would choose one class and give it almost unlimited freedom to do as they pleased in terms of designing their curriculum. I set no
deadlines except that they were to present the entire body of work that they had produced up to the time of the reporting period. Marks were negotiated between the students and me in an informal interview that was semiprivate but nonetheless done in the class and in the presence of other students. In other words, there were often witnesses to the process, and the fairness of the negotiation was always under the scrutiny of a peer. Students were also always made aware that if they preferred to be interviewed privately it was their option. This type of negotiation, though occasionally stressful (simply because it is a negotiation), seldom, if ever, caused animosity after the fact. Students often mark themselves too low in my estimation, and of course are always happy to hear me disagree with their low mark.

It is interesting that many students refuse, or try to refuse, to take part in the assessment of their own work and mark. This is a very telling fact that does not speak well of what they have learned in the system they have been “trained” in up to this point. Students have not been given autonomy by the system, regarding assessment. This is an enormous problem in subjective subjects where the teacher’s qualifications apparently grants them total assessment rights. I disagree strongly that the teacher’s qualification ought to give the teacher uncontested decisions in subjective assessment. If we expect students to take responsibility for their actions and learning, they must learn to assess themselves. I prefer a dialectical approach as a way of weaning students toward full personal assessment. I am well aware of the difficulties involved, that they are as diverse and unique as people are, but nonetheless, when
students learn to forfeit completely the responsibility of self-assessment to an authority figure, they surrender their very spirit and learn to become reactive rather than proactive; they learn dependence rather than independence.

It is impossible to embark on a 100 percent creative endeavour when the teacher's expectations, and the system and society's myths about marks, loom in the background of the young artist's mind.

Only little children--preschool children--explore art as life, unencumbered by convention, expectation, and criticism. Instead of judging little children, we celebrate their art as life activities. We share in their creation and we celebrate their joy, as much as their accomplishment, because joy is the ultimate accomplishment. But as soon as they become part of the school system we begin to coerce them into conforming to social and cultural convention, and we do it with the "threat of marks."

It is only when children discover the walls of measurement imposed by enforced "schooling" that they stop making pure art and begin to conform to the conventions of adults in order to get the reward of marks, which transforms as positive attention and symbolizes ultimately, money and profit; art for marks instead of art for life and spiritual communion with the self, the materials of the earth, and the realms that bring all into being. And so, my students mark themselves with my guidance in a dialectical negotiation.
I am presenting this section of student artwork to illustrate the skill level and the depth of emotion that students can portray if they are given the opportunity to truly pursue their own “spirit” in art image making. There is little doubt that these students would have neither the time nor the intent toward self exposure and self expression to the level that these works display if I had taken up their time teaching them how to do gray scales or insisting they work in monochromatic colors the way my teachers did. Even art history must be explored with caution, lest it influence yet another generation away from the icons of its time, e.g., Conan the Barbarian bodies to impressionism and surrealism; two favourite steps of art educators. This is not to say that Conan style art is good or bad (It teaches body proportions and anatomy in a way that is natural to urban media-bombarded young people regardless of whether most people do not look that way.), but it presupposes that surrealism or impressionism is better and I try not to impose value judgments of any kind.

The following works were produced for the most part, by my senior students from twelve or more years ago in two consecutive graduation years. The necessity of protecting the identity of many of these students will be immediately obvious as I relate their personal stories; stories that illustrate the depth of their work and spirit. I have in part also chosen work that is twelve or more years old because I believe that if, by the unlikely chance, one of these
now impossible to locate individuals should somehow become aware that their work is being used to illustrate the results of my teaching in this presentation, that their life patterns will now be well enough established so as not to be disturbed by their pasts. I could not show such works and disclose the intimacies of the stories of these people under any other circumstances. The honesty, integrity, and courage, that many of these works display offer us an opportunity to view individual spirits fully engaged in the mirrored reflections of their truthful circumstances. As a result, each spirit has given itself the opportunity to make conscious choices for change and personal growth.

To see and share in their honesty and to be so invited as a teacher into the deepest and most profound secrets of my students' lives has been at times difficult and at times a joy that exceeds written description. Love paves the way to shedding the clothes of our doubting, and as a result my students feel secure in serving up to others as much as they dare to express in the works in this presentation.

In sharing ourselves openly, we reach out and touch others in their deepest places, creating an avenue of discussion that leads to hearts getting together in learning and loving. In my classes, the point of departure for such discourse is often the finished work of art.

I am aware that the following, "real life stories" will, to some extent, read like a soap opera, but the inter-relatedness of the works reflects the overlapping lives of some of the students; many of whom are of similar mind and were brought into close contact by personal interest and working circumstances. I
do not believe such scenarios are unique to students in the arts. I have no doubt that life scenarios of students everywhere in our Western culture would not be any more or less shocking as we have come to admit in the past few decades how soon young people—not necessarily grow up, but—explore the realities they see on television and in the media. The speed of which our Western culture and ways have transformed other cultures worldwide is proof positive of the influential power of the Western media. That same media is shaping the lives of all people. Only visually literate individuals capable of understanding the messages both suggestive and subliminal in advertising and the big media, are in a position to make personal decisions void of media influence. Art and the arts can be used for both positive or negative purposes.

Therefore, it is necessary that all people become visually literate and aware of the barrage of powerful influences constantly present in our urban environment; influences that are purposely trying to invade our psyches. Art can be used to manipulate our very spirit, or it can be used to purge our demons. It can express our pain and our joy, and it can be a tool of communication. The following works, I believe, illustrate the ability of art to provide an outlet and an avenue of personal expression for beginning artists who are really, like all of us, students of life.

The first group of works to be presented were done by a young man who, to my knowledge, had not taken any art classes previous to grade eleven. After completing the chalk pastel in fig. #7 Kevin, who was ecstatic about the piece, confided that it was an illustration of the life he led on weekends “downtown.”
Fig 7
At first glance the work, like most artworks, carries little meaning for us as viewers. It is only when we take time to scan and isolate the various elements and principles of design that we begin to “read” and make contact with the work. The practice of describing in detail what we see “objectively” is the best way to initially engage an art work. So let us do that.

The first things we notice are a group of isolated, simple contour line, box-shaped, upright rectangular buildings sitting on a rectangular wedge. The wedge is like a page of paper with one corner up and projecting slightly away into the background; its opposite corner is coming forward into the foreground. The wedged rectangle is therefore diamond-shaped and on a diagonal to the total rectangular ground surface. It acts as the grounding surface for the buildings and has perspective lines that converge to each of the farthest corners of the wedge, then crisscross each other, creating consecutively larger diamond shapes as the lines merge into the foreground. The buildings and the surface they sit on are sunlit in yellow pastel, and are starkly contrasted by long dark shadows that recede into the background, back of the buildings. In the foreground (at a corner of the city block) there is a stop sign casting a long shadow away from the viewer. To the left side of the work, standing starkly alone at the base of the building, and just below a fire escape, there stands a tiny person casting a shadow up the wall. In the middle of the foreground, just beginning to cross the street from the other smaller group of buildings is another tiny but not truly human-shaped, two-legged, almost giraffe-necked creature that is also casting a long dark shadow. It is heading in the direction
of the little being standing by the building under the fire escape. The stop sign is halfway between them, and its black cast shadow must be crossed, if they are to make contact. To the top of the group of buildings on the left is a decrepit, leaning billboard supporting a sign that says LandMark Hotel. Just behind the buildings is an isolated little playground that includes a tiny merry-go-round, a slide, and a sandbox. The entire street scene hovers over a cropped corner of a planet whose atmosphere swirls in patches and lines of grayed white and blue clouds, as though seen from a satellite in space. The upper lefthand quadrant of the work is a dark grayed, bluish-mauve sky that also reports diagonal curved lines, echoing the curve of the planet (presumably Earth).

My interpretation of the work is that it is one that is more carefully drawn than it at first appears. Everything is highly contrasted and only that which is deemed absolutely essential is included. The entire little street scene floating above the planet, is in fact a very significant slice of the reality of the young artist’s life. It floats above the rest of the world and is secretly hidden above the clouds. But heaven is a dark, seedy place where tiny insignificant distorted beings secretly meet. They cast long ominous shadows of guilt. Stark shadows. The empty playground behind the street scene is despairingly lonely despite any attempt to be more positive as playgrounds are usually thought to be. It symbolizes for me, the void of illusion that life can be the amusement park that those who choose to live there pretend it to be. They think they are happy in their drugs, alcohol, and seedy sex, when at the same time, they must know they are really dying.
Kevin did this pastel in my grade twelve drawing and painting class. I did not attempt to analyze the work in the presence of his peers but instead began asking him how things were, and what he did during the weekend. Eventually, on a particularly “low” emotional day, this usually gregarious young man asked if he might speak in private with me. At lunchtime we walked out in front of the school and there, sitting on the curb, Kevin explained the meaning of his artwork.

He was a 17-year-old male prostitute and spent most weekends in the downtown streets, in and out of the gay bars, drinking, but not abusing drugs, and staying awake pretty much all weekend. We discussed sexually transmitted diseases, the nature of his guilt concerning his lifestyle, and his family’s reactions. I tried not to pass judgment but instead offered support and advice anytime he needed it. Kevin managed to stay in school and graduate, in part I believe, because he had an outlet that he had just discovered in art. Kevin was a lost soul and the art room was a place of neutral acceptance where, metaphorically speaking, he could openly wrestle the demons of his inner existence.

In some of the following works I will describe the circumstances as I see them in terms of how “I interpret” the works. I do not pretend to be a qualified art therapist, and I would not offer this kind of explanation to one of my students, except by their request, and only after clarifying to them that I am not such an expert in visual psychoanalysis that they should accept my interpretation as more valid than their own. My interpretations are just that,
my interpretations. But that is one of the great joys of art, the viewer benefits by their own interpretation and in a sense the viewer is not only second guessing the artist's symbols and meanings but at the same time performing a personal dialogue with the self as the viewer free associates on the work. Quality artwork becomes a springboard for all people to interact at their level, as they become active participants in the work. The work evolves and becomes something personal to each viewer. Sometimes the interpretation differs little from that of the artist and sometimes it is completely different.

Figs. #8-9: Kevin's first attempt at painting employs the same theme of the rectangular, almost plywood-like wedge, painted yellow, and starkly contrasting an ominously dark background. The wedge extends in a foreshortened fashion from the foreground to the back at cross diagonals to the picture frame; once again there are two point perspective lines, this time of violet and green that support the illusion of depth as they create large diamond shapes in the foreground that get progressively smaller till they converge at the back of the wedge. On the wedge a naked and tormented figure raises his hands with wrists facing the viewer. There are drops of blood dripping from the point where the hands meet the wrists that form a pool next to the left knee. The figure is painted in flesh tones, suggesting a white male, but there are no genitals. The eyes are closed red slits and the mouth is a wide open scream through squared off, imperfect yellow teeth and a large bleeding tongue. There is a deliberate red dot of blood on the forehead and short black hair just above that. Hovering above the tormented figure, to the right, is an indifferent or
perhaps slightly bewildered blue-eyed, green face with yellow hair that runs off the edge of the picture.

Out of the upper righthand corner of the picture and out of the head of yellow hair is a wooden crucifix that is about five inches long and painted purple. The cross is literally screwed to the painting from the back side. There are real red strings hanging from brass rings that have been screwed into the wooden cross at five significant points: one at the point where the head of Christ would have been, one at each point where the hands would have been, and one where the crossbars meet, where the heart of Christ would have been.

The Christian symbolism is that of the Church but with strings attached. The cross could also carry the symbolism of the puppeteer with cut strings symbolizing Kevin's effort to break loose. The work is Kevin's "inner self portrait." A tormented and completely disillusioned, misunderstood soul. Much of the symbolism is frighteningly obvious and as Kevin related the work to me—once again, sitting on the curb, I remember thinking, "Yes, reality is what goes on inside, and it is the option of the spirit to explore any way it chooses." Kevin chose to go downtown and do what he was doing, but he felt he had been driven to it. He refused total responsibility, which I continually tried to put back onto him. Nonetheless, I did sympathize with the story he related, as the relevant circumstances about this work and life.

Kevin explained that his father was a macho, fanatical Christian, who played football in his youth and expected Kevin to be the same. He saw his father as tyrannical, unbending, and unloving, especially as Kevin matured
and began to rebel and reject his family's more traditional values. Life at home was stormy, uncomfortable, and void of love.

One day while Kevin was "downtown" he met a nice man who bought him drinks. The nice man, Kevin said, sincerely cared, and offered his help and "affection." Before long Kevin had two or three nice men friends who, vying for his attention, began to offer him money for his attention and favours. He said they showed him more love than he had ever received at home so he began to spend more and more time with his downtown friends.

I cannot judge whether or not Kevin was naturally drawn to the Gay experience but I admitted to Kevin that I felt that regardless of his sexual preferences, he was being taken advantage of, and being used, by more experienced individuals who saw his inner emptiness, and his consequent needs and weaknesses.

In the painting, Kevin is of course the screaming crucified soul down on his knees, alone and bleeding from his raised wrists. The green face is his bewildered father, indifferent to Kevin's pain. The cross is the only way his father may love him, through the Church with strings attached. His father is a puppet of the Church and the broken strings are Kevin's breaking away; the severing of ties.

Kevin's natural use of colour harmony and contrast resulted from his search to express as sincerely and intensely as possible the chaos of his inner spirit. I once met his father. His hair was black like Kevin's, but the stark contrasting yellow of the painting against the black background served its
purpose better than trying to emulate the true colour of his father’s hair. Outer reality is not the issue here.

The green of the face lies beside yellow on the colour wheel and is therefore analogous. The purple of the cross lies opposite yellow on the colour wheel and is therefore, according to color theory, complementary. These are artistic principles worth pointing out after completion of the work, not before, lest I might have distorted his truth and his colour tendencies. The painting is 100% Kevin’s. It happened in my art room because I let it happen, not because I taught him how to paint. There is no part of my ego finding its way into Kevin’s finished product. His work was literally the naked truth and it allowed a springboard for conversation and sincere hear-to-heart discussion.
Fig. #10: Kevin's second painting continues his theme. Only this time the background, again dark, uses one point perspective with blue lines that converge to the center of the horizon line about one third of the way from the top. What were diamond shapes before are now four-sided quadrangles that create the illusion of a foreground, middle ground, and background that starts with larger shapes at the bottom that get progressively smaller as they recede to the horizon line and the band of "sky" that continues from there to the top edge of the painting.

A faceless, naked, foreshortened humanoid figure stands on the graphic tarmac looking upward to the viewer. The figure's right hand, open with fingers extended and palm facing the viewer, appears to the left side of the work and is painted red. The left arm and hand extend somewhat up and foreshortened to the right side of the work. It seems to be presenting the two masks of Greek tragedy and comedy. The sad face of tragedy is painted green, as was the face of his father in his other painting, and the laughing face of comedy is blue.

Attached to the front of the painting is a carefully crafted wooden window that sits about one third from the bottom along the first horizontal line. The window is not a perfect rectangle and gets wider as it goes to the top. Kevin assembled the top of the window to hang about three inches out from the painting. Its adjoining middle sill, complete with closed wooden handle, sits about two inches out from the painting and both horizontal wooden crossbars cast a real shadow onto the painted surface. The window is sky blue and the faceless spirit figure peers through this closed angular window (perhaps a
Kevin is preying to the forces beyond.

For the sake of economy I will no longer isolate the “objective” elements of the works from the subjective meanings. I have presented the previous objective analysis as a useful starting method for the sake of those not used to “how to first discover a work of art.” Instead, in the following works I will integrate the subjective and objective together.
Fig. #11 is a chalk pastel by Janice. Janice was eighteen years old and Kevin’s closest friend. She often accompanied him downtown on weekends and kept a watchful eye on him. This pastel is her rendition of Kevin, who is to her blatantly Gay.

Janice sees Kevin’s lighter side and is obviously humored by him. The background is sunny. The gestures are carefree, nonchalant, and mischievously content. The figure, modeled almost like a Henry Moore, with an out of proportion arm and a three-fingered hand, brings the cigarette to the mouth we imagine we see but is not actually there. There is no nose and the eyes are just long slits of purple, soothingly closed behind rather flamboyant cat’s eye sunglasses. The smoke coming off the cigarette looks like little crescent moons and they balance in blue and in simplicity of line the only other prop in the picture, a martini glass complete with olive. The figure is naked and has no genitals. It has no qualities that could be anyone, unless one knows Kevin. Anyone who knows Kevin knows it captures his essence when he is happy. This is, in my estimation, one of the best real life portraits I have ever seen. Janice has pictured Kevin’s spirit as she imagined it. This is the real Kevin “to her,” when he is behind his mask of comedy and happiness.

Janice’s first painting in fig. #12 was 32X48 inches and painted in acrylic on masonite. Two large, faceless human figures, painted like ice sculptures are posed with their backs to each other. The female figure on the left wears a thin-strapped nightgown. Her head hangs downward in guilt, shame, and remorse. The hair falls limp and straight. The male figure to the right appears to be
walking away and out of the picture. He is stripped naked, and drained and empty of spirit. The messy ruffled straight hair falls down chaotically. Janice has managed to make this student-grade poor-quality paint appear luminous. The modelling of the forms and the contrasting light and dark areas are achieved by using numerous brushstrokes carefully drybrushed in wispy lines that cause the light and the dark blues to shimmer off each other in glowing contrast.

Fig. 12

Fig. #13 is a closeup of fig. #12. The discussion I had with Janice concerning her painting's meaning was interesting and revealing. She confided that she felt deeply insecure about her relationships with young men. She said
that she felt strong attractions in the beginning of her relationships, but once she was satisfied that she had the undivided attention she insisted upon, she found her new lover to be weak and less interesting. Before long, and she could not help herself, she would push them away, but not until she was convinced they were hopelessly in love. It was as if she fed on men’s spirits. The painting portrays her guilt and shame. The colours are ice cold and the nightgown covers her nakedness. The man is what is left after she is done with him.

Fig. 13
Fig. #14 shows another tormented crucifixion. This painting is 32X48 inches and is done with oil pastel and acrylic paint on masonite. The young man who painted it was a brilliant student and athlete. He was very conscious of the physical form and here displays the raw meat of sinewy muscle and flesh nailed to a cross. The painting offers two points of view: one of the victim seen by the viewer; the other allows the viewer to become the victim on the cross, looking down at the feet. From this vantage point the artist allows us to participate fully in his despair and pain. The red lines in the body contrast the green lines in the skin, as well as the solid green of the cross. The choices of colour, every brushstroke, its length, thickness, direction, weight, commitment, and intensity are deliberate. The textured turbulent sky invades the chest of the crucified figure and both the chest and the sky are wounded and bleeding. The closeup of the feet, so carefully attended to in the layering of glazed-over paint, and the attention to detail of subtle form and shadow, finds the artist searching flesh and bone itself as he tries to reconcile its very meaning. He pays homage to the wonder of the body even in the throes of great pain.

This painting is a personal response to being one of Janice’s used up lovers. The artist, I will call him Eric, felt as though she had devoured his very soul, and the crucifixion archetype was the way he chose to express his pain and inner suffering. The painting is a self portrait, and Eric the athlete, artist, poet, is almost more real in the intensity of the painting than he was in actual conversation.
Eric and Janice managed to remain friends. It is interesting that she painted her painting of herself and Eric (in fig. # 12) which I will call “Blue Ice,” at the same time as he was doing his painting; almost as if they were having an intense dialogue with each other through their work. Both of them were being brutally honest in a way in which words fall short.

Fig. #15 is a pencil drawing done on 18X24 cartridge paper. At first glance there is a crowd of slender, attractive human female figures drawn in perspective with one large figure in the right foreground. The figures get smaller moving into the middle ground and then the background. In the bottom half of the picture plane, the white, line-drawn figure is blended in somewhat with the background. Some of the figures have been grayed slightly for subtle contrast, but in the top half of the drawing the background is black. The figures are white and the contrast is striking. The drawing is also Eric’s. He tried to relate it to me as his Freudian castration complex. He was still reeling from the pain of losing his strength and vitality to Janice in their little love episode.

The central figure in the drawing is Eric, frightened, assaulted, stripped naked, and holding his genitals up and out of the reach of the naked female Delilahs pretending to be at his feet and helpless. One has her arms and legs wrapped around his calves, and she and one of her counterparts reach upward to his genital area. They all seem so beautiful in their submissive servile modes but the large figure below and to the right in the foreground is, as Eric described it, “shedding her skin.” She is peeling back the beautiful and illusory outer epidermis to reveal the wretched devouring creature within. Her wings
are not angelic, but are instead torn and almost batlike. The large female figure hovering to the top right has already shed her skin and holds it in her left hand. Her demonic, wide open mouth tries desperately to assault the penis and testicles. The central figure with its mantis-like arms, clutches its genitals in two-fingered, clawlike hands that are as threatening as scissors.

The metaphor of a demonic spirit hiding within speaks openly to the idea that indeed there is a spirit or soul somehow inside the body. Regardless of whether Eric believes in the idea of souls or spirits, he nonetheless uses a spirit metaphor to express whatever it is that is wounded within, as well as to describe what it is that is his real attacker.
As Eric came to accept his circumstances, his occasional trust in women crept back, and in fig. #16 (reminiscent of Matisse) we find a male and a female figure blending in a naked dance. The positive aqua blue background cleanses the figures’ twisting and moving torsos as they swing about in rapt ecstasy.

Fig. 16

I am including five more of Eric’s works, to offer the opportunity to see the exploration of color, brushwork, and controlled freedom; as well as to show that given the freedom, students can produce high-quality work that is inspired yet not lacking in quantity. I have found that inspired students produce more work than I have materials for them.
Fig. 20
Fig. 22 on the previous page and the five figures that follow were done by a young born-again Christian. His delightfully positive outlook comes through in his work. All works, except for the collage, are large paintings done in acrylic paint on masonite board.

Fig. #22 is the collage. The elements within the total image are cut from different magazines.

At the end of a pier in space, a simple patio deckchair invites the viewer to sit and gaze into the cosmos. The light of God emanating from the galaxy in the top left quadrant seems to shower down through the violet background of eternity, where it lights up the chair and warms the deck in orange. The security and comfort of warm summer nights come to mind and the cosmos beyond is a suggestion of heaven. This is a very spiritual work done by a very spiritual young man.
Fig. #23 is a Mother and Christ pencil drawing on paper 18X24. It employs variations of line, tone, contrast, and simplified shape. The eye comes into the picture at the dark area where the halo and cross traverse, and follows the thick dark line at the back of the head, down the shoulder, elbow, and forearm that encompasses the shape of the Christ-child, almost as if it were still in the womb, but simplified, so that it could be a seed in a bean pod.
Fig. #24 naturally employs a compositional device that used to be taught in the art schools and academies—the pyramid. It extends from the enclosed hands of the central pink adult figure, down the forearms to the tips of the children's hands, and then to their dancing, leaping feet. It also seems to continue, with a slight bend, to the bottom corners of the work. Pyramids are symbols of power and strength in physical form and in mystical traditions centering around Egyptian and other occult myths.

The darkened deep blue sky is not ominous but instead provides contrast to the rising or setting yellow sun. The sun lightens and tames the gradated blues in the waves. Ron conducts his own colour value scale test here as he adds white to blue, tinting the hue upward in well-defined shapes within the waves. The figures are asexual, naked, and seem to be children at play, dancing to life itself in the security and presence of an adult. The cool blue sky and waves are warmly contrasted by the soft yellow of the rising sun that illuminates the twin souls into individual warm colors; one child orange, one child yellow. The adult is white-hot pink. Again, this is a rendition of spirit in symbol and form. But there is little doubt that the spirit of Ron permeates the work, sending out something of himself, perhaps aka threads, that fuse his positive vibrations with the viewer. We become forever touched by Ron and his energetic positive outlook.
Figure #25: I nicknamed this one Ron's Paper Christ. The reds contrasted by the turbulent blue sky, lay for the most part in calm horizontals, suggesting rest. Had Ron used diagonals or verticals, the red would have seemed more like cold blood instead of the warm blood of life from the sleeping and gentle “Paper Christ.”

The green cross is as much the tree of life as it is the cross of crucifixion. The orange Christ complements the blue and is analogous to the pink and red sky. The cool deep burgundy, suggesting Earth and blood, penetrates the cool dark blue section of sky in the upper righthand corner, which is warmed by the refreshing lime-green highlights of the cross rooted in the bottom of the sky as the cross gets wider at its base.

The body of Christ is wavering in the wind, adjusting and reshaping itself into the clouds the way clouds transform into other things in our imaginations when we complete their suggestive shapes. The Christ is shapeshifting. He is becoming the wind and sky.
Figure #26: Ron continues to celebrate life through dance. The background blues are again distinctly defined into rhythmic bands and shapes in three predominant tints of blue. Again the background blues hint of water as much as they hint at sky. Abstraction freely coalesces with representation. The dancing red figures are again sexless and naked, stripped to their inner core. The primary red contrasts the primary blues and a sense of depth is achieved by the use of overlapping, with a hint at atmospheric perspective, where the stronger contrasts of the light and dark of the leaping foot of the foreground figure overlap and are lightened in front of the slightly smaller, thinner and darker leg of the other figure. The toe of the larger figure touches the heel and instep of the other figure's foot, and the hand of the smaller figure touches the head of the foreground figure, completing an interesting loop that bonds the two together. They are separate yet a "unit" at the same time. The chest area of the smaller figure, tinted subtly, suggests breasts and could therefore mean it is a feminine spirit. It is touching the larger (and only because of its size), more masculine spirit. The larger figure dances out of the picture, perhaps in a flight to get away, or perhaps because it dances freely to its own tune in its own direction.
Figure #27 "Naked Women Before The Mirror." This is a large acrylic painting 48x82. The woman standing before the mirror is reflecting beyond her reflection. She is feeling her Chi, her inner self. In naked contentment she enjoys her feminine form as she feels and blends the form of her inner being with the shape and form of her outward physical appearance.
Frank came to me about halfway into the term. The councillor pleaded that, under the circumstances, I should let him enter the class. He was 17 years old and had been a resident of Michigan until just a few days before becoming a student in my class. Two weeks earlier, both of his parents were killed in a headon car crash. About four or five days after the crash, the Michigan authorities came to Frank and told him that his parents were not really his biological parents. He was told that he had been adopted, and that his biological father had been located and contacted, and under the circumstances he was willing to take Frank. His father lived near the school I teach at and Frank was enrolled into my class.

Figure #28 is Frank's first painting; a self portrait. The primary blood red background sets off the blue boy. He looks away from the viewer in frightened bewilderment as if looking for what might happen next. He tries to fix his wide open eyes on something real. He is trying desperately to "see" reality. The body is not in perfect proportion. The head sits atop a neck that leans, and the left shoulder (on the right side of the picture), is sliced off angularly. This serves to isolate the figure to the center, thinning it, and not allowing it to bleed off to the right. He is not connected to anything. He is isolated from everything, even from the edges of his painting.
Figure # 29: Frank uses a real pinstriped yellow shirt, dipped in wallpaper paste, and glued to a dark burgundy-painted ground. The head of the figure is some sort of wall insulation, glued and built up. The sunglasses hide and glamorize at the same time, as sunglasses tend to do. The real tie, also dipped in wallpaper paste, is thrown back over the shoulder as if caught in a powerful wind. The creased and wrinkled shirt enforces the windy feeling.

I read it as a lost, tormented, convoluted spirit, battered by chaotic winds. The illusory sunglasses see only a darkened world as they try to hide the tormented interior being.
Figure #30 is a pencil drawing 18X24. It began with the mare in the middle of an empty page. The young woman who drew it asked me what I thought she should do next. Not wanting to tell her what to do, I opted to brainstorm ideas with her. I admit I did influence the work. I suggested the mare looked as if she was very static—frozen in time, perhaps on a merry-go-round.

The drawing took its form with the winged stallion appearing first and the merry-go-round soon after. When the drawing was complete, the young woman offered its full explanation, complete with her personal story. A story I was unaware of until our discussion.

Her family was Christian and very strict. She was not allowed to have boyfriends nor was she allowed out of the house during the week or past 10 p.m. on weekends. Nonetheless, she had a boyfriend who was twenty-two years old and with whom she believed she was in love. She felt her life with her boyfriend was more real than the programmed reality she was caught in at home—a reality dictated by her father and dictated to him by the Church. Her life was not her own.

In the drawing, the winged stallion unicorn inserts his horn into the lock that secures her to the merry go round. The key fit the lock and she was freed. The graceful and elegant stallion was beautiful, powerful, and free, making him very attractive to follow. With his magic, he could free her from the bonds of static belief—from the little girl life she stands on, where her mare's hooves
meet the merry-go-round surface and its painted toy elephants; images from childhood.
Figure #31 is a closeup of figure #30. The insertion of the horn into the lock is clearly symbolic of sexual union, a time when a woman gives herself to a man in a way she cannot give to her father. It is a self assertive act, signifying self decision and autonomy from other influences. To the right, other winged stallions fly in to claim and emancipate other mares from their merry-go-round lives. The realistic drawing skills speak for themselves. Learning how to shade boxes, cones, and spheres would have wasted this girl’s time, and I am sure would have bored her to further static tears.
Figure #32 is another drawing done by the same girl. The darkened background subtly contrasts the wild frantic horses overlapped by the horse heads coming into the foreground. The dominant head in the foreground has the reins pulled in. Her eyes are sad and the reins taut. The strain and the fear are great. Her father knows the truth, and her boyfriend may be what her father says he is; dark, wayward, and evil. I cannot be sure because I do not remember fully the story behind this one, but the frantic screaming horse behind the one with the reins pulled in, may be her boyfriend, or it may be her enraged father.

Both of these drawings anthropomorphise horses into human spirit. This girl senses and speaks in these works of her inner being, and its relationships to other inner beings in her life.
Figure #33 on the previous page, as well as figures #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, and #39 are Debbie’s. This frail, almost anorexic girl was obsessed with being feminine. I thought of her as dangerously feminine—not to others, but to herself. The theme of most of her work poses glamorous thin women in the latest fashion. Fashion was, to her, more than a statement; it was a form of power she believed women could possess. Feminine power lay in female sexuality, in a woman’s ability to attract and hold a man, for in men real power and security could be obtained. I am presenting here a body of her work, which as a whole I believe speaks more clearly than individual pieces do.
Male symbols in Debbie's art are represented by the two following works in figures #38 and #39. The kneeling rugged personality in figure #38, I believe, is a well-known rock star. He is thin but muscular and not particularly well dressed. Men do not have to be.
Figure #39 is Debbie's only nature scene. Flesh-coloured, potentially life-giving cactuses assert their virility and power in a dark but ominously beautiful landscape. The spirit of life is again the substance that asserts itself in this richly coloured but desolate and dark landscape. Power; male power, is something to behold as Debbie is clearly paying homage to male strength and virility.

As an anecdote, after viewing and discussing Debbie's work with her, when her mother dropped in to meet me, my advice to her was to buy Debbie some thick heavy hiking boots and see that she walked in the woods until she understood the redeeming qualities of mud and sweat.
Figure #40: Karen’s pet peeve about herself was that she was lazy. She admitted it, and often also admitted to being bored. The subject of her work is boredom. The irony of Karen in these works is that boredom has “inspired” an honest depiction of her inner condition. The posturing of the figure in figure #40 depicts a jaw pushed out of place, perhaps over time by a hand that supports the weight of the head. The right elbow rests on the knee, and her left forearm and hand are also at rest on the back of the knee and lower thigh. The shoulders are slouched forward and the lines of the face cannot resist the pull of gravity. The weight of her body seems almost too much to bear, and the brushwork, in mostly vertical and diagonal strokes, patches and overlaps a full palette of colour in such a way as to find the negative attributes of each. The reds are angry. The greens envious, the yellows cowardly, and the blues empty and cold. She is a body of stored up and unexpressed emotion, too lazy to even try to express itself.

Her spirit is still, but not in a good way. The right eye is hypnotized, as the lines of the iris radiate fully to show no white. The other eye is dark, and the spark of yellow/green in the center echoes the same emotions pentup in the colours of the body.
Karen’s other painting of the tiger, Fig. #41, orchestrates fiery reds and yellows set off by black and white patches that radiate almost like a sunburst out from the center. For all the attempts about becoming fired up here her green tiger’s eyes are all glazed over. She is still bored.
Fig. #52; a pen and ink drawing on paper, 18x24, is a variation of the ideas in fig. #50. Again, black and white opposites are played with in the background. The only colour, red, is balanced through the work adding to its intensity. The characters are grouped into events within the whole; relationships are not what they seem. Things are not solid, e.g. just right of center and near the top of the drawing the ghostlike bottle is cut through by a meat cleaver but does not break. In this way conventions of physical limits are distorted. In an interview with Todd, he referred to this as the “blurring of distinctions.”
Fig. #50 and its closeup in fig. #51 are what began as a "game drawing," a technique I have passed along to my students that I learned while in university from my professor Bob Steel. The process requires the artist to scribble all over the page and then to simply stare into the scribbles and free associate. When gestures of images are recognised they can then be outlined or rendered in any way the artist chooses. Free association in this manner prompts an exploration of the unconscious in a fun yet revealing exercise that can then be apprehended and added to in a more conscious way.

Here, Todd juxtaposes animals, people, and objects into isolated events that are nonetheless webbed into the whole. Objects and events are at once isolated, and inseparably connected at the same time; not unlike quantum particles in relativistic physics. The space between objects is filled with both white dots in a black background and black dots on a white background. Where dots straddle the border between black and white, the dots themselves become black and white in the portion that opposes its background. The black and white world, the world of opposites, of the dualist West, is thus toyed with here as Todd teases our visual perception of reality.
Fig. #49 is a silkscreen done in my colleague, Myra Edie's graphics class in the same year Todd did the other works in this presentation.

Todd is a very intense young man—analytical, intellectually objective, but subject to powerful emotion when he senses injustice, blind ignorance, or social, and sometimes personal circumstances beyond his control. This intense portrait, almost apelike in its raw animal strength, peers out accusingly from behind eyes of ancient primordial wisdom. The diagonal posture is not at rest and the hot fiery red and orange has to be contained within bold, thick black lines. This is a purposely threatening and accusing portrait that undoubtedly is Todd. It is a portrait of his inner self, angry at the world he sees, a world of weak cowardly followers, too lazy and too complacent to seek alternatives to the status quo that everyone knows will be the demise of the planet and future generations.
Figure # 48: The artist was as shy, delicate, and quiet as the figure in her painting. I believe she used a photograph as the primary source, but the final rendition, so soft and gentle, is really a depiction of the girl who painted the painting. Every time I see this picture I visualize the young woman who painted it and recognise that it emanates the essence of her very being. The spirit of the girl is entangled deeply in the work.
Figure #47, also a large painting on masonite, depicts an undersea world teeming with life webbed together by strands of colourful organic lines, like aka threads, Chi, or super strings dancing and radiating their light; a living eternal presence of universe itself. Both of these works are celebrations of the web of life.
Figure # 45 is of a whale or fish floating gently in a dark, perhaps deep water background. The fish radiates its own light, almost phosphorescent, but really pastel. The colours are tinted with white, thinned and confidently painted with long easy strokes. It seems that the life force--Chi--lights up and flows through the image. Fig. #46 is a closeup of fig. # 45.
Figure #44 is equally, if not more disturbing. Robin is not exorcising his devils in these works. He is Hell itself, eternally tormented in the present moment.

Bands of blue getting progressively colder as they radiate away from the fiery-coloured head and torso encompass the figure like a coffin in a dark unknown void. The mouth, again wide open, screams in utter torment. The arms, interlocked in a black outline, are straight-jacketed together symbolizing immobility and confinement. The spirit is powerless, completely out of control, and frozen in isolated self-denial. The work is beyond rage. Rage at least sometimes knows its source.

Both works strip away outerworld imagery. These works again speak of spirit, of the inner self, the unseen unknowable being within. They speak most poignantly to the truth that only intense emotion can bear light on the fact that the center of the universe seems indeed to begin in the self.
Figures #43 and #44 are both oil pastels, done on heavy stock bond paper. Robin was an intense young man. His two works in figs. #43 and #44, although at first glance appear to express opposite emotions, actually address the same problem: they both speak of inner turmoil and absolute inner chaos.

In figure #43, the confused self cannot settle on one predominant colour. Like the work of Karen in figure #40, the colours are chaotic, seemingly indiscriminate patches of color, that portray a multitude of confused pentup emotions. The insane laughter just breaks out for no apparent reason. The inner chaos extends outward to an equally misunderstood outer world. A world of right and wrong moves, as symbolized by the black and white checkerboard to the top left of the tenuous brick wall, unsure of being built or destroyed, and of spiralling hypnotic vortexes or webs, to the right of the jaw.

Nothing is horizontal. Nothing gentle. Nothing suggests rest. The reds, yellows, purples, and oranges are predominantly hot like fire. The spikes of blue coming from all sides break up the chaos and lead all eyes to the insane face and head with its wide open mouth, exposing the darkness within. The darkness becomes the focal point of the picture.
Figure #42 was painted by Benta. Benta was a little overweight, but she dealt with it well. She had a boyfriend, she liked to talk and smile, and she loved doing artwork. Benta’s lighthearted emotions regarding her weight condition are joyfully expressed here as she paints these lovely, almost blown up, helium-filled female figures. They are the colours of the sky and light as the air that holds up the birds. There are diagonal lines of movement uniting the composition. The direction of the reaching arm of the figure on the left, the direction of the lines of the rolls of the tummy continue along the bird’s wing that is being touched by the head of the background figure. This direction continues in the lines of the bird’s body to the top of the picture.

The figures are almost cloudlike in their way and are couched in a contrasting dark leaf foliage to the left side. The dark could be interpreted to be something negative and encompassing, but the light to the right and the flight symbolism of the birds tends to lean toward the positive.
Fig. #53: Levy's hypothesis that it is possible for an artist to imbue his/her work with Chi and a life force of its own that is still connected--by way of aka threads--to its creator, comes to mind when I think of or look at Todd's chair paintings. They have an energy of their own.

Because we think of chairs as straight and stiff, and because Todd's chair in fig. #53 is organic, breathing, almost moving, we are seduced into the work. Perhaps we could learn from this chair how to be more pliable than we allow ourselves to be. It is us (or Todd) if we loosen up. The chair and the houses form an inverted triangle of red that links them like a bonded family unit. The golden light in the windows of the houses implies life and warmth that flows through the window and lights up the chair. The chair becomes alive and inviting; almost inviting us to sit in its lap.

Todd, the peering hostile God of judgment in fig. #49, has surrendered to the eternity of the moment in a gesture of forgiveness and acceptance. But the chair is Todd—waiting.
In fig. #54, Todd creates a sense of depth via the artistic devices of overlapping, converging perspective lines, and size variation. The painting is not quite finished, the white through the window is bare canvas and therefore not relevant to analysis; it is in fact, quite distractive, but the painting is far enough along to appreciate its power and simplicity.

The chairs are solid, straight, yet almost moving as the larger chair seems to walk right out of the picture.

These chairs are still organic in color but less so in their straighter lines. They assert themselves as being very much “there” of even “here” as the one on the left is “in your face.” Though more static than the chair in fig. #53, these chairs still have a force of their own. Todd’s Chi again asserts itself through this work.
In fig. #55 and its closeup in fig. #56 the red chair is as organic as the green, blue, and red spirit beings. Both subjects wrestle with the viewer's sense of convention about what is real, alive, and conscious. The chair is as real, alive, and conscious as the figures which, stripped naked, are simplified to portray frightened immobilized spirits that are even more cornered than the chair is. This time there is no window of escape. There is no symbolic metaphor through which one might imagine other connections or possibilities. Though cornered, the chair seems happier and more content than the dark and intensely coloured figures. It does not fear immobility, just "being" is fine in itself, but it knows it could move if it wanted to.
Fig. #57 is a large painting. In an interview for this thesis, Steve (now twenty-one years old) enjoyed and confirmed my interpretation of this work.

The confident, powerful, and erect spirit is his higher self. It is positioned on the staircase above the other spirit and is motioning this slouched, searching, and dumber lower self to take a few steps upward.

The lights of the collective unconscious filter through the corridors of metaphor, symbolized by the window illuminating the figures and their conflict of a divided inner spirit that recognises its own ambivalence.
Steve is a deep, witty, and brilliant young artist who has wrestled the black and white issues of good and evil through his art since his early childhood. His love of comic book superheroes began at a very early age; prompting Steve to draw them. He confided that as a six-year-old he was seldom seen not wearing his Superman cape. Steve was clearly gifted in his drawing skills and while in my class I encouraged him to pursue his chosen art form. Asking Steve to broaden his artistic horizons and conform to a standard high school curriculum would have been a waste of his time and a blatant example of institutionalized dogma and protocol about the value of a standardized measurable curriculum.

Steve began writing letters and sending examples of his work to Marvel Comics in New York (with chocolate bars enclosed) while in my class. They wrote him a few letters back suggesting he loosen up and draw from the model a little more. It was the same and only advice I really ever had for him. I saw my task as helping him psychologically prepare for early success and remain a happy person.

In less than a year after his high school graduation, Marvel Comics offered Steve his own comic book, *EctoKid*, a superhero created by the well-known writer of horror stories, Clive Barker. Steve was only nineteen years old.

I have included the cover of Steve's debut comic book and a few pages of his work in Figs. #58-61 to illustrate the dedication, spirit, and professional expertise of this talented young man.
Fig. 59
Fig. 61
In fig. #62 Wendy confided that when she painted this picture in my grade eleven class she was interested in pagan ceremony and ritual.

The primal firedance of contorted figures is a spiritual ceremony uniting the spirit of humanity to the spirits of earth, fire, and air as symbolized by the white moon in a starry sky.

The figure in the foreground has an arm reaching forward almost becoming the fire. The head is a stone or perhaps the earth sliced through with a green grassy surface the same colour as the ground.

The white moon in the top left is echoed in the white light of the fire and in the eye of the “earth-headed dancer” tying the elements of earth, air (sky), and fire to the primal soul of humanity. There is a pure white moon in a cool endless sky that is heated up by the fiery reds, yellows, and oranges sitting on a lime-green grassy ground. This dance of a circle of masked beings is painted with thick sinewy paint. It is raw, primal, almost instinctually naive. Good and evil do not really find a place here, where consciousness is swallowed up along with its separations and meanings into the blending of elements in the pureness of the dance.
Fig. #63, a pencil drawing on paper was done by a very sweet, feminine but gutsy little girl in her grade twelve year. The feminist statement is clear: little girls can play with toads and other crawly things, too! There is a potent statement of power in the enlarged forearm and hand. The pose, and the strong contrasting light and dark tones emphasize Sherry’s convictions and feelings. But the sturdy and powerful little human being in this drawing is as at peace with these other creatures as they are with her. Feminine power is powerful, but not life threatening. It nurtures and this little female Earth mother protects rather than intimidates. She absorbs completely the viewer’s insecurities and paranoia’s about the ugliness or beauty of these animals. They blend as a loving unit of life and creation. The beauty is in their trusting and comfortable relationship; a unity that accepts individual differences and life forms yet knows their oneness.

This is a deeply spiritual statement about the earth, life, and humanity from a truly feminine perspective.
Realism and super realism (especially of nature painters) are often judged by some individuals in the arts as shallow and lacking in depth and spirit. It is sometimes viewed as safe because it is less metaphorically obscure and does not allegedly provide as much of a task for the critical theorists to make use of their qualifications that they all too often believe grants them knowledge beyond simple opinions such as, "I like it." The public is not "educated" to know the difference between good art and bad art. I think both the public and the arts community could find room to open their minds about what constitutes good and bad art.

This thesis argues that life is lived by spirit and is in itself spiritual. All life, from birth till death, is spiritual, and living moments temporarily frozen into the time and space of the visual arts cannot help being spiritual. All reality has its spiritual content and those who would judge realism as inferior in the arts seem to have forgotten the spiritual nature of daily living.

Fig. #64 is a pencil drawing done by Chris. He used a photo from a magazine to copy this masterpiece. I saw the photo and I believe his empathy enriched this drawing with his Chi because, although the drawing is almost photorealistic, its impact as a drawing is remarkably different than its source (the photo).

To say that life itself is not a spiritual experience is challenged profoundly by this work. I suggest the viewer stop and study this work carefully, and then while looking at it, try to imagine that spirit does not exist.
The self "is moved" by sight, emotion, and spiritual communion with the total experience and meaning of this work. It has a force of which we are part. It is a focal point—a beacon of love and unity that binds us to it in ways that words will never explain. This work makes humanity whole and one, and whole and one with nature as well. It tells us there is heaven on Earth, and that we are spirit in the body.

Copy or not, borrowed image or not, this is one of the most powerful works of art I have ever encountered. The photographer is to be commended, but so is Chris for taking this image beyond what it was.
Fig. #65: this 32X48 acrylic painting, a self portrait, is as intense and powerful as the young man who painted it. This was Chris’s first painting. It took a little coercion to get him to attempt it but his confidence as an artist and his extraordinary drawing skills were easily adapted to paint, which he applied loosely but in a controlled fashion. It looks exactly like him.

If indeed the eyes are the “windows of the soul,” Chris’s soul peers out mysteriously from behind this illusion of his face and flesh with an intensity that longs for understanding.
Fig. #66: this pencil drawing is a symbolic archetype of much of the meaning of this thesis. The questions of humanity are posed in juxtaposition.

Logic itself is geometrically fused into the hip and turns upward into the rib of this timeless woman who could be Eve, Helen of Troy, Venus De Milo, or the girl next door.

Man/woman the seeker is compelled to know the secrets binding the unity of all existence, and geometric logic is here juxtaposed and blends into the organic curves of a beautiful woman who by her very nature defies logic. Love is her quest and logic her barrier. Logic defines realities and the illusion of boundaries, limits, and separateness. Love defies limits, boundaries, and even realities.

The round orbs within the geometric perimeters could be either planets or quanta. They symbolize the physical, but to try to think about and fully comprehend them logically would be impossible. They are complete in themselves—void of questions or answers; perfect in their sense of unity and being; microcosms of the macrocosm.
The drawing to the left, fig. #67, was done by Laurie when she was in my grade twelve class. Laurie is now a very well known and respected Vancouver artist. In an interview for this thesis, Laurie said that she had seen this work in a photographic magazine while browsing in the school library. It was taken from a war street scene and it moved her to the point of "reacting physically." She felt strongly about the image in that, as a child she stated that she "identified with animals" because of their inability to communicate and express themselves, which made them so completely vulnerable. In Laurie's formative years she felt alone and cut off in many ways as well.

In the war photo, the child is hanging on to a warm-bodied living creature; identifying with its life. Laurie is now and has been for a long time, a vegetarian. She believes and feels all life to be profoundly sacred, and the child in the picture, holding onto and protecting the hen, reminded her of the love she had for a cat that, when it died, moved her as much as the loss of a human life could.
Fig. #68: this pencil drawing, also by Laurie, was done in the same year as the peasant girl holding the chicken. Again, it explores humanity as spirit. This little boy in fig. #68, and its closeup in fig. #69, is a living body animated from within, and like Chris's self portrait in fig. #65, its spirit cries out from its inner being.
Although Laurie confided that she has a deep empathy for animals and all living creatures, these works are the beginning of a long tradition of personal exploration of just what humanity is. Laurie draws and paints human beings often. I am including fig. #70, an image she painted as a commission while still in my class in 1980 as well as a copy of her invitation (fig. #71) to an exhibition of her work at the Dianne Ferris Gallery in Vancouver in 1994. It appears that Laurie is still trying to work toward the naked truth.

Fig. 71
Chapter Nine Conclusions

I have presented these student works as a thesis within a greater thesis. My students' works clearly indicate that inner questions, feelings, and emotions are the source of much of their artwork. The works are now beacons that speak of their inner worlds. There is a voice within their bodies coming from their creative living spirits that expresses itself through their creations. The most profound reality of these young artists is the reality we don't see. Their artworks help us to empathize and relate to that reality within.

The artworks do indeed indicate that we are spirit but the preceding chapters, and the greater thesis of this presentation, indicate that as spirit we are capable of transcending the physical world. As spirit we live more than one lifetime. And as spirit we can explore the inner being of other objects or beings. These student artworks help to support the greater thesis that the education system needs to recognise that it teaches to a very "surface" level of what we are. The arts provide a safe avenue to the inner spirit and should therefore be core subjects in education.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

There is an enormous body of evidence, in the form of testimony, recorded hypnotic regressions, near-death experiences, out-of-body experiences, spirit communication, paranormal and parapsychological tests (J. B. Rhine et al), as well as testimony of mystics and philosophers from the ancient past to the present, suggesting that consciousness can exist independent of the body, supporting the thesis that we are eternal spirit having a limited human experience.

Quantum physics no longer supports a mechanistic picture of physical reality. Instead it seems that the universe is inseparably linked throughout all time and space, and may be a construct of consciousness. This coheres with the Eastern mystical worldview that the physical world is *Maya* (illusion) and offers support to theories of nonphysical pure energy dimensions of reality, e.g. David Bohm's implicate and explicate order; universes that I suggest could house a nonphysical spiritual dimension.

Religious fundamentalism and radical scientism have deluded Western humanity into a spiritual crisis that has buried our inner selves into a spiritless philosophical paradigm based in property, possession, and overconsumption in everything we do, including information intoxication. We have lost touch with the earth and ourselves as spirit, and in so doing, we do not know what and who we are. Because we do not know for sure that we are eternal spirit, we inadvertently seek immediate gratification in an attempt to satiate our inner
longings for spiritual communion. For many, love becomes distorted, perverted, and addictive, because it is not understood within its true context, which is spiritual, unlimited, and open.

Because we do not know who and what we are, we blindly educate our children toward human survival, void of spiritual enrichment. We do this by insisting that the public education system remain completely secular, even to the point that many teachers would not feel comfortable with students of various religious persuasions discoursing freely about their personal beliefs in the classroom. Such discourse might influence a fundamentalist's child and make the child aware of other evidence, philosophical argument, and beliefs. Children might be influenced by "education" and not by the indoctrination fundamentalists would prefer.

Inadvertently, we also inculcate the principles of radical scientism to the point that, whether we say we believe in a spiritual reality or not, we nonetheless go about our lives as if we did not believe that way; instead of living every moment of our life as if it is spiritual!

We insist that the present core "academic" subjects are more important than other subjects, i.e., the Fine Arts, because they are esteemed by universities who, like the school system, do not consider the Fine Arts important enough to human development to elevate them to core status. The spiritual content and reward of the Fine Arts is ignored or not recognised by the universities. Scientism and the dogma of logical empiricism have rendered the largest part of our universities spiritless as well.
Arts educators need to become cognizant of the spiritual content of the Fine Arts. It is here that we can sincerely argue the necessity of boosting the status and the time allocated to the arts in the public education curriculum. Life and how to live it is the content of the arts. Few people, as they approach the final moments of their life, look back and confide that they wish they had spent more time at the office, yet we prepare our children to do just that! Why?

I find it very distressing that schools continue to focus more and more on contact with the business community that already exerts far too much influence into school curriculum and the classroom. Government mandates for career preparation courses and related programs cut more and more time from the arts and delivers the message that the arts are expendable and less important than career preparation and/or the core academic subjects. Government and social ignorance of the spiritual value of the arts is self-perpetuating, because most people stopped doing art in grade one, and because universities do not include the Fine Arts among courses for university entrance. Very few people explore the realms of joy on a personal level that the arts offer. For this reason, few people truly understand the real value of the arts, which is spiritual, because they were not exposed to the arts in school. The public, government, and the universities underscore and give only token support to the arts.

Until humanity accepts itself as spiritual in nature, the earth will also continue to be ignored for its deeply spiritual content. For profit, we continue to ignore the real bottom line understood by the indigenous cultures. In all the
discussions regarding logging and timber rights in British Columbia the argument of the spiritual content of our virgin forests finds no place at all in the negotiations. That we take chainsaws to native spiritual homes and dwelling places is not factored into our bottom line myths. Most of humanity does not want to face this word, spirit, nor what it represents because it would surely require a complete shift in lifestyle and beliefs about property and ownership in a capitalist democracy. I do not believe our capitalist democracy would in any way be threatened if people recognised their own spiritual nature. I suspect we would simply find a much more humane, sane, and sincere way of doing business.

Many people would opt for more “quality” time and less material possession as quality contact with others and the earth would become increasingly attractive. When individuals learn to cut through the illusions and myths of the outside world (Maya) and turn inward to the universe of spirit a simpler uncomplicated lifestyle becomes easier to accept and enjoy.

Status, glamour, vanity, fashion, and ego aggrandizement fall away as communion binds separate entities to the whole, allowing them to feel complete and full with beingness itself.

Happiness begins in the self, with nothing at all, yet the present education system is geared to terminal distraction that, by the way, becomes terminal to about twenty-two species of plant and animal life every day. Big business feeds on precious nonreplaceable species and calls it growth and progress. The myths we pass to young people when we overemphasize that the
purpose of their education is to prepare them for a good job ultimately perpetuates the myth that the economy must grow in spite of the "trade offs." We don't need a better economy. What we need to do is what Christ suggested, translated from the Greek word metanoia, "change our consciousness." Our personal and educational goals should place more emphasis upon inner explorations that would also serve to help us to be happy with life itself, not getting more "stuff." We need to learn to be happy with what Earth can afford to give.

Public educators and the universities must take the lead rather than follow government and cultural protocol. It is a tragedy that those at the forefront of human knowledge are led rather than lead. The new knowledge in the West is that we are spirit. The universities and the public education system must now shift attention away from the dogma of scientism and logical empiricism and reconsider their educational goals in light of this knowledge.

Spiritual ignorance is dangerous to the planet, other species, and to humanity.

To read about spirituality in books and Scripture has its place, but it cannot educate as well as firsthand spiritual experiences. Without actually experimenting with drugs or hypnosis, etc. the closest states of mind related to spiritual experiences that can safely be explored are the states of mind we undergo while immersed in the arts. The dissolution of the ego, resulting in a sense of transcendental wholeness of being is felt by anyone immersed deeply into music, dance, or carving. The arts offer a direct link to our spiritual inner selves.
The artworks in this presentation depict images that refer directly to inner spiritual realities, offering young people a bridge between their inner and outer universes. The content of these works is undoubtedly spiritual and it is for this reason that they move us in spirit. I have included my students’ works that I might illustrate the effects and results of my beliefs on my teaching and to provide evidence of the spiritual content of the arts. I argue that because the arts are about life itself (including our inner life of spirit) that the arts should be elevated to core status by the universities and the Ministry of Education.

Research, and an enormous body of testimony worldwide, suggests strongly that consciousness can exist independent of the body. (e.g. near-death experiences; a significant percentage of Americans surveyed have experienced communication with a spirit). Shamans and the Chinese understand other forces (energy or spiritual forces like Chi) that negate the need for much of our technology. Healing can be done with the mind, as in Moyers’s Healing and the Mind. Astral travelling, or out-of-body experiences can take us to places that airplanes and rockets cannot. Through hypno-regression we can time travel and relive the drama of past lives, recount foreign lands, speak foreign languages, and discover hidden talents. The shapeshifting of shamans suggests we can experience being a tree or the wind. Satori suggests we can become one with the universe and all of being.

I feel I have been deluded and shortchanged by my education because, instead of exploring these inner potentials, I was taught they do not exist. Though I have experienced some of the above phenomena as real and true.
personal life experiences I have been told by others who have not experienced them that my life experiences are delusions.

This research and personal testimony were not done just for my benefit but as much or more for the benefit of my students who I have not been at liberty to share my knowledge with because it contravenes the predominant myths and beliefs of our culture and education system.

There is far more to human potential than “meets the eye.” This thesis is a wakeup call to an education system that by omission has done its populous an enormous disservice.

The academic community needs to lay down its taboos and move beyond the dogma of radical scientism and religious fundamentalism and to begin exploration into the matters presented in this thesis.

The best of what we are is hidden within, where there is an unlimited universe waiting to be discovered and explored. The academic community needs to turn more of its attention to this inner transpersonal realm of human consciousness and stop ignoring those who do know and experience these truths. Perhaps it is time for a “Shaman in Residence.”
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