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### Tumbling Through Time: An Inquiry Into Vision

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TUMBLING THROUGH TIME:

An Inquiry Into Vision

by

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Candidate for the Master of Fine Arts  
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May 28, 1976

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose Of The Thesis:

The purpose of my thesis is to photographically investigate the coextension and interlineation of the creative process as it relates to dreams, fantasies, and memories.

### Scope Of The Thesis:

The work of the thesis project will revolve around an on-going inquiry into the essential structure of the creative process prior to, and at the moment of, its inception. The particular character of this study will concern itself with the relationships of dreams, memories, and fantasy as they affect the personal state of mind before and during the creative phenomenon of image making. It is at the moment of artistic creation, or creative viewing, that fantasy as experience starts to draw upon memories and dreams for raw image material. Fantasy as experience has been explored in my film "Memories," and it is hoped that the still photographs will work in conjunction with this film to further examine the affinity between memory framework and dream composition.

The implications of fantasy (be it conscious or unconscious) and its reciprocal relation to dreams and

memories is to be displayed in my still images and examined as conceptual thought in the thesis report. The intent will be to create for myself and others visual possibilities that allow room to examine what effect memory, dreams and fantasy have on our perception. My studies thus far have revealed that dreams, memories and fantasy are separate but related ideas which can best be investigated by examining them as event or experience. This is the intellectual endeavor which my work will attempt to illuminate.

The thesis report is viewed by me as an integral part of the thesis study, in that it will attempt to give a running account of the sensibilities behind the images and establish new methods in viewing an aesthetic image. In trying to bring about practical guidelines for quality perception of the image event, it is hoped that the photographs themselves will act as visual pointers to ideas expressed.

#### Procedures:

This thesis project evolved from visual research and academic studies concerning personal perception. It represents a multifaceted exploration into the realm of dreams, memories and fantasy. This exploration found its beginnings in literature with the writings of

Carlos Castenada, Aldous Huxley, Herman Hesse, and J. Krishnamurti playing an important introductory role. My film "memories" was made in an effort to explore the correlation of memories and dreams in constructing a fantasy event. I have now begun work on still photographs which attempt to both extend the interrelatedness of film and still photographs, and break new ground in representation of dream and memory interpretation. The added purpose of the stills will be to produce a mirror-like quality in relation to personal definitions of reality. I believe my film points in a direction of "meaning through fantasy as experience," which my stills will attempt to emulate.

Current work involving the still photographs is concerned with choosing images from among the negatives produced to find those which best display the ideas I wish to express. This will be done with the advisement and collaboration of my thesis board in the viewing of my work prints. Work also is in progress on the thesis report itself. Sources in the literature of perception and specifically as that literature relates to dreams, memories and fantasy will be sought out with the guidance of the thesis board and integrated into the body of the investigative report. Present sources in literature being examined are: Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of



Mind, John C. Lilly, M.D., The Center of the Cyclone: An Autobiography of Inner Space, Robert E. Ornstein, The Psychology of Consciousness, R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience.

The still photographs to be completed for the thesis will number twenty (approximately) and measure in the sixteen by twenty inch range. To enhance continuity between film and still photographs a purposeful similarity of lighting and color will be used in each. The film is in 16 mm black and white with optical sound track and final printing on color stock for proper image toning.

## CHAPTER I

### Unmediated Contact With The New

Tumbling through time: An inquiry into vision, is the title for this work. This appellation is a mode of description. It is a metaphor for a way of seeing, concerned with perception and in defining the moment of awareness. It is about the interlineation and coextension of the creative process as it relates to memories, dreams, and fantasy.

We have all felt it, that sensation that sweeps over you in a moment of insight. It is an early morning in fall, the frost has covered everything exposed to it with a thin coating. Your foot comes down on some dried weeds in the field and a crunching sound stops you short, and for an instant you feel the wonder of it all. The feeling sweeps over you and with quiet reassurance the world stops for a second or two. Afterwards, everything rushes back and the world rearranges itself in your mind. The "noose" tightens around your brain, and consciousness returns. We search to regain those moments, and yet as we continue on our morning walk through the early frost, the dam holds the flood waters in check. The pleasant feeling lingers, but the breakthrough is gone. Only the seepage is apparent.



What happened in that moment? Where did the mind-body go at that instant? Can I go there again? Will it happen again on its own? Can I "will" it to happen?

Many have the longing to return to that lost moment. It is like rousing out of a dream, you like the dream and don't want to be awake quite yet, so you bounce back and forth trying to keep the dream together. But, you are awakening now, and something is taking control, and you head for the refrigerator for a glass of orange juice. The day begins to arrange itself, to find and order things.

Sometimes I feel compelled to write on the bathroom mirror at night. Leaving my name, occupation, life goals, days duties, responsibilities; all that is needed in case I don't quite awaken out of that "someplace" in the morning. It would be reassuring to leave behind a little note to bring me around. Memories are like that too. A memory will seem to come out of nowhere without any planning or forethought.

Memories will suddenly be there and with them will come all their associations (good, bad, or indifferent). The memory is there for a moment and it changes all that is for a short time, then escapes back to where it came from.

Memories, dreams, moments lost or regained, are all a part of our makeup. They are the part and parcel of the things going into making us who we are. It is like our walking encyclopedism of self. Consciously or unconsciously all is carried with us through each waking and non-waking moment. The brain-body is efficient and the baggage does not become too heavy to carry. For some it does become too heavy a load and then a reevaluation of self becomes necessary.

What keeps the mind-body in order, so that it can continue and grow inwardly, as well as in the physical sense? These are questions that the mind-body asks of itself. Some say that there is a large portion of the mind that isn't even being used. That I, as a person in society, haven't even begun to tap the potential of the mind-body. Where do I begin if I want to tap that area? How will I start to find the hidden recesses of self?

It would be sensible to start with what I'm already working with; my senses, through which I know the world about me. My eyes seem to be the most heavily used tool (process) I've got. My vision, the visual perceiving process, seems as good as any place to start. At twenty-six years of age, many things have passed before my eyes (not everything), but an abundance.

Practically everything that goes in front of them is received, transported, transmitted, and stored in the brain. Furthermore, it seems that what the eyes see is somehow effected by what has been previously stored in the brain. It seems that sometimes, when my mind is very busy thinking about something of particular importance or interest to me, that I'll not see what is passing in front of my open eyes. We have all had the experience of driving a distance, and while driving, have chatted with a friend. Suddenly we pause at a stop light and realize that although we remember exactly what the conversation has been about for that last thirty minutes, I, as driver of a car going sixty miles an hour through heavy traffic, have no recollection of having driven the car or paid any attention to what has been going on with the act of driving. And there you sit, knowing perfectly well who has been involved in talking away about whatever, but who was driving the car?

It is similar to the owner of a store returning to find, "Nobody minding the store." It is his hope that nothing has been stolen or that no one has jeopardized his business.

The mind-body starts to look a little more complex than was first thought. Things pass before the eyes and yet all is not seen.

It is beginning to resemble a prestidigitator's act: "The hands are quicker than the eye." The brain appears to be able to handle much more than a stimulus response theory could begin to explain. A proposed theory that we are utilizing only fifteen per cent of our brain capacity, opens an area of interest. There is an excitement at the possibility here; eighty-five per cent of something that is somewhere within me and yet hidden from me is the tip of an iceberg.

How and where am I to start looking? I will go back to the eyes. They function by taking what is out in front of them and relaying that information to the brain. I will try to break it down and simplify it to some extent. There is a package of cigarettes on the desk in front of me. I shut my eyes and they disappear. The longer I stare at them, the better I can see an "after-image" when I shut my eyes. The afterimage fades with color changes and little bubbles come down across a fluidly-looking black-reddish screen. I wait for awhile and then open my eyes again to look at the pack sitting there, in the same place that I had left it.

There is an incident which comes to mind concerning visual reaction. I had rented a cabin on a lake for a few months last fall, and the window across from the bed gave a perfect view of the lake. I had only lived there a few days.



On the morning I'm referring to, I was not, as yet, familiar with my new surroundings; always a little surprised at where I was, I guess. Anyway, I awoke from a deep sleep and as I sat up to get out of bed, the view startled me. For, it seemed that instead of me sitting up, it was the world outside the window that was moving or rolling up and down like a window shade. I quickly realized that it was I who had moved, changing the view in the window: not the landscape outside.

But, for a moment there, something happened between what was being "seen" and the one doing the "seeing". A barrier was let down, if just for an instant. The role of object being perceived was switched. It brings up an interesting idea, a sort of "what if": What if all we see around us is really seeing us? A hard one to fit into our rational thinking. This coincides with something John Lilly said in the introduction to his book, The Center of the Cyclone:

Discoveries of any great moment in mathematics and other disciplines, once they are discovered, are seen to be extremely simple and obvious, and make everybody, including their discoverer, appear foolish for not having discovered them before. It is all too often forgotten that the ancient symbol for pre-nascence of the world is a fool, and that foolishness, being a divine state, is not a condition to be either proud or ashamed of.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John C. Lilly, The Center of the Cyclone: An Autobiography of Inner Space (New York, Bantam Book, Inc., 1973), p. xi.

It is not that I've made any great discovery. The point is, we have ways of processing information, ways of taking what the eye presents to us, and interpreting that data making it fit into what we already know. We rarely drop the barriers and see things differently. My mind came to my rescue and stopped me from interpreting the visual display (out the window) wrongly. I quickly "got hold of myself" and correctly sized up what had happened, I then elicited the specialized response as to what I'd really seen.

I know that the world, for the most part, doesn't move around as I take my morning walk. I am the one moving about and that changing pattern on my retina is caused by my movement. Sitting back and wondering about the "what ifs" does bring up some interesting possibilities. One possibility or line of thought worth following brings me back to the eye-brain connection. Light rays hit the retina and the image information there is relayed to the brain. When I view the pack of cigarettes, what enables me to see the pack of cigarettes? Could it be possible that a pack would be on the table but I would not notice it? Old phrases like: "Gee, it was there all the time, and I didn't see it," or "There it was, right in front of my eyes and I missed it," come to mind.

If I did not know what a pack of cigarettes looked like I wouldn't be able to find it, unless, of course, I could figure it out based on clues of some sort. Also, if I'm not looking for, or desiring the object to be found, again I will not notice it. Ask a child to go and find your ball point pen and as he starts out looking the response comes from him: "Whats a ball point pen, dad?" You then clarify yourself by stating: "You know, what daddy writes with." He then finds it, just about where he was starting to look.

In a way, we are what we see around us. And in turn, we see around us what we are. It is like the change of a familiar phrase: "I'll see it, when I believe it."

It seems that we notice through a double process in which the first factor is a choice of what is interesting or important. The second factor, working simultaneously with the first, is that we need a notation for almost anything that can be noticed. Notation is a system of symbols—words, numbers, signs, simple images (like squares and triangles), musical notes, letters, ideographs (as in Chinese), and scales for dividing and distinguishing variations of color or of tones. Such symbols enable us to classify our bits of perception. They are the labels on the pigeonholes into which memory sorts them, but it is most difficult to notice any bit for which there is no label. Eskimos have five words for different kinds of snow, because they live with it and it is important to them. But the Aztec language has but one word for snow, rain, and hail.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Alan Watts, The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are (New York, Pantaeon Books, 1966), p. 29.



The question raised is about that area of eye-brain where we do not have an appropriate or existing symbol for a happening or idea. What happens to an event for which we have no symbol? The question is deceptively simple and somewhat confusing. It is like describing gravity to a young child. Things we have no symbol or label for are harder to notice, as we have nothing to talk about them with. This is very slippery subject matter. An attempt to talk about or investigate something or event for which there might not be any words-symbols. This is beginning to sound like the submerged portion of the ice-berg.

That vague untapped portion of the mind-body which I talked about earlier becomes apparent. Words-symbols, could be a key to getting into those hidden recesses of self. Aldous Huxley had some things to say about this.

Knowledge is acquired when we succeed in fitting a new experience into the system of concepts based upon our old experiences. Understanding comes when we liberate ourselves from the old and so make possible a direct, unmediated contact with the new, the mystery, moment by moment, of our existence.<sup>3</sup>

"Direct, unmediated contact with the new," that sounds like me waking up in the cabin or the early morning frost under foot.

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<sup>3</sup>Aldous Huxley, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Other Essays (New York, Perennial Library, Abridged Edition, Harper and Row, 1972), p. 34.



Could it be that when we have that sudden insight or flash of feeling about us that something in us is surfacing, breaking out, so to speak? Short flights into the mystery of our existence may be too short for us to notice or make note of.

The eye-brain connection is constructed so that we are tuned into a selected group of wave lengths of visible light. We see just those wave lengths. Just outside our perception is infra-red on the one end, and ultra-violet on the other. The wave lengths have to be within a certain frequency or we don't "see" them; they are there, but they do not register. A wave length could be too long or short for us to see. A flight into the mystery of our existence could be too short for us to notice, or if repeated often enough or long enough it might be taken note of.

A child learns to talk by being around those who know how to talk. He soon learns, for instance, that when others look at him and say: "Johnny, eat your cereal," or: "That's a good boy, Johnny," that his existence is called Johnny and that when he manages to form a "blurrp" that sounds like "mom ma" he gets a warm, excited, reassuring response from mom. But no one throughout his childhood will reinforce him when he articulates in any way that others have no words for. It would be much like

feeding a question into a computer that was not programmed with the proper material. "No response," is the best that the computer can come up with. And so it is when the eye-mind is confronted with information for which it has no previous "programming," there can be no response. Or, if there is any kind of recognition; is it conscious or unconscious? It would be like peripheral vision; when does something cross the awareness threshold and register as input to the brain?

## CHAPTER II

### The Shadow of Who We Are: Programming

For ease in reading this material and greater continuity of sentence structure I'll colate the following ideas into one word (in doing so I'll be borrowing an idea from Dr. John Lilly in his book, Programming and Meta Programming In The Human Biocomputer). The word is: programming. I'll use it to represent the very human phenomenon of learning to learn.

When one learns to learn, one is making models, using symbols, analogizing, making metaphors, in short, inventing and using language, mathematics, art, politics, business, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Our programs are what we learn; learning to learn involves the use of programming. It is the way our eye-mind functions in growing up human. In fact, growing up human is a program in itself. Most people are afraid of the word programming especially when it is used in conjunction with the "free will" orientated human being. It is a loaded word with some negative meanings associated with it. Nevertheless, it is a very useful idea to use

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<sup>4</sup>John C. Lilly, M.D., Programming and Metaprogramming in the Human Biocomputer: Theory and Experiments (New York, The Julian Press, Inc., 1972), p.ix.

in pursuing the concept I would like to bring out.

The eye-mind functions much like a computer. When Johnny learns that his existence is symbolized by the sound "Johnny," it is very likely that he will retain that bit of programming the rest of his life. Along with that program, there are very many more. The use of words and the cumulative build-up of our attendant knowledge about the world through language, represents one of the most important of our programs. We become our program, it is our lives. It is all that we know about our world passed on from generation to generation.

There are in the lives of human beings very many situations in which knowledge, conceptualized, accumulated and passed on by means of words, is of any practical use. For example, if I want to manufacture sulphuric acid or to keep accounts for a banker, I do not start at the beginnings of chemistry or economics; I start at what is now the end of these sciences. In other words, I go to a school where the relevant knowledge is taught, I read books in which the accumulatives of past experience in these particular fields are set forth.<sup>5</sup>

What then are the breakthroughs—those moments of insight? How do the hidden recesses of self surface? As human bio-computers or body-mind entities we have acquired through the ages not only the ability to keep our survival

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<sup>5</sup>Aldous Huxley, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Other Essays (New York, Perennial Library, Abridged Edition, Harper and Row, 1972), p. 34.



programs intact, but have reached expanding higher levels of programmability. We are able to conceptually deal with higher levels of our own programmability. We program, to a certain extent, our own programs. Ideas can be put together and new knowledge can result. This new knowledge in return becomes a part of our memory storage system and becomes an existing program; a record so to speak. Albert Jay Nock, in his Memoirs of a Superfluous Man, expresses an existing program in this manner:

The literatures of Greece and Rome provide the longest, the most complete and most nearly continuous record we have of what the strange creature Homo sapiens has been busy about in virtually every department of spiritual, intellectual and social activity. Hence the mind that has canvassed this record is much more than a disciplined mind; it is an experienced mind. It has come, as Emerson says, into a feeling of immense longevity, and it instinctively views contemporary man and his doings in the perspective set by this profound and weighty experience. Our studies were properly called formative, because, beyond all others, their effect was powerfully maturing. Cicero told the unvarnished truth in saying that those who have no knowledge of what has gone before them must for ever remain children.<sup>6</sup>

The memory storage system takes all experience and sifts it through what is already stored, finds a place for the new experience to fit, and deposits it there. The immediate experience is, so to speak, interpreted by the very act of it being comprehended. By noticing a "new" experience, we are "taking note of it," transferring it into symbols of previous knowledge, and adding it to our

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<sup>6</sup>Albert Jay Nock, Memoirs of a Superfluous Man (New York, Discus Books, 1973), p. 43.

store of programs. Our past programs affect the way a new experience is interpreted. There is a "melting pot" effect. (For more information on the corresponding idea of Gestalt Field Theory, see: K. Koffka, Principles of Gestalt Psychology.) Can we then, in fact, ever see anything new? How do we break through the screen of words and thoughts which act as primary interpreters of everything we see? Can we step outside our own programmability and surface above it? The problem seems to be analogous to a person hypnotically fixated on his own shadow and never being able to see beyond it.

Let us step outside the shadow by looking at the way we suppose things are in a somewhat different light. Enter with me into a "what if" situation. Richard Adams' recent novel Watership Down, as described by R. Buckminster Fuller: "Watership Down is just one of those great ones that every once in a long while lets us know that the universe has something really mysteriously great 'going' for humanity." The heroes of the story are rabbits endowed with human personality, and it is the way in which these compelling characters view the human reality that fits my point here. Listen to the way one of the rabbits relates a story of encountering a common feature of our environment. Take note as to the time or point when you, as reader, become aware of what is being expressed.

I was just going to tell the others that there was nothing for it but to turn and fight when we came to a great, steep bank that seemed to slope almost straight up into the air. It was steeper than this hillside below us here, and the slope seemed to be regular, as if men had made it.

Well, there was no time to think about it, so up we went. It was covered with rough grass and bushes. I don't know how far it was to the top exactly, but I should guess it was as high as a well-grown rowan tree—perhaps a bit higher. When we got to the top we found ourselves on small, light stones that shifted as we ran on them. That gave us away completely. Then we came upon broad, flat pieces of wood and two great, fixed bars of metal that made a noise—a kind of low, humming noise in the dark. I was just saying to myself, 'This is men's work, all right,' when I fell over the other side. I hadn't realized that the whole top of the bank was only a very short distance across and the other side was just as steep.<sup>7</sup>

How long does it take you, as reader, to put together the clues (as seen through a rabbits eyes) and realize what the rabbit had experienced?

The shadow of who we are and what we have become is so all pervading that rarely is it possible for a break to appear. The cloud of self, with all its built in programs of thought, circles our heads like a misty halo, directing and focusing the immense orchestra and stage of life into an understandable play. But, let us not mistake the actors with the one doing the directing. I, as director, have within myself, the capability of adopting new programs. Just as in writing a novel, or

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<sup>7</sup>Richard Adams, Watership Down (New York, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1972), p. 215.



creating a painting, I have the ability to present new possibilities or ways of viewing the world. As of 1972, all the big man-made computers of our technology were being pre-programmed by man. "All choices and assignments of what the solid-state computers do, how they operate, what goes into them, are still human bio-computer choices."<sup>8</sup> In other words, in comparison to a computer-brain, we have the option of choice in what program we would like to tackle. So if we want to look beyond (the "tip of the ice berg") the possibility for doing so is up to us.

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Lilly, Programming and Metaprogramming in the Human Biocomputer, p. ix.



## CHAPTER III

### The Search Within

The history of what homo sapiens has been up to is infused with a constant search to go beyond; to search out that something within us. The early pre-Socratic philosophers of Greece were obsessed with finding the answers. Much of our western mode of thought is based on the pre-Socratic, Socratic, Aristotelian answer to the question and how to formulate it. Knowledge of these sources, as I have pointed out, is part of our program (our experience). We must look at all our sources throughout history, in order to comprehend the extent of the program we have become. It is a long road and it ends, full circle, with the point at which it starts; the self.

The problem with the search is that, the one doing the searching is, in effect, what is sought. Remember what I said earlier: "Something that is somewhere within me and yet hidden from me." If it is within, it can't be seen or perceived to be there because it would be very much like one eye trying to see itself.

It is . . . as if one were trying to describe the color of a mirror in terms of colors reflected in the mirror. Just as sight is something more than all things seen, the foundation or "ground" of our existence and our awareness cannot be understood in terms of things that are known. We are forced, therefore, to speak of it through myth—that is, through special metaphors, analogies, and images which say what it is like as distinct from what it is. At one extreme of its meaning, "myth" is a useful and fruitful image by which we make sense of life in somewhat the same way that we can explain electrical forces by comparing them with the behavior of water or air.<sup>9</sup>

Image, symbol and myth, possible ways of referring to that which falls beyond our human knowledge (program). A word or image (conceptual program), becomes mythical when it implies a meaning beyond what is currently considered fact. We are getting into an area here that seems to lie beyond that which is considered within "reason." (Reason, according to Webster New Collegiate Dictionary: A ground or cause; that in the reality which makes any fact intelligible.) Facts are within the realm of reason because they can be proven to be real or existing within the bounds of what is considered reality. And, remember, that the "facts" or what is considered "reasonable" for the present generation may have been thought of as mythical or phantasmagoric for an older generation. Take traveling to the moon, for instance, or; the theory of gravity, for another time.

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<sup>9</sup>Alan Watts, The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are (New York, Pantheon Books, 1966), p. 12.

Who would question the person whose personal search for hidden recesses of self challenges his own sanity?

And in a society where a prominent psychiatrist can advertise that, given the chance, he would have treated Newton to electric shock therapy, who can blame any person for being afraid to do so?<sup>10</sup>

Let us take a moment and look at one who treaded this treacherous path of self-knowledge, and dared to cut through the strong, programmatic beliefs of his times. Even in antiquity Heraclitus (500 B.C.) was known as "the dark." Rex Warner in his book, The Greek Philosophers, describes Heraclitus' ideas in this manner:

How wide, various and deep was his outlook may be indicated by the fact that when we read today the fragments which have survived we are reminded sometimes of a Hebrew prophet, sometimes of an oracle, sometimes of William Blake, sometimes of T. S. Eliot and sometimes of such modern thinkers as Hegel, Marx or Bertrand Russell.<sup>11</sup>

Most historians dodge Heraclitus and for good reason. He was a very original thinker, his confidence in what he had to say is all too apparent in the fragments of writings attributed to him. Heraclitus challenged the mood of his times and his peculiar grandeur of vision still invokes a certain "standoffish" disposition with current historians.

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<sup>10</sup>John C. Lilly, M.D., Programming and Metaprogramming in the Human Biocomputer: Theory and Experiments (New York, The Julian Press, Inc., 1972), p. ix.

<sup>11</sup>Rex Warner, The Greek Philosophers (New York, Mentor Books, The New American Library, Inc., 1958), p. 25.



I once more quote from Rex Warner:

Mere knowledge is not enough for him. He claims to be able to see into the nature of things and to have discovered a universal law, something that is "common," so long as one is "awake." This law is, for the first time, connected with man's own nature. ("I sought for myself").<sup>12</sup>

In the historical context, and in trying to place Heraclitus somewhere in the chain leading up to Socrates, most writers have a hard time fitting Heraclitus into the scheme of things. When everyone around him was questioning: "What is the stuff of the universe?" Heraclitus was off on a different line of thought.

Unless you expect the unexpected you will never find (truth), for it is hard to discover and hard to attain.  
(Fragment 19)

Everything flows and nothing abides; everything gives way and nothing stays fixed.  
(Fragment 20)

You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters are continually flowing on.  
(Fragment 21)

Time is a child moving counters in a game; the royal power is a child's.  
(Fragment 24)

Most people do not take heed of the things they encounter, nor do they grasp them even when they have learned about them, although they suppose they do.  
(Fragment 57)

Even he who is most in repute knows only what is reputed and holds fast to it.  
(Fragment 87)

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

*I don't think all the quotations need be quoted only the most relevant ones!!*

In the circle the beginning and the end are common.  
(Fragment 109)<sup>13</sup>

Stepping outside the program, if even for a moment, can have far-reaching, and even alienating effects. Society often questions the sanity of those who engage in "what if" type thinking. It is only when this type of thinking proves fruitful in a measurable, factual way that we turn around (reverse our ground), and find ways for the new idea to exist in a rational way.

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<sup>13</sup>Philip Wheelwright, Heraclitus (New York, Atheneum, 1974), pp. 19—90, passim.

## CHAPTER IV

### Window Screen of Reality

Let me return now to the concepts of images, myths and symbols. It would seem that these words could act as keys into the hidden recesses of self; at least they could be useful in exploring the perceptual process. (Dreams can also work as keys: More on this in Chapter Nine). Almost no one throughout your life will re-inforce you when an attempt is made to articulate or make sense of that which does not fit into pre-existing definitions of reality. Heraclitus was named "the dark" because of such an attempt.

Myth, image and symbol are words which work as labels for that which we cannot grasp first hand. Carl G. Jung attributed the following meaning to the word symbol:

What we call a symbol is a term, a name, or even a picture that may be familiar in daily life, yet that possesses specific connotations in addition to its conventional and obvious meaning. It implies something vague, unknown, or hidden from us.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Carl G. Jung, Man and His Symbols (New York, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), p. 3.

The idea of something hidden within and yet a part of me is once more evident. A thread of thought is getting thicker here and is seemingly worth following. Use is made of symbols in order to give ventilation to that which cannot be fully understood on the surface. The obvious meaning of something is very often our meaning, given to that something through our program. The meaning we give a visual stimulus is an individual surface meaning and yet, as a symbol, it could have additional sub-surface meaning. For example, an image may be seen for its immediate obvious meaning, and in addition, the image is made up of some smaller less apparent symbols that escape our first visual response. But do the smaller less apparent visual stimulants escape the brain's attention entirely? It is worth note to consider a theory of Henri Bergson's:

. . . the brain is a reducing mechanism, designed to enable the organism to pay selective attention to stimuli for the purpose of appropriate action. According to this premise, if the brain did not act as a filter one would be assaulted by so many sights and sounds that he would be unable to function. Several recent experiments support this view. It appears from EEG records and subjective reports that the brain responds continuously to incoming stimuli of which the individual is consciously unaware.<sup>15</sup>

The consciousness that I ordinarily identify with as being reality is but a "pointillistic,"<sup>16</sup>narrow view.

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<sup>15</sup>Marilyn Ferguson, The Brain Revolution (New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1975), p. 238.

<sup>16</sup>Pointillism - A form of divisionism in which the colors are applied in dots on a white ground and according to a severely systematic plan. (Also see: Neoimpressionism.)



Narrow for a reason; the purpose of screening out incoming stimuli to an acceptable level or tolerance of activity. The mind programs itself along pathways designed to allow for maximum efficiency-survival of the mind-body and still allow for new ideas to enter for purposes of growth. Just as too little input into our mind-computer would result in a frequent "no-response possible" answer, the same is true if the mind is over loaded with the sights and sounds of input. The mind is, in effect, pre-programmed not to over-program. But the important point here is that programming is possible on different levels. There is the "reality" level of our ordinary state of consciousness and there is a interlineated level, of which we are only occasionally aware. As stated by Huxley: "Simultaneously or alternately, we inhabit many different and even incommensurable universes."<sup>17</sup>

In breaking through to the submerged portion of the iceberg we are, at times, visiting worlds within the self. The worlds within are found in much the same manner that we would search for the hole through which flies are getting in the house on a hot summer day. We look for, and find, a hole in the screen through which the flies are entering. Holes sometimes appear in our own

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Huxley, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Other Essays, p. 1.



consciousness, most of the time we quickly patch these apertures with the reality of our past knowledge. Other times the holes are too big and a whole new screen is needed, if you will, a new conception of reality becomes necessary. And, if I can carry the analogy a little further, sometimes the whole wall falls out, screen and all, and the reality of another world floods the room. Such was Einsteins' theory of relativity.

Physicists often view this window screen of reality as a very thin barrier held up solely by our subjective world of appearances. Sometimes when existing words and symbols (programs) are not enough to facilitate an on-going search into self; the "intuitive" mode of thought takes over.

Einstein himself once said that his first intimation of the theory of relativity was an ineffable physical sensation rather than an idea.<sup>18</sup> He felt it before he understood it intellectually.

It is my thought that if a search is going to be made by self (in efforts to discover the hidden recesses of self) then looking into areas that represent "possibilities" for a hole in the screen, would be a place to start. Heraclitus treaded this path and left a message

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Ferguson, The Brain Revolution, p. 260.

for those who would dare to follow. "Unless you expect the unexpected you will never find (truth), for it is hard to discover and hard to attain." \* Image, symbol and myth are intermediaries to be used both by the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. Here I refer to the unconscious, not as a dangerous area for repression or the monster within us, but in a more positive light; more to be thought of as a working idea, a way of referring to that submerged portion of the iceberg. To expect the unexpected, in working with such ideas as symbols, would be to expect something more or different from the word. In other words, I'll work with the word as a useful theory or explanation for an event, and try correspondingly to look at it in the light of: What might be the unexpected possibilities of this concept of symbol? In that context, Jung's Man and His Symbols has covered some important ground work:

Thus a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider "unconscious" aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained. Nor can one hope to define or explain it. As the mind explores the symbol, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason.<sup>19</sup>

"Beyond the grasp of reason," would be in reference to areas that lie beyond our screen of perception. To see the symbolic nature of something is not an end in itself,

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\* Heraclitus, Native of Ephesus, an Ionian city during the sixty-ninth Olympiad, approximately 500 B.C.  
<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Jung, Man and His Symbols, p. 4.

but part of a process of defusing the power of the screen. The screen of words and thoughts (individual perceptual programs based on past experiences), derives its power directly from the prominence which we accord it in ourselves. Knowledge of symbols and how they affect perception both consciously and unconsciously, is a step towards acknowledging our programmability.

In addition to that step, recognizing my own capabilities as a self programmer opens an even wider break in the screen of reality by allowing for questionable reality states to exist. Once the screen has been opened slightly, the reality of existence (as I know it) becomes theoretical in substance and tissue-thin in its power to program new input. It would be analogous to feeding a computer a program which told the computer: "All existing programs are now under question; reformation of given programs is now permissible."

I cannot point out any specific symbols to work with in order to break out of the screen of self-programming. I am, in effect, using the problem to point out the problem. The breakthrough would then be different for each individual, depending on his previous experience in life (program). This seems confusing, at first, because as individuals in this society, we feel very confident that most people can understand how everyone else feels



about every facet of mankind. This is due to the similarity of our past programs. When Carlos Castaneda (the author of The Teachings of Don Juan, A Separate Reality, and Journey to Ixtlan) speaks through his writings of this similarity of past programs and how man sees himself in the world, he uses the concept of "shields."

[Don Juan] Your problem is that you confuse the world with what people do. Again you're not unique at that. Everyone of us does that. The things people do are shields against the forces that surround us; what we do as people gives us comfort and makes us feel safe; what people do is rightfully very important, but only as a shield. We never learn that the things we do as people are only shields and we let them dominate and topple our lives. In fact I could say that for mankind, what people do is greater and more important than the world itself.

[Castaneda] What do you call the world?

[Don Juan] The world is all that is encased here, he said, and stomped the ground. Life, death, people, the allies, and everything else that surrounds us. The world is incomprehensible. We won't ever understand it; we won't ever unravel its secrets. Thus we must treat it as it is, a sheer mystery!

[Don Juan] An average man doesn't do this, though. The world is never a mystery for him, and when he arrives at old age he is convinced he has nothing more to live for. An old man has not exhausted the world. He has exhausted only what people do. But in his stupid confusion he believes that the world has no more mysteries for him. What a wretched price to pay for our shields!<sup>20</sup>

"What people do" and "shields" are what programs are all about. We confuse our programs for the world. We confuse the tissue-thin reality of individual perception for the

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<sup>20</sup>Carlos Castaneda, A Separate Reality (New York, Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1973), pp. 219-220.



mysterious world. In my analogy to the window screen; it is like mistaking the screen itself for the view out the window. Only when we find a hole in the screen while chasing down a fly, do we begin to realize the screen for what it is; a transparent barrier.

## CHAPTER V

### Experiencing Illusion: The Paradox

If I am going to break through the screen at frequent enough intervals so as to drastically alter my programmability; is there a systematic approach I can use? How do we play with the variables of our experience of life, to enable us to take on the power of the screen? Remember that the screen has only the strength of illusion, providing we feed that strength. It is our screen; our program. It controls, or programs the individuals perception only if the person believes in it. This quote is again from Castaneda.

The world is such-and-such or so-and-so only because we tell ourselves that that is the way it is. If we stop telling ourselves that the world is so-and-so, the world will stop being so-and-so.<sup>21</sup>

In ordinary states of consciousness, what I think of as my "self," is very much defined by a constant internal feedback system. This system is based on a simple idea: we talk to ourselves. Day in, day out, we keep a constant chatter going with ourselves. Through this internal talk, we keep up an illusion. The illusion is so

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 219.

deceptive that we forget that we originally started the conjuration in motion. We pushed a huge sphere over a cliff and it disappeared into the dark. Two months later, after forgetting about our sphere, it has gone full circumference of the earth and is now bearing down on us. The sphere now facing us is our own doing. But, this is forgotten, and the "new" sphere is dealt with as if it were something alien and apart from us. So it is with our perception, we can only rarely discern the lens through which we see. The goldfish does not know that he is in a bowl and that he is swimming in water. The water is his world, the bowl is the boundary of his existence. To go outside the bowl is almost instant death. Only through an accidental spilling, or a misguided leap will the goldfish ever experience another reality, apart from that which is his world. As humans we have a different, more paradoxical existence open to us. Our boundaries are flexible and permeable, and they are delineated by us. The guardian keeping me from exploring the hidden recesses of self, is me. Again something hidden from me and yet within me. (The one doing the hiding act is also me).

All things are in a relationship. The window screen, as an analogy, is related to the window and the window derives its being by a wall that holds it up. The walls

are the reality of the room in which we reside. And somewhere inside the skin and bones of us, is the "I". And yet this isn't true either. The paradox of our existence manifests itself here. Can we allow for the seemingly contradictory idea that everything around me is an illusion created by me, and at the same time I'm separated from it all, hiding inside a mind-body? Allan Watts in the book This Is It, talks to this sensation of apparent contradiction.

. . . it seems that whatever I do freely and intelligently is at the same time completely determined, and vice versa. It seems that absolutely everything both inside and outside me is happening by itself, yet at the same time that I myself am doing all of it, that my separate individuality is simply a function, something being done by everything which is not me, yet at the same time everything which is not me is a function of my separate individuality.<sup>22</sup>

Given the right time, place, and preparation, almost any idea can be made to sound sensical; as long as its opposite and paradoxical side is not presented at the same time. As separate events occur and separate stimuli are presented to the mind-computer, each is dealt with and placed in its proper channel. But to present seemingly contradictory stimuli simultaneously, is to press the programmability of a mind into a double-bind situation

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<sup>22</sup>Alan Watts, This Is It and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience (New York, First Vintage Books Edition, 1973), p. 52.



which could result in a withdrawal maneuver on the minds' part. Such is the nature of internal talk. We are pre-programmed not to allow input of material which is of contradictory sensation. Our internal chatter weighs, measures, defines, delineates, judges, analyzes all incoming stimuli and responds appropriately on a conscious level. Cut through the internal talk and you will come face to face with another realm. What is the unconscious part of me doing while this is happening?

## CHAPTER VI

### Make Believe Actuality: A Whole Universe of Possibilities

The intention of the previously presented material was to lay a ground work for an analysis of my personal search into the unconscious aspects of perception—vision.

(Tumbling Through Time: An Inquiry Into Vision).  
The purpose of my thesis is to photographically investigate the coextension and interlineation of the creative process as it relates to dreams, fantasies, and memories.<sup>23</sup>

Last night my son was taking a shower and while he stood there with the water pouring over him he sang: "I'm singing in the rain—I have no personality." He'll be seven this June, and where he got those lines, I'll never know. They probably came to him from separate sources. The way he sang it (his style), might have come from a tune at school, but the words were no doubt his doing, misconstrued from other words he had heard. Children often take what they hear and unconsciously harmonize it with their own programming. Later, I asked him to sing it again, but either he couldn't remember what he had sung or he was a little self-conscious about doing it. It was, to me, a strange and original expression of what might

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<sup>23</sup>From Authors' Thesis Proposal.

have been going on in his mind at the time. As children we give vent to our inner feelings and emotions by a fairly constant mingling of the surface reality of experience and the open, unconscious grouping aspects of the mind.

For instance:

. . . the revision of the Lord's prayer: 'Give us this day our jelly bread: A similar orderly, if absurd, misperception was the high-school students' conviction that his biology teacher had told the class to read Darwin's Oranges and Peaches.<sup>24</sup>

Creative expression by a child is making use of the raw material of his experience as a programmable entity, and then drawing off of that experience to form an individual response (creative act). This is a natural human endeavor.

What is the quality of childhood? Being young has a newness to it. Each new experience is filled with wonder and excitement of discovery. Everyday brings the new and extraordinary into focus, adding to the increasing repertoire of encounters with life. A child's days of summer seem to stretch into infinity with no end in sight and concepts of yesterday, today, and tomorrow have no meaning. I remember pulling at my mother's dress and nagging her that, "I've got nothing to do." It must have been a time of change for me because I can remember much of that hot summer's day, when sneaking up through the tall grass on 'make believe' enemies didn't hold my fas-

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Ferguson, The Brain Revolution, p. 251.

ination anymore. Time must have become important to me. I knew, on that day, that summer vacation time was limited, and I was worried about filling each day with as much "good times" as possible.

As the child turns into an adult, he leaves something behind. A separation begins to form within the "I". A feeling emerges which commences a separation process of the individual. This is not a conscious endeavor, it is more or less a part of our human heritage. The child grows up, and the things that captivated his mind in younger days are no longer the focus of attention. Free association with the "make believe" and the inter-play of reality with fantasy becomes less and less a part of our personal make-up. In effect, the programs which were acceptable for little Johnny are now not approved of for a young man. To a certain extent, this is a very necessary development in growing up in a socially acceptable manner. The negative aspect of the change is that, in most instances, it forever seals the lid on two necessary phases of the creative human. The sensation of "make believe," will die out. The feeling that the "I" can play inwardly as an active instigator of all kinds of wild and facinating games, will become a part of the unconscious (and not likely to re-surface). In addition, a new con-



sciousness will emerge; instead of the interplay of reality and fantasy as an ordinary aspect of childhood there will come a new feeling of aloneness. The sensation of "I" as distinct and estranged from what is happening around and to the self, will now begin to integrate into the personality. No longer will the game of life be created by the participant, he will view himself as separate from it. In The Book: On The Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are, Alan Watts expresses this change in the self.

We suffer from a hallucination, from a false and distorted sensation of our own existence as living organisms. Most of us have the sensation that "I myself" is a separate center of feeling and action, living inside and bounded by the physical body—a center which "confronts" an "external" world of people and things, making contact through the senses with a universe both alien and strange.<sup>25</sup>

The self becomes a stranger in its own land. The "make believe" and "lets pretend" loses its pretender and believer. The instigator of belief and game participant changes into a bystander who feels alien from his own game. In reference to what I have stated earlier; the programmer forgets that he can still program lifes' program. We lose the capacity to see lifes' program; to see ourselves as participants in a self programmed game.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Watts, The Book: On The Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are, p. 8.

Instead we become external visitors.

This feeling of being lonely and very temporary visitors in the universe is in flat contradiction to everything known about man (and all other living organisms) in the sciences. We do not "come into" this world; we come out of it, as leaves from a tree. As the ocean "waves," the universe "peoples."<sup>26</sup>

In 1943, Hermann Hesse's last major work of fiction was published in Germany under the title of Das Glasperlenspiel. In America the book became known under a different title, Magister Ludi. It is now known by the title The Glass Bead Game. My purpose in referring to this work is to bring out an idea that directly relates to the concept of "man as creator and actor in his own world." I came into contact with the writings of Hesse about six years ago, when my search for hidden recesses of self was at its tumultuous beginnings. It was to Hesse that I looked for analogies of my own feelings of discontent and inner restlessness. His novels gave me a feeling of fellowship for others who had treaded this path in search of meaning. It wasn't until last winter that I reread The Glass Bead Game, and found for the first time what had existed all along. "The Glass Bead Game is an act of mental synthesis through which the spiritual values of all ages are perceived as simultaneously present and vitally alive."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Theodore Ziolkowski, "Foreword," in Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game, by Hermann Hesse (New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1970), p. ix.

In the lengthy quote that is to follow, it is my hope that the reader will begin to see a parallel between the mode of a child's expressive "make believe reality" and a higher level consciousness of self programmability; the level of consciousness capable of seeing all programs and working with the possibilities for altered states of consciousness inherent therein.

The Glass Bead Game is thus a mode of playing with the total contents and values of our culture; it plays with them as, say, in the great age of the arts a painter might have played with the colors on his palette. All the insights, noble thoughts, and works of art that the human race has produced in its creative eras, all that subsequent periods of scholarly study have reduced to concepts and converted into intellectual property—on all this immense body of intellectual values the Glass Bead Game player plays like the organist on an organ. And this organ has attained an almost unimaginable perfection; its manuals and pedals range over the entire intellectual cosmos; its stops are almost beyond number. Theoretically this instrument is capable of reproducing in the Game the entire intellectual content of the universe. These manuals, pedals, and stops are now fixed. Changes in their number and order, and attempts at perfecting them, are actually no longer feasible except in theory. Any enrichment of the language of the Game by addition of new contents is subject to the strictest conceivable control by the directorate of the Game. On the other hand, within this fixed structure, or to abide by our image, within the complicated mechanism of the giant organ, a whole universe of possibilities and combinations is available to the individual player. For even two out of a thousand stringently played games to resemble each other more than superficially is hardly possible. Even if it should so happen that two players by chance were to choose precisely the same small assortment of themes for the content of their Game, these two Games could present an entirely different appearance and run an entirely different course, depending on the qualities of mind,



character, mood, and virtuosity of the players.<sup>28</sup>

The child begins life with an inherent sensory feeling for the newness of all that is. He stays in touch with the universality of his perceptions, living each day with excitement and wonder at all that is new through his eyes. "Time is a child moving counters in a game; the royal power is a child's."<sup>29</sup> The child then enters his separation stage and loses his identity as both participant and director in life's game. For a very few, the next transition is a re-discovery of the secret that was made earlier, and a return to a unified self becomes possible. This is only a way of speaking, we do not actually return to anything, it is always in the present; the here and now of self.

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<sup>28</sup>Hermann Hesse, Magister Ludi: The Glass Bead Game (New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1970), pp. 6-7.

<sup>29</sup>Heraclitus, (Fragment 24), trans. by Philip Wheelwright in Heraclitus (New York, Atheneum, 1974), p. 29.



## CHAPTER VII

### Jolts From The Subliminal

The here and now can be worked with in a creative manner, once the concept of searching out hidden recesses of self has been reached. The submerged portion of the iceberg can be said to exist if the "self" believes it to be so. If the self has had sufficient jolts from the subliminal self, (also termed the unconscious, or in my earlier analogy—that which exists beyond the window screen of perception), then the probability of a new system of beliefs being adopted is high. The extent to which we are predisposed to view self programming as a creative option is determined by the quality of our belief. By the word belief I mean a persuasion or conviction of truth. (I do not mean to use the word as a synonym for faith).

When the threshold to a doorway (breakthrough in perception) has been reached through repeated confrontations with the totality of self, the individual is then aware of the option for creative manipulation of his own experience. The total contents and values of our culture lay before us awaiting what phantasm we might play. The

"I myself," is ready to "see" differently; ready to summon the components of self which have previously passed unnoticed by the conscious mind. (Again, that is a conditional "unnoticed" which could be proved to be otherwise).

As the jolts to my consciousness become more frequent, I find that they usually come about under the following conditions: these could be loosely classified into two categories: one having to do with memory and the other with the realm of dreams. Although, as human beings, we are constantly dealing, to a certain extent, with our memories and dreams (either on a conscious or subliminal level), it is a different endeavor entirely, to treat them as creative, programmable options. In reference to Heraclitus, this would be the "unexpected" symbolic nature of memories and dreams. To work with these two concepts on an investigative level with the intention to derive from them possible breakthrough type experiences, is at the heart of my personal search.

Dreams and memories have become, for me, the key to unlocking the doors of perception. To go through these doors requires of me, a constant struggle at maintaining an awake, altered state of consciousness. At the core of this "awakeness" lies the ability to perform

two seemingly simple acts; to first believe in the existence of different levels of consciousness and second to believe that these interlineated levels can be found within the self. To treat something as a creative, programmable option; this mind game of believing is a necessary intermediation.

I kept reminding myself. 'In the province of the mind what one believes to be true either is true or becomes true within limits to be found experientially.' Later I was to realize that the limits of one's beliefs set the limits of the experiences. At the limits of one's creative imagination, . . . there are a set of beliefs yet to be transcended. The learning process is on a vast scale.<sup>30</sup>

Having realized the creative possibilities of dreams and memories, I set out to see if photography could act as the intermediator in bringing me a step closer to the hidden alcoves of self. In the following two parts of this paper I will treat dreams and memories as separate but inter-related themes.

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<sup>30</sup>John C. Lilly, M.D., The Center of the Cyclone: An Autobiography of Inner Space (New York, Bantam Books, Inc., 1973), p. 14.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Totality of Memory

Memories are directly related to beliefs. Beliefs form tradition and tradition is a part of the way society shapes its self-image. We act according to the way we see things (beliefs). Our behavior becomes a function of our memory-related, self-interpreted past experience. This self-interpretation takes place on two levels: the conscious and the unconscious.

Memories are the distillated essence of which the mind is made. It is analogous to the leaves on a tree. The length of time we consciously use a given memory can be likened to the seasons of a trees' foliage. Autumn arrives and the leaves wither and fall away with the winds of change. Some leaves hold tight to the branch and no matter how severe the winter, remain intact.

Memory is a multifaceted phenomenon which can be looked upon as the constructual framework around which a "self" is synthesized. There is the hidden (unconscious) substructure and the more obvious surface framework



(conscious, rational state). If some memories remain intact as constant programmed material on a conscious level, it is of interest to consider the ones that remain undetected by the conscious self, and yet are capable of working as "pre-programmers" for new input. This point could be illustrated by the "leaves on a tree" analogy, if we were to think of the tree as having an additional invisible set of leaves that existed but could not be disclosed by the unaided senses. This set of subliminal leaves would remain intact, coextending and interlineating with our original set of leaves. A coextension and interlineation of the subliminal with our more identifiable states of awareness represents an approximation at illustrating the totality of self. Even when we approach this totality of self through some means of investigation, it is important to remember that we are going to transposed areas of thought. We continue to be investigators searching out the essence which seems hidden, and yet is only camouflaged by our own screen of perception.

The camouflaging effect can, on occasion, be broken through. We are not totally tied to the world view that our senses present to us. The eye-brain connection is astonishingly adaptable.

The brain's potential for adaptation is as spectacular as its powers of absorption. Karl Lashley told of "a student who, in the stress of a public recital, unknowingly transposed one-half tone upward an entire movement of a Beethoven sonata, a feat which she had never attempted before and could not duplicate afterward, even with some practice."<sup>31</sup>

Although an initial disturbance of the eye-brain connection may cause a temporary "no response" feedback situation; if a visual display (applicable to the other senses as well) persists long enough, it will become stored as a new program (memory).

Memories are programs which can be worked with in a creative way. In my photographic image making, I have found that the process of choosing negatives to print and working with those negatives in producing a new original meaning (combined negative print), is analogous to the way the eye-mind functions. I use negatives that date as far back as eight years and as current as four months. Each negative has its attendant personal set of memories and meanings, and when combined with another negative produces a third hybridity.

In working with the memory through photographic means I am making tangible the qualities of memory. I not only think about my memories but I make them physically existent as objects to be contemplated. Like the mind, my

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., Ferguson, The Brain Revolution, p. 300.

next step is to choose from among the photographic memories and make new combinations out of the existing raw material. The resulting image is in itself a statement of creative possibilities rendered into the reality of a photographic print. The new meaning of that print will then act as a initial program and in return influence the perceptions that will follow. In this way the mind can work with the option of self-programming.

Photographically investigating the realm of self-programming through the use of memory framework, is one avenue I have found useful in unleashing the creative potentiality proven to exist in the unconscious. It would be misleading to think that the unconscious or subliminal self is non-functional unless we consciously give vent to it. We operate as a totality (in some respects), whether we are aware of it or not. Just as our heart beats without us thinking consciously about it all the time, or just as we walk across a room without thinking about each step, so too our other "selves" are working within us. Henri Poincare, in his writings on Mathematical Creation wrote of the role of the unconscious in mathematical invention.

. . . the subliminal self is in no way inferior to the conscious self: it is not purely automatic; it



is capable of discernment; it has tact, delicacy; it knows how to choose, to divine.

. . . calculations themselves, they must be made in the second period of conscious work, that which follows the inspiration, that in which one verifies the results of this inspiration and deduces their consequences. The rules of these calculations are strict and complicated. They require discipline, attention, will, and therefore consciousness. In the subliminal self, on the contrary, reigns what I should call liberty, if we might give this name to the simple absence of discipline and to the disorder born of chance. Only, this disorder itself permits unexpected combinations.<sup>32</sup>

The combination of working with the raw material of my personal history, both on film and intellectually, allows room for the unconscious to break through to form new and original programs. This is at the heart of my creative endeavors.

In order to fully comprehend what is involved in the area of memory and its role in our construction of reality, it is worthwhile to consider the phenomenal capacity of our eye-mind-memory connection.

Investigators from the Bell Telephone Laboratories and New York University found that subjects can scan between 75 and 125 letters per second. Another study suggested that not only is visual scanning rapid, but the ability to remember what has been seen is almost limitless. Subjects were shown 2560 photographic slides at the rate of one every ten seconds. One hour after each subject had seen the last of the slides, he was shown 280 pairs of pictures. One member of each pair was a picture from the series he had seen, and the other picture was similar but had not been shown. The subjects chose correctly 85 to 95 percent of the time. Those who had seen the pictures in two days did as well on the testing

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<sup>32</sup>Henri Poincare, "Mathematical Creation" in The Creative Process: A Symposium, ed. by Brewster Ghiselin, A Mentor Book (Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 1952), pp. 39-42.



as those who had seen them over four days. In one version of the experiment, subjects were shown mirror images of the originals. Still, the high scores were not addicted.<sup>33</sup>

Studies completed outside the laboratory, on long-term memory, are almost nonexistent because of the time span involved and the number of people inclined or able to work on it. There has been one study completed by Bahrick and Wittlinger which tested (not memorized short-term memory) the more personal long-term memory of people in their fifties and sixties.<sup>34</sup> The following are excerpts from that study.

The grist for our experimental mill was material from high-school yearbooks dating back to the early '20s. With names and pictures out of the past, we jogged the memory of 392 high-school graduates . . .

. . . . .  
Only those who had left high school more than 40 years ago failed to recognize at least 90 percent of their classmates portraits. But even those subjects, in their 50s and 60s, could identify three fourths of their classmates.

. . . . .  
Apparently, neither learning nor retaining names and faces of hundreds of individuals overtaxes our memory if the learning process is extended over several years.

. . . . .  
We found that recall of names was much better if we prompted our subjects with a classmates' picture.

. . . . .  
It is clear that visual clues are very helpful in remembering names. We learn to associate a name with a face, and if we don't have the picture in front of us, we must conjure it up from memory.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., Ferguson, The Brain Revolution, p. 249.

<sup>34</sup>Research team consisted of: Harry P. Bahrick, Professor of Psychology, Ohio Wesleyan University, Phyllis O. Bahrick, Research Associate, O.W.U., Roy P. Wittlinger, Associate Professor of Psychology, O.W.U.

We can recognize what we have learned much better than we can recall it, and we retain visual information somewhat longer than verbal information.

. . . . .  
 This large-scale study of very long-term memory reveals that we have a remarkable ability to keep very large amounts of information for a very long time. But, our ability to retrieve that information is much less impressive. Perhaps as this research continues, we will find ways to get at those hidden resources.<sup>35</sup>

The ability to retrieve memory (to find and go over past programs) seems more limited than our potential for storing memories. They are there and yet exist in a non-functional state until we somehow jolt them loose. The study found that verbal input was less likely to jar a memory loose than was visual input. The power of a photograph in retrieving past memory programs and making those programs "come alive" again is phenomenal. On the average, people thirty years out of high-school could match names with yearbook photographs in nine out of ten instances. If we are given verbal information without a visual counterpart we are less likely to "play back" a past memory (program).

A possible extension of the Bahrick-Wittlinger study, which would be hard to factually document, would be to see what effect the combining and juggling of these memories (one with the other) could have in regards to

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<sup>35</sup>Harry P. Bahrick, Phyllis O. Bahrick, and Roy P. Wittlinger, "Long-Term Memory," Psychology Today, December, 1974, pp. 50-56.

creative invention. For instance, what might be the result if separate non-related material was allowed to form combinations of value and content, and search for heightened, possible hybridity of meaning? This is, in effect, similiar to what Hesse has written about in The Glass Bead Game. And, to a certain extent, this is the field of photographic investigation I have been working with.

A query arises concerning the question: Why is our ability to retrieve existing memories seemingly limited when compared to our program storing capacity? The answer, I think, is to be found in the operational mode of the eye-mind connection. The primary function of our sensory systems is to pay selective attention to incoming stimuli: choose which stimuli are most important, which need immediate attention, and further; to discard all incoming information which seems irrelevant.

If we were not selective in our input, the human mind-eye connection would probably be overwhelmed with all the existing stimuli surrounding us. It must, in effect, act as a filter of incoming information. Our memories act as filters and each memory program is also initially filtered depending on circumstances. Aldous Huxley in The Doors of Perception, commented upon this



necessary filtering process.

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. To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies that we call languages. Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born—the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim insofar as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness, and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all words for actual things.<sup>36</sup>

In regards to memory, there is another concept of importance. When we take note of something or more simply, notice something, a selection process is involved. To notice is to select; to separate something in our perceptual field as more important than others. Whatever the reason in a given situation, the eye-mind connection pays attention to some parts but ignores others. So at the time we attend to some facet of our perception, we simultaneously do not give conscious focus to other aspects. It is a narrowed beam of perception to begin with and when the added filtering effect of language is brought into play the beam gets threadlike.

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<sup>36</sup>Aldous Huxley, The Doors of Perception (New York, Harper and Row, 1954), pp. 22-24.



If we are then to consider memory as a totality, the realm of visual memory should not be entirely consolidated with verbal memory. Although not separate, they should be regarded as having important differences. Many visually creative artists have been said to possess unusually alert powers of observation and acute visual memories. Derek Hudson, in writing about the famous illustrator, Arthur Rackham, made this very point.

To his work in his chosen field Rackham brought the gifts of an unusual visual memory, especially for landscape and natural growth in all its forms . . . and a fertile imagination guiding a hand of great sensibility and skill in draughtsmanship.<sup>37</sup>

In seeing relations between the illustrations of Arthur Rackham prints and the images I have produced in photographic form, there exists an interesting parallel. It is of interest to me that in creating photographic prints there is an unconscious part of me drawing upon the raw material of visual memory. The working mode of the unconscious in liaison with the conscious mind, in the building of an image, makes non-conceptual symbolic content in my photographs a definite possibility. By opening the mind, and studying each image for possible symbolic content, I, as an artist, make possible the surfacing of otherwise hidden visual memories. This phenom-

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<sup>37</sup>Derek Hudson, Arthur Rackham: His Life and Work (New York, Charles Scribner and Sons, 1960), p. 44.

on can be greatly aided by constructive communication with other artists who also share an interest in the unconscious aspects of image making.

One of the difficulties encountered in searching into the symbolic aspects of visual memory is that this search must be augmented by the use of language. This can be a handicap and result in many misunderstandings and very often leaves the seeker appearing to be "reading" too much into the image. And yet, the power of any one of my photographic prints may very well lie in its ability to jolt the viewers visual—symbolic memory. As Derek Hudson commented in summing up the importance of Rackhams' illustrations:

Would the application of psychological analysis assist our appreciation of Rackham's drawings? A correspondent has told the present writer, in an interesting letter, that he believed Rackham's future standing would be high and that it would be based on the 'symbolic content' of his work as well as on its artistic merit.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

## CHAPTER IX

### To Outface Dreams

The world we think we know and see, is only a view. We are seeing our own program. At birth we enter a bubble of perception. The bubble is at first clear; we see through it. But as we grow older the bubble gets more and more cluttered with words and ideas concerning our world. By the time a human becomes aware that he is a "self" the bubble of his perception is so completely covered with programs that he can no longer see that a bubble surrounds him. In justifying his existence, he points to the programs lining the walls of his bubble and says: "That's the way the world is."

A part of us remembers the walls of the bubble and what is beyond those walls. Those memories came from a time when we didn't have so many word-programs covering the walls of the bubble and screening out the larger world view. Each night can represent an opportunity to slip through the screen of programs. We dream; and although it is usually not treated as an area for self discovery, dreaming takes place during sleep and represents about one-third of our lives. I refer back to Heraclitus:

"Unless you expect the unexpected you will never find truth."<sup>39</sup> What is the unexpected nature of dreaming? Let us turn our priorities around and look at sleep-dreaming as our main activity, and at the remainder of our life as 'rest' from dreaming; which is an unexpected turn. Instead of looking at sleep as an altered state of consciousness, look at it as our natural state of awareness. Although this seems a bit like a science fiction plot to the western rational mind, follow me with this idea for awhile! At this point, it would be helpful to remind the reader of a quote from John Lilly.

In province of the mind what one believes to be true either is true or becomes true within limits to be formed experientially. Later I was to realize that the limits of one's beliefs set the limits of the experiences. At the limits of one's creative imagination . . . there are a set of beliefs yet to be transcended. The learning process is on a vast scale.<sup>40</sup>

If you were investigating the totality of something and you found two-thirds of it to be made up of such-and-such, and another one-third made up of so-and-so, and in addition you knew that a whole was impossible to achieve if any one part was missing, then it would be obvious that the whole was entirely dependent upon the parts.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Wheelwright, Heraclitus, p. 20.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Lilly, The Center of the Cyclone: An Autobiography of Inner Space, p. 14.



To treat dreams as a necessary integral part of the whole self is a step towards recognizing their importance. Just as you would consider an arm or leg as a part of your physical makeup, dreams are also an important element in our psychology.

With my "flip of priorities" idea in mind, let us take a look at a different culture than ours, the Senoi Tribe of the Malay Peninsula (a preliterate people).

The sophistication of the Senoi dream culture has been compared to our level of attainment in nuclear physics.

.....  
The late Kilton Stewart, a research psychologist who studied the Senoi society for fifteen years, said that the tribe believes that "any human being, with the aid of his fellows, can outface, master, and actually utilize all beings and forces in the dream universe."

.....  
Should the Senoi child report a falling dream, his parents would congratulate him. "That's a wonderful dream, one of the best you can have!" They ask him where he fell to and what he found.

.....  
The child might answer that the dream had not been splendid at all, but rather frightening and that he awoke before landing. The adult then explains that all dreams have a purpose. The next time he has a falling dream he must relax and have fun because such dreams mean that the spiritual world wants to bestow its powers on him.

.....  
"The astonishing thing," said Stewart, "is that over a period of time . . . the dream which starts out with the fear of falling changes into the joy of flying. This happens to everyone in the Senoi society."

.....  
The Senoi have no war, no violent crime, and astonishing mental health. Stewart believed that all men

might profit by studying them. "In the West the thinking we do while asleep usually remains on a muddled, childish, or psychotic level because we do not respond to dreams as socially important and include dreaming in the educative process."<sup>41</sup>

With this "altered culture view" of dreams in mind, it is with some feelings of assurance that I propose to follow my personal search for self discovery through the use of the photographic image. I have found, in working with the non-verbal highly visual characteristics of dreams, an avenue for breakthrough. It is outlined as follows: Once I accept the "realness" of dreams as being existing, experiential, observable, thought processes, I will then "see" them differently. I "see" them anew. My feelings are positive and constructive concerning the dream state. I view it as an avenue to another level. I enter sleep and then dream with an idea planted in my memory. I will awake during sleep, but I will not awaken into the reality of non-sleep; I plan to awaken back to the world of dreams instead. This is, in effect, a pre-programming measure, instituted with the goal of becoming "awake" during a dream state. The key I work with is a photographic image. When going to sleep I mentally look at the image in my memory (play back a past program) and program myself to remember during dreaming. I remember the image, when it appears in the dream; it acts as a key to breaking up the dream and placing me consciously into

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Ferguson, The Brain Revolution, pp. 161-163.

the dream. This is very hard to explain with words. It is the sensation of the "I myself" awakening within the dream and participating on the level of a witness. A participating witness and yet not participating. It's like being removed from the action and yet watching the self acting. I am reminded of Huxley and his reference to such an event.

Simultaneously or alternately, we inhabit many different and even incommensurable universes.<sup>42</sup>

Although "awakening" during a dream and yet staying in that dream does not sound like a very important accomplishment, believe me; it can be. Almost total dream-memory recall is possible. I have "played back" visual material from dreams and have used this non-verbal raw material in the building of my photographs (see illustration on page 65). The confrontations with the totality of self have become, for me, the very roots of creativeness. To slip past the screen of ordinary reality and view the other worlds that surround and are a part of us, is a natural human endeavor leading to increased perceptual sensibility. Researchers will go to great lengths to discover what and where dreaming is, as if it is separate from the self. I believe that if you were to ask a Senoi tribesman what dreaming is he would answer: "It is me."

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Huxley, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Other Essays, p. 1.



## CHAPTER X

### Fantasy: A Way of Relating

Of the three themes that I have covered in working on my thesis project, fantasy particularly represents the active, experimental aspect of my work. It is, in other words, my mode of picture making; the informing gesture of my creative endeavors. I view fantasy as the collective synthesis of the raw materials presented through memory and dreams. Contained within the labels of memories and dreams, are the visual stock with which I work.

Very often we view the artist-photographer as working either from "inner" inspiration or instead, concerned with "outer" realities and the interpretations of those realities. For example: it is sometimes called documentary photography if the photograph accurately records an existing external reality. A confusion results as to what is "outer" and what is "inner" in regards to the subject matter of photographs, or in regards to the manner in which a photograph was made. This confusion is very analogous to the individual, and the way in which he views himself.

The individuals' particular way of relating to the



world balances experience and behavior. It is worth remembering that, although some experiences may seem to be of an "inner" nature in contrast to those which seem "outer" in character, both are more accurately viewed as being facets of perceptual experience. When we "see" a photograph as expressing an inner reality or as expressing an outer reality, we are reflecting a probable split in the modalities of our thinking process. R. D. Laing, author of The Politics of Experience, refers to this split in our perceptual awareness in the following.

We seem to live in two worlds, and many people are aware only of the "outer" rump. As long as we remember that the "inner" world is not some space "inside" the body or the mind, this way of talking can serve our purpose. (It was good enough for William Blake). The "inner," then, is our personal idiom of experiencing our bodies, other people, the animate and inanimate world: imagination, dreams, fantasy, and beyond that to even further reaches of experience.<sup>43</sup>

In particular, fantasy is always referred to as being an inward transpiration, something that is usually not shared with, or communicated, to others. Some artists work consciously with the fantasy mode of experience in producing images and rely heavily upon it for inspiration. Here are the words of Max Ernst in reference to a technique he had discovered for exploring the unconscious in search of artistic inspiration.

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<sup>43</sup>R.D. Laing, The Politics of Experience (New York, Ballanting Books, Inc., 1973), p. 21.

. . . the cracks in which had been emphasized by years of scouring . . . I placed sheets of paper at random over the markings and began rubbing with lead pencil . . . I was surprised by the sudden intensification of my visionary faculties and the hallucinatory series of contradictory images which superimposed themselves one upon the other with the persistence and rapidity characteristic of erotic memories.<sup>44</sup>

Those lines were written in 1925 and they very much remind me of the fantasy involvement I experience in the making of photographic images.

Fantasy is then a way of relating to the world. In some instances it could be proven to be the essential meaning of a given experiential program. If we experience something or relate to something in a fantasy manner, I believe it can take place both consciously and unconsciously. Although we may not grasp the meaning of a fantasy, and may even try to dissociate ourselves from its effects, the cumulative outcome is that we are, to some extent, influenced or programmed by fantasy.

To a greater or lesser extent, the first ways in which the world has made sense to us continue to underpin our whole subsequent experience and actions. Our first way of experiencing the world is largely what psychoanalysts have called fantasy.<sup>45</sup>

If a fantasy experience or relationship should happen to surface and be noticed, it is usually regarded as a bothersome irrational, and even infantile interuption

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<sup>44</sup>Jean Clay, Max Ernst: The Marriage of Heaven and Earth, Intellectual Digest, March, 1973.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Laing, The Politics of Experience, p. 30.

in the flow of thought. We are liable to respond to it by explaining: "Oh, my mind wandered for a minute." Like dreams, fantasy (as a part of our psychological make-up), is usually destined to play a very minor conscious role in life.

The extent to which fantasy plays a role in our unconscious perception can never be fully explored. The important point is that it is there and should be considered as a viable, workable portion of our existence. To ignore the fantasy element, would be to further alienate and separate the human experience.







## CHAPTER XI

### Technical Aspects

In making the final prints for this thesis I used sixteen by twenty inch, Kodak Polycontrast Rapid F paper. The paper was developed in Kodak Kodalith developer, with equal portions of part A and part B developer at 68 degrees. The use of (Poly contrast F) paper in combination with Kodalith developer necessitates a long exposure time. My exposures varied between three and twelve minutes depending on the negative density. Development time is determined by when the blacks have become dark enough while trying to maintain the sepia-orange tone characteristic of under-development. This will sound, to the reader, like an inconsistent manner of producing a print, yet; it is the only way to produce the "hazy" effect associated with Kodalith developer. The result is, that no two prints are exactly the same.

I worked primarily with double or triple negative "sandwiches" in the enlarger to produce my multiple-image appearance. The negatives used were mostly from 35 mm with the exception of two images which originated from 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  by 3 $\frac{1}{4}$  format camera.

After the initial development bath, the prints were quickly pulled (they go black quickly if left too long in the developer), and then they were placed into an acid bath which was used at a strength of approximately ten times what is considered normal. The acid bath must be strong to completely stop development at the desired time. Each print was fixed individually for seven minutes in Kodak Fixer. All prints were washed at 70° for thirty minutes and then hypo-cleared in Perma Wash for five minutes. The prints were then washed for the final time of ten minutes.

The film portion of my thesis was done on 16 mm Kodak Tri-x film. The final print of the film was made with color film stock; printing for a sepia tone. The copy of the film included with this thesis report is transferred to video cassette.

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