

My Quest for Oceanic Ecstasy

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As I approach my eighties at these end times we live in—in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, rapid economic collapse, accelerating abrupt climate change, and the sixth mass extinction of the species—it is an opportune moment to reassess the central purpose of my life. Success in life is conventionally measured in social terms. However, while I have been married a couple of times, with two children, and have had a reasonably successful business career in the information technology industry, mostly with IBM, my solitary spiritual quest has been far more important to me.

This can best be described as returning to the sense of Oceanic Ecstasy that I enjoyed for fifty days after my conception in England at the end of August 1941. For, as Stanislav Grof says in *The Holotropic Mind*, our early experiences in the womb “have strong mystical overtones; they feel sacred or holy. ... In this state of cosmic unity, we feel that we have direct, immediate, and unlimited access to knowledge and wisdom of universal significance.” This rapturous period in our lives, a reminder of “Gardens of Paradise in the mythologies of a variety of the world's cultures”, can be referred to as ‘oceanic ecstasy’.

This brief paradisiacal period came to a cataclysmic end at 4 p.m. on 16th October 1941, when I was just a two-centimetre embryo, illustrated here at double size. That morning, my mother had visited her doctor, as she had missed two periods, and was told that, indeed, she was pregnant with her second child. Then, in the afternoon, she went for a walk with a friend and her own child.

Perhaps because of my mother's excitement at being pregnant again, on this fateful day, she did not put my three-year-old brother John into reins, as was conventional for toddlers at the time. But John, with his newfound freedom, blindly ran out into the road and was knocked down and killed by an army lorry returning to barracks. My mother instantaneously went from ecstasy to devastating trauma, an energy pattern that was immediately transmitted to the very soul of my being, in direct contact with my mother's being.

This mind-shattering event has influenced every moment of my life ever since, at first un- and subconsciously, but with increasing consciousness since I was 42 in 1984, when I had a couple of three-hour sessions with David Wasdell, a leading primal therapist at the time. Conventional medical theory says that such causal affects are impossible. Embryos are just a bundle of biochemical cells, with no consciousness. So early prenatal traumas cannot affect later life. However, since July 1983, when the First International Congress on Pre- and Perinatal Psychology was held in Toronto, medical practitioners have begun to question scientific dogma, as I describe in my book *The Psychodynamics of Society: From Conception to Death*.

Since March 2017, when I finished this book, my understanding and experience of what is happening to us all as a species has deepened considerably. As I describe in my monograph ‘Mapping the Cosmic Psyche’, from December 2019, the Cosmic Psyche is the ninety-nine per cent of the Universe that is inaccessible to our five physical senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. This is not common knowledge, either among humans today, or during the ten thousand years of human learning since our forebears began to settle in villages to cultivate the land and domesticate animals. During this period, humans have struggled to understand that which is beyond the material world, developing a host of words in different languages



within the context of various cultural worldviews to describe their experiences of what we all intimately share in common.

Not that everybody has lived in complete ignorance. For instance, Yehuda Berg highlighted the vastness of the Cosmic Psyche in *The Power of Kabbalah*, where he said, there is a curtain that divides our reality into two realms, 1% being our physical world, while the other 99% “is the source of all lasting fulfilment. All knowledge, wisdom, and joy dwell in this realm. This is the domain that Kabbalists call Light.”



For myself, the notion of the Cosmic Psyche and the radiant Light of Consciousness enable me to use Self-reflective Divine Intelligence to understand why my brother’s death has had such a profound influence on my life, also answering a host of other scientific questions, which cannot be answered by attempting to explain the psychospiritual realm within a materialistic, mechanistic worldview.

In essence, what happened is that two behaviour patterns became established in my psyche, leading me to experience what Stan calls a ‘bad womb’, greatly disturbing my innate sense of Oceanic Ecstasy. These habitual patterns were to be reinforced many times in later life until I learned to master them with as much awareness as possible. For, as Rupert Sheldrake points out in *The Presence of the Past*, once a specific behaviour pattern is formed in evolution, it tends to repeat itself through habit.

First of all, I experienced my intrauterine environment as hostile, a distressing situation that became social hostility as soon as I was born, for my mother was unable to accept me as a substitute for her first-born, whom she beatified. This habitual behaviour pattern became reinforced when I was seven years of age, when I began to form concepts for myself. For not only had I been born in a dysfunctional family. I intuitively realized that I had been born into a dysfunctional culture that is not based on the Truth.

Specifically, I realized that the overall contexts for religion and science, denoted by the words *God* and *Universe*, respectively, are incompatible with each other. I therefore did not have any way of finding Peace by ending the long-running war between science and theology or of determining whether what I was being taught in church and school was true or not. Accordingly, I began to question the fundamental assumptions of the deluded culture I had been born in, not very popular. Ironically, I had to keep my distance from the authorities in my life, as much as possible, in order to return to Oceanic Ecstasy later in life, an example of social distancing, a term currently in widespread use during the COVID-19 pandemic. For, as J. Krishnamurti once wisely said, “It is no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society.”

However, if I had overtly questioned the cultural beliefs of the society I was born in throughout childhood and adolescence, I would not have survived. The homeostatic, autosteric tendencies of social structures would have come into play, like the immune response of the body, and I would have been destroyed. So, at the ages of 11, 16, and 18, I became fully assimilated into the prevailing culture. As a result, I won school prizes during the first two periods and I was a candidate for a first-class honours degree in my first year majoring in mathematics at university.

However, if I had continued to behave in the way that society wanted me to behave, I would not have been able to heal the deep wounds in both my personal psyche and that of the culture in which I was born later in life. So, the second behaviour pattern, induced by my brother’s death, came into play. Between weeks four and eight of human gestation, the brain goes through a particularly rapid period of growth. But, just as this was happening, my entire existence came crashing down.

This growth-breakdown pattern has occurred at several moments in life, as the creative power of Life has been guiding me back to Oceanic Ecstasy. Specifically, at the ages of 12, 17, and 19, I abandoned Christianity, science based on physics, and capitalist and communist economic systems because they are

based on assumptions that are obviously false. I learned very little during these years and those that followed them because I was deeply depressed, eventually failing my finals at university. So, at the end of my formal education, I was in a desperate situation, close to suicide. Little of what I had been taught made sense. Even my beloved mathematics—in the way that it was formulated at the time, and still is—could not lead me to Wholeness and the Truth, and hence back to Oceanic Ecstasy.

In the event, I was able to obtain a pass degree in mathematics in 1964, much helped by a sympathetic lecturer at the University of Nottingham and Donald Reeves, then a curate at my parents' church in Maidstone, as he describes in *Memoirs of a Very Dangerous Man*. The title is a reference to Margaret Thatcher, who called Donald a 'very dangerous man' when he was Rector of St. James's Church in Piccadilly and a popular, but unorthodox television presenter of the Christian message.

Back in the sixties, Donald helped me gain a modicum of self-confidence by chatting occasionally over a pint of beer and by arranging for me to meet Frank Lake, who was to write later, "The focus for psychopathology is now, for us, the first trimester of intra-uterine life. These first three months after conception hold more ups and downs, more ecstasies and devastations than we had ever imagined."

However, although Lake was a leading authority on the psychiatric significance of a child's development at or before birth within the Christian tradition, he was unable to explain why I had failed my degree and why I felt so depressed and hopeless living in a culture that felt quite alien me. Rather, he focused attention on familial issues, rather like R. D. Laing, particularly on my relationship with my mother, grievously affected by what had happened to her (and me) before my birth.



Equipped with a degree in mathematics, my entry ticket to the world of work, I then abandoned my search for the Truth in order to get married, have children, and develop a business career in the conventional manner. During the next twelve years, from the ages of 22 to 34, I was once again assimilated into the prevailing culture, making a total of fifteen such years during my lifetime. For most of the rest of my life, I have lived as an outlier, not fitting in anywhere, constantly questioning people's misguided assumptions and beliefs in an exhilarating spirit of curiosity.

This relatively stable period in my life ended abruptly in January 1977, when the second behavior pattern initiated by my brother's death was triggered once again. A few weeks earlier, my career manager had intimated that in the new year I would be promoted to second-line manager in an IBM sales office, responsible for a team of some sixty systems engineers and their managers. However, this did not happen because executive management used A Programming Language (APL), as a management information tool, to restructure three customer-related divisions, involving two or three thousand employees, reducing the number of sales branches from 22 to 15.

I became deeply depressed once again, in a midlife crisis, finding myself in a quite different environment from that which I had enjoyed during eight stimulating years working for IBM on leading-edge projects. Delaying as long as possible to see a doctor, eventually a consultant at St Thomas's Hospital told me in September 1977 that I was suffering from manic depression, today known more as bipolar disorder. He told me that this disturbance was biochemical in origin, most probably genetic. I did not believe him, for I do not debug a computer program by attaching an oscilloscope to the circuitry. So, as soon as I dared, I took myself off the drugs that my doctors had prescribed for me and sought a psychological explanation for my ailment so that it could be remedied.

With this aim in mind, I had six sessions in early 1979 with a psychotherapist, trained in Jungian analytical psychology. I gained two insights from the conversations that I had with her. First, when Betty

asked me what I could remember from my first eight years, I could remember nothing. I had pulled a thick curtain around my early years because they were too painful to remember. Secondly, she told me that she could see that I was afraid of people, not some, but all humans. This was quite a shock, especially because I care deeply for humanity. Besides, how could I have been a reasonably successful manager and systems engineer with such fears?

It is clear to me now why I was so afraid of humans. Most people base their precarious sense of security and identity in life on their religious, scientific, economic, and rational belief systems. So, questioning what I call the seven pillars of unwisdom underlying Western civilization can seem existentially threatening.

Nevertheless, to help me face my deepest fears, Life threw me into the deep end. Despite my psychological disturbances, I had not lost my innate sense of Wholeness and natural intelligence, so often stultified by the fragmented education and economic systems, focused increasingly on specialization and the division of labour in the workplace. So, I was able to see far more what was happening in the information technology industry than most of my colleagues, including IBM executive management in Armonk, New York.

Inspired by three years as the systems engineering manager in the mid 1970s for the British Post Office (now British Telecom), which had bought an advanced timesharing system from IBM, I realized that the data-processing industry was at a watershed in its thirty years development. Managers and professionals were learning to interact directly with computers to get access to corporate databases and for data analysis and modelling. So, having been transferred from management to marketing, I set out to write an executive guide on the management and development of Decision Support Systems, in conformity with IBM's marketing slogan 'Manage data as a corporate resource,' whatever that might mean. I was also giving well-received presentations on the emerging information society at customer executive seminars at IBM's European Education Centre near Brussels in Belgium.

However, as I attempted to rebuild my business career by developing a European reputation, much broader than one I had had in the early 1970s for a textual information-retrieval product, I could see that the global economy held the seeds of its own destruction within it and therefore my children, then aged nine and six, were not being educated to live in the world that would exist when they came to be having children of their own. This I had already known from my painful experiences of the deluded education system during the 1950s and 1960s. But, now the situation became far more critical, involving my children's and children's children's generations.

So, when I transferred to IBM's Information Systems Support Centre (ISSC) in 1980, I was deeply conflicted within. On the one hand, the ISSC had been given a five-year timeframe within which to develop its marketing strategy, giving me plenty of scope to develop my ideas and establish the international reputation that I was seeking. On the other hand, how could I, in all conscience, engage in these marketing activities when I knew so little about the long-term psychological and economic implications of humanity's growing dependency on information technology?



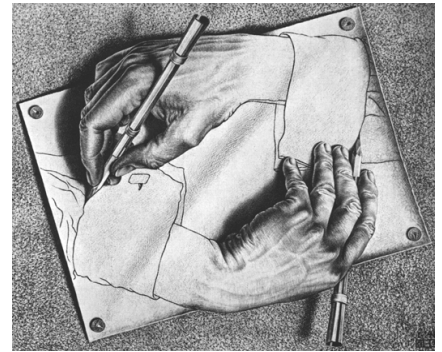
To resolve this dilemma, forty years ago this winter and spring, I set out to develop a comprehensive model of the global network of all interacting business enterprises, governmental institutions, and NGOs using IBM Business Systems Planning (BSP), whether or not jobs and tasks were performed by humans or computers, as archetypical machines. At the heart of BSP was a process-entity matrix, showing the relationships between dynamic business processes, such as designing, manufacturing, marketing, ordering, and invoicing, and their relationships to each other, as well as integrated models of static classes of information in enterprises, such as employees, customers, products, locations, and deliveries.

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But how could a BSP process-entity matrix model the development of programs written in APL, such as the one that had triggered an inherent weakness in my psyche three years before, bringing both my marriage and managerial career to an abrupt end? Like other programming languages, APL programs consist of functions and the data that they operate on, corresponding to processes and entities in BSP models, which I call active and passive data when stored in computers.

However, APL has some systems functions that enable programs to modify themselves in flight, so to speak, changing passive data to active and back again in a nanosecond. So, just what is going on when humans write APL programs that dynamically create functions, execute them, and then delete them so that they no longer exist, even though their effects remain? As an example, IBM's primary management information tool at the time used these systems functions, leading me to wonder whether it would be ever possible for a computer to program itself without human, that is, Divine intervention. In other words, could machines think? as Alan Turing believed in 1950 in a seminal paper on so-called artificial intelligence.

Furthermore, if I were to develop a comprehensive model of all business processes, I would need to include the process of developing the model in the model as it was emerging in consciousness in a meaningful manner, an apparently impossible task. For this would be like a television camera filming itself filming, brilliantly illustrated by M. C. Escher's famous lithograph 'Drawing Hands'. So which comes first, the territory or the map?



Given the apparent impossibility of managing our business affairs with full awareness of what we are doing, by spring 1980 my inner tension was almost unbearable, bringing me close to suicide once again. On the one hand, while I was gaining a reputation as an innovative visionary on the continent of Europe and with some of my colleagues in the UK, my manager did not understand the changes that were happening in the industry at the time and was antagonistic towards my endeavours to re-establish my business career.

On the other hand, scientists and technologists, such as my colleagues and I, were changing people's lives in radical ways, but we had very little understanding of the consequences of our activities. Yet, as the necessary understanding could only come from the solution to the business management and modelling problem I had been wrestling with that winter, the prospects facing humanity looked hopeless.



Yet, there was still a spark of light deep within me. Even though I had abandoned physics as a teenager, because I did not believe in the existence of a fundamental particle of matter or in the big bang theory of the origin of the universe, I still had faith that science would one day be able to explain the mystery of life. It was in this spirit that I took a stroll on Sunday 27th April 1980 on Wimbledon Common in London, on my way to the pub for lunch.

Then, at 11:30 on that fateful morning, all was revealed—close to the Tangier war memorial at map reference 51° 26' 30" N, 0° 14' 02" W (TQ 2284 7288, to the nearest ten-metre square in the Ordnance Survey grid). As active and passive data in computers, together with the corresponding cognitive structures in humans, are causing the pace of change in society to accelerate exponentially, they must be synergistic types of energy, akin to kinetic and potential energy in mechanics.

I knew at once that I had been given the key that would unlock all the innermost secrets of the Universe: what it is, how it is intelligently designed, and what it truly means to be human, in contrast to the other animals and machines, like computers. So, three weeks later, in a state of great excitement, I resigned from

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my marketing job and set out to develop a self-inclusive mathematical model of the Totality of Existence that would unify the psychospiritual energies within us all with the four forces recognized by physicists.

At the time, I told my closest friends, who had helped me to overcome my suicidal feelings, that it felt as if a dam had burst in my psyche, releasing a torrent of energy that had previously been held back by the constraints of the culture I had been born in. However, as I can now see, this apocalyptic eureka moment was more like a big bang exploding at the Divine Origin of the Universe, as evolution took the most momentous change of direction in its fourteen billion-year history.

Today, after forty turbulent years battling the stormy seas, like a single-handed yachtsman repeatedly circling the globe, I have reached a tranquil harbour. I have been successful beyond my wildest dreams, unifying mysticism and mathematics, science and spirituality, and all other opposites. I have thereby realized Love, Peace, Wholeness, and the Truth, which I set out to do as a seven-year-old in order to return to the exquisite sense of Oceanic Ecstasy that I had enjoyed for the first seven weeks of my existence.

Sadly, however, no one on our beautiful planet Earth understands the transcultural nature of what I am saying, even Advaita sages and teachers of Nonduality, who similarly know that Consciousness is all there is. Twenty years ago—after I discovered that *Jñāna yoga*, the involutory path of wisdom and abstract knowledge in Advaita, is complementary to my creative, evolutionary modelling activities—I ingenuously thought that it would be possible for humanity to thrive for a few more generations in the eschatological Age of Light, once we were free of our delusions following the collapse of the global economy.

Then, two years ago, following a meeting in Oslo with Guy McPherson, co-author with Carolyn Baker of *Extinction Dialogs: How to Live with Death in Mind*, I realized that I had been far too optimistic. The collapse of the global economy would reduce global dimming caused by aerosols in industrial pollution, leading to an acceleration of abrupt climate change. So my guesstimate of two or three centuries before the inevitability of human extinction became two or three decades.

This vision told me, as we entered the 2020s, that the changes that we would need to make as a species during this decade would be far greater than all those we had made since the invention of money, some 4,000 years ago. What I did not know was how quickly this need would become evident to the general population. As I can now see, the global temperature could rise so fast in the next two or three years that the habitat that we need to grow our food would be unable to sustain us.

Under these circumstances, there is now little chance of completing the final revolution in science, like Kepler and Newton in the 1600s, which I have thought was my main mission in life since 1980, transcending all categories of human learning in transdisciplinary Wholeness. However, as I can now see, my principal purpose in life has been to find God, which I express in this monograph as the quest for Oceanic Ecstasy.

This might seem rather self-centred, but as the solution to the ultimate problem of human learning that I have been offering humanity for the last eight years can seem existentially threatening to the psychosocial structures of even self-named luminaries, I must inevitably continue to live in solitude in the Swedish countryside, sixteen kilometres from the shops that provide me with the basic necessities in life.

So, I live just one day at a time, today writing these autobiographical reflections, both to find some sense of closure and also to clear up any misconceptions that those who have read some of my writings might have. Continuing this process of tidying up loose ends, I'll next update the article in which I describe the history of my writings since I set out to write an executive guide on the management and development of interactive computing in 1979. Sadly, however, it looks unlikely that I shall ever finish my final book titled *Unifying Mysticism and Mathematics: To Realize Love, Peace, Wholeness, and the Truth*. Changing the direction of thousands of years of mathematical reasoning is far too great a challenge, requiring many further years of studying the entrancing patterns lying deep in this most fascinating subject.