

The Tears of a Clown



**Stella
Baker**

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Introduction

*"Now there's some sad things known to Man
But ain't too much sadder than
The tears of a clown
When there's no one around...."
--Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, ["The Tears of a Clown"](#)*

I've taken the title of this book from the 1967 Motown song by Smokey Robinson and the Miracles which I've quoted above. The tragedy I'm referring to is the perceived tragedy expressed throughout Mankind that he is not in control of his environment and is therefore not free.

What can be a greater human tragedy than this?

This is a book about the Ego and self-image.

If you have an Ego or a self-image then inevitably you're going to come into conflict with others, and you're also going to get hurt. There's no two ways about this. If you don't want to be in conflict with others, and you don't want to get hurt and offended, then don't have an Ego or self-image.

But can you?

How far do you expect to get living in society where the basic requirement for participation is an Ego or a self-image before you become toast?

Do you see the conundrum? Kind of looks like damned if you do, damned if you don't, doesn't it?

Please feel free to join me on a journey of exploration and looking at the relationship between the Ego and self-image and conflict, misery and suffering.

Thinking and being

What you think is who you are.

This is existence at its most basic, fundamental level. Existence is principle and process. You have existence itself, which is the principle, an arbitrary point in a process, and then you have the process of existence, the creativity and interaction. This is the how and what of existence, of life, of everything.

There's you. You are the principle here. Thinking is part of the process of you being you. Everybody thinks. I think. You think. We all think. Thinking is a fundamental part of life, of our existence, and it is so because we are relative to an environment, a planet, a society, and a culture.

Thinking is part of the natural process of being human, because our central reference point to life and existence is language, culture and beliefs. Words. This is where we get into reincarnation and karma.

We are conscious, because consciousness is the basis of all existence. You go to sleep at night because you are tired, and are less conscious, or it's harder to get energy from your consciousness, so you go to sleep and become less consciously aware of your environment. Being less conscious and less consciously aware means less energy is needed. So you go to sleep and let the subconscious aspects of your being take over. Then you wake up in the morning becoming more conscious and more consciously aware, and so have more energy.

Energy is even more important to us because physical existence is based on the energy cycle or vibration. You are a vibration of energy. I am a vibration of energy. Everybody is a vibration of energy. This is so because we are attached to a physical body. Our physical bodies are just form, dimension, pattern, rhythm, billions of biological cells existing together in a basic pattern or rhythm, dying, replicating, reproducing, growing, and dying again.

This means we're constantly caught between two environments. We have on the one hand the environment of our physical bodies, brain, heart, lungs, organs, skin, bone, etc and so on which functions together as an organism, a body, a collective which makes up our physical being. Then we have the wider environment, that what we assume is not us, our immediate environment, our homes, our rooms, our spaces, the outside world.

Thinking is part of what we do naturally. It's part of the process, the karmic process, because karma is physical action and physical activity (because karma is essentially energy vibration) and thinking is a physical activity. Thinking is what we do to arrive at the principle, which is who we are at a given moment in time.

Consider that your life right now is a matter of just two things:

- how you are feeling right now.
- what is going through your mind right now.

There you have it. The principle and the process. The how and what of your life, or rather, the who and how. You can only be as conscious as you can think you are and put into language and express in some way. These two things determine the nature and quality of your life right now. They also define who you are.

What I'm doing here is giving you a wider context within the mysticism so that we can dig deeper into the Ego and self-image and explore the possible reasons why we develop an Ego or self-image and through it, why we form so many different emotional and psychological attachments.

Separateness

I'd like to start off here by pointing out that all thinking, as in conscious thinking, is a response to a stimulus of some sort. We are created by our environments, both natural and also social and cultural, and we think as a response to that what we perceive and are able to figure out from our environment.

This is a mutual creative process which I refer to as a mystical transaction. We create our environment through our senses and sensory nervous system. Out there in the environment, in actual reality, there is just consciousness and energy vibrations, empty space, atoms and molecules, and we translate all this into images, sounds, light, texture, pattern, sensations and experiences through our senses.

Light requires eyes and sight to be perceived. Sound requires hearing and an ear drum. Texture and form requires skin and nerve endings, as does heat, cold, and the variations in pressure that come from wind. What you perceive of your environment is always relative to your perception and individual perspective. Change your perspective, your perception of the environment changes and you see something different.

Way back in the past, very early in your life, probably further back than you could remember and before you learned to use language, you learned separateness.

You could have learned separateness in any one of a number of different ways. You were startled by a loud noise. You fell off the bed and hurt yourself. You were feeding off your mother's breast and still hungry, no milk was being produced. You felt relief from having a wet, soggy nappy changed.

Whatever.

But there was an event where you learned separateness and the concept of self and other. "This is me." "This is not me." "This is me." "This is not me."

It's at this point in your life that the Ego was created, where you started to perceive yourself as someone or something different from your environment and others in your environment. This is where there was separateness in your perception and the mystical transaction with your environment.

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Probably nobody ever pointed this out to you simply because we all went through the same experience very early in childhood and the separateness and sense of self and other is something which is generally accepted as a normal part of being a human being.

But while this experience very early in your childhood is so insignificant that you cannot remember it, it was actually if anything the defining moment of your life because central to your experience of life, and your perspective on life, is your self-image and your Ego.

Who you think you are

So following on from the previous chapters along the same theme, we arrive at the 'what'. The 'what' here is the Ego, the self-image, your perception of yourself as you are built up from all your experiences of life going as far back as you can remember.

Your Ego is woven into the general theme of your life, the undercurrent of how you feel about life and what is going through your mind right now. Your Ego gives you a sense of identity, a definite sense of being, and hopefully a general sense of reassurance and comfort when you look in the mirror.

Isn't that why you look into a mirror? For reassurance, and a sense of security, that everything looks the same as it does normally? Isn't the whole point of looking into a mirror is to reassure yourself that you look okay? That your skin hasn't turned a funny colour, or your nose has grown, or there's some great, almighty zit on your cheek?

But as is often the case the simple act of looking at yourself in a mirror isn't just about looking at your face or checking your physical appearance and features. It often involves looking at your self-image as well, simply because you associate yourself with your self-image just as much as you identify yourself with your face and your physical body.

Therefore simply looking at yourself in the mirror or seeing your reflection say in a window in the street can trigger thoughts and feelings about your self-image and Ego, and within this how you feel about yourself.

As you can see, this all follows the exact same principle and process in the beginning, that whatever is coming in from your perception is what triggers your thoughts and feelings, as does whatever you perceive in your environment. What you think and feel in the present moment becomes your principle or perspective.

Now, fingers crossed, hopefully, all of this karma or activity is in some harmonious or congruent relationship and you can come away from the mirror or your reflection feeling just as good about yourself as you did beforehand.

But this is not always the case, and it's also not true for everyone. Some people feel uncomfortable about seeing their reflection or looking at themselves in the mirror. Some people don't feel too good about themselves and this is often because of something which has happened in the past or past trauma.

You see the simple act of looking at yourself in the mirror or seeing your reflection triggers thoughts, emotions and feelings, and they can only come from one source, and that source is memory. Memory is the root of past karma for it is the storage space in your brain for your past experiences of life, from which you create your self-image and Ego, and on which most people, and you're probably one of these people, base your entire conscious perspective on life.

If you're one of these people who feels uncomfortable about looking at yourself in the mirror or seeing your reflection please feel free to keep reading. There's only you and me here. Maybe together we can share some insight and find some answers to some unanswered questions. Who knows?

Notice here how everything also is coming back to the basic 'how and 'what' about life. How are you feeling about your life right now? What is going through your mind right now? It all comes back to the principle and process and the fundamental basis of life and existence. Please also keep this in mind as you read further through this book.

This is where we get to one of the most fundamental and basic social rituals in existence. Most people, in fact I would go as far to say everyone or almost everyone participates willingly in this social ritual. Out of this social ritual we get the widespread and common understanding of respect.

Is respect given or does it have to be earned? What say you in response to this question? Keep this in mind as I elaborate further on this social ritual.

What I'm referring to here is the fundamental basis of all social interaction. The rule or principle is a very simple one.

"I will respect you and accept you for who you say you are, if you respect me and accept me for who I say I am."

This is it. It's really that simple.

Who you say you are is usually who you think you are or believe yourself to be. It's Ego, self-image, something which you have spent time and put in a great deal of effort working on. Let's think about the various ways you work on your self-image.

First there's your physical appearance. The way you style your hair, the clothes you wear, the shoes and footwear you wear, the things you carry with you. Then of course there's the stuff you were given by other people such as your name, your education, your job, your home, and the role you play in society.

Then there's the way you use language, the way you talk, the things you say, the catchphrases, stuff you say over and over again. The beliefs and opinions you hold. The political and religious ideologies you follow. You have your own level of cultural awareness and interpretation of what is culture and what isn't.

Then there's your attitude and relationship with other people, your past life experiences, and your relationship with yourself, and this creates your relationship with your environment, the things you feel you need in your environment, the type of environment you feel most comfortable in, and all the little adjustments and enhancements which go together to create a comfort zone.

Make no mistake creating, crafting and developing an Ego and self-image takes up a lot of your life energy and focus, and it rarely ever turns out completely as you envisage it in the beginning when you were young and didn't have that much life experience.

Here it's important to understand that human beings as a species evolve through culture, which is a major part of language - which if you remember is the central human reference point for life and existence. Out of cultural attitudes you get social attitudes and social beliefs on a much broader scale, but you also get a representation of culture and social attitudes on an individual level with each individual human being which is manifest or expressed through the Ego and self-image.

The similarities and differences all play out in this basic fundamental social ritual between you and other people - if you believe I am who I say I am I will believe you are who you think you are - through social interaction.

But if this is what we are all doing on some basic and fundamental level, then why is it so? Why do we spend so much time in our lives cultivating and developing an Ego and self-image?

The Inner Conflict

Alluding to the song quote which inspired the title of this book, and also to the opening words in my introduction, having an Ego and self-image comes with a great deal of insecurity and inner conflict.

There's no two ways about this. The Ego arose out of your assumption, and it was an assumption, that there was separateness between you and your environment. You were so young, life was a new experience for you, you had no framework or even the ability to think otherwise and you simply did not have the ability to call into question or examine your assumption, because you were around a year, 18 months, or no more than 2 years old.

By the time you developed the ability to think about why or how you think or feel, you were around six or seven years old. Still a relatively small child, but old enough to create and develop an Ego and self-image and to have various experiences imprinted on your memory from your earlier childhood.

This is how you ended up with an Ego, or self-image, which is essentially a compromise between your innermost feelings and desires on the one hand, and the wider (perceived by you) external social and cultural influences and forces coming at you from your social and cultural environment.

Wherever there is compromise there is a conflict. Out of this conflict you probably feel a sense of insecurity, of alienation, isolation, loneliness, and this lies somewhere deep down inside of you. It's always there somewhere in your hintergedanken, a neat German word for the back of your mind. In this hintergedanken, or deeper spaces in your memory, lies the voice of your karma.

Sometimes there is silence, and there is no voice. Often this voice speaks when there is change in your life, or some kind of threat to your Ego, such as an illness, a threat to your life, the loss of a relationship, or some other trauma, or fear, or danger, and so on.

Out of this you're getting fear energy, and this can manifest itself in many different ways. It can be insecurity, it can be guilt, it can be shame, it can be anger, either towards someone else, something else, or towards yourself. It can be fear, it can be dread, it can be anxiety or depression, a sense of futility, hopelessness, or even the feeling that there's no way out or the feeling that you're not going to cope, or be able to handle the new reality. There may be suicide ideation, a fight or flight response, it can be so many different things.

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However on some level there's a pattern or rhythm and a fundamental relationship which is invariable and which follows a principle. There's some threat or challenge to your image of who you are, your selfhood or Ego, and it's coming from your immediate reality through your perception, and, understanding that you develop your Ego through choices, you feel insecure and wonder whether you made the right choice.

This is usually what lies at the root of whatever trauma you're going through which arises out of this inner conflict and sense of separateness between you and other or between you and your environment.

Fear of death

So expanding on the previous chapter I'd like to get into something a bit more specific which I'm sure that we have all experienced at some point in our lives - the fear of death. There's many different aspects to the fear of death and dying, because out of this we get the fear of trauma, fear of pain, fear of loss, fear of suffering, and it's often the case that we fear all these things because they represent a threat to our existence.

But what the fear of death really boils down to is a threat to our Ego and self-image, and contemplation of the possibility that life and existence can continue without us. If everything can continue and be the same without us, then what is the value and meaning of our lives and our existence?

Please keep in mind that the Ego and our self-image is a value system. We have a need for meaning and a sense of value in our lives and existence. We have a need to feel that we are included, a part of something which is bigger than us, a sense that we somehow matter to our environment and others in our environment. We have a need to feel that we bring or add some value to others in their life, their existence, their life, that we are somehow important, and these are all very basic, fundamental, and powerful human psychological and emotional needs.

Death, or rather physical death - because death is entirely a physical phenomenon - is something we are aware of because we come face to face with death early in our lives, often in childhood, possibly with the death of a relative, or the death of a pet. My first experience of death, or rather bereavement, was the death of my paternal grandfather at the age of six. My paternal grandfather was a retired miner and an alcoholic, he lived in a bungalow in Batley. I saw him as a kind man and figured that he somehow gave up on life after the death of my paternal grandmother, an Irish gypsy, in the 1950's.

His death for some reason didn't affect me as much as the death of a childhood friend at 13 who died from cystic fibrosis. We were in hospital together. He from cystic fibrosis, me from pneumonia. I had just come out of a short coma when he died. I thought we would leave hospital together. I was wrong.

The death of my paternal grandfather, years previously, affected me differently. I wasn't that grief stricken with my grandfather, maybe because I was too young to properly understand the impact of my grandfather's death. He was there, alive, right up to the time when I went to see him in hospital and he looked at me, smiling. Then all of a sudden he wasn't there, and I couldn't understand why.

But what awakened in me from the death of my grandfather was an awareness of death and mortality and it was back then, at the age of six, that it dawned on me that one day in the future, just like my grandfather, I would die. Maybe you have experienced this for yourself - I'm guessing here as death and bereavement are so complex and variable human experiences that they usually manifest as unique experiences. For sure we all die, and people die all the time, these are facts of life. But the circumstances and ways in which human beings die are all unique and highly individual. No two deaths are ever alike, as no two lives are ever exactly the same. Death is a clear example of trauma, and trauma is what makes us unique and individual, trauma is what creates diversity.

But maybe you have experienced something where, when bereaved and confronted with the death of someone else, what is triggered are thoughts, feelings and emotions connected with your own mortality and the realization that life is an incredibly fragile experience, and that on some deeper level our lives are incredibly fragile.

What disturbs us is the fact that we cannot do anything to alleviate our fear of death. How far back can you really remember of your life? How far back into the past can you go? How deep can you dig into your memories? What is your earliest memory of life? Even if you have powerful abilities to recall and remember chances are you won't get any further than your first ability to use memory, which is somewhere around the ages of 2 or 3.

You won't be able to recall the first realization of separateness, the assumption that you made that there was a 'you' and there was an 'other'. You won't be able to remember being born. You won't be able to remember being a foetus and being in the womb.

You cannot even conceive death. You simply don't have the capacity to conceptualize death, simply because you cannot remember experiencing it, you have no idea what death actually is, because all you know that death is not living.

Isn't this how the doctors determine that someone has died?

Clinical death has no symptoms, because it's not a condition, and it's not a disease. There is nothing that you can point to or make an example of and say that "This is death" apart from the fact that you have a corpse, a dead body which is no longer living or displaying any vital signs of life. Death is the absence of life in a physical body.

So what is it that you're actually afraid of?

What I suggest is that your fear of death is actually a fear of the ending and destruction of your Ego and self-image, and not much more than this. You cannot fear that what you are unaware of. You have no knowledge of death, whatever it is, and how death relates to you. Your fear is a thought arising out of memory and thus relative, through your Ego and self-

image, to your perspective. Much of what you understand yourself to be, the image or concept of you, is your Ego. You perceive death as not living, not existing, and so what is being threatened here is your Ego or self-image.

Fear of other

*"Now if I appear to be carefree
It's only to camouflage my sadness
In order to shield my pride I'll try
To cover this hurt with a show of gladness...."
--Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, ["The Tears of a Clown"](#)*

So moving on from death we come to fear of other. By other here I'm referring to anything which isn't you, your perspective, your life, your Ego, self-image, or your comfort zone. For reasons of economy I'm going to focus on other people, but the same mechanisms and principles also apply to new environments, new experiences, new events and even new insights and awareness.

This is important. We are aware, from previous chapters, that developing and maintaining an Ego is a multi-dimensional creative process requiring vast amounts of emotional and psychological investment. It's not just about the shoes, the clothes, the hairstyles, it's also about the labels, the status, the position, the experiences, and all the various badges and tokens of Good Model Citizenry and Widespread Social Respectability.

Developing and maintaining an Ego is not easy. In fact it's a struggle and involves a lot of trauma, insecurity, pain, suffering and misery. In fact I would even be prepared to go as far to say that developing and maintaining an Ego and a self image for most people is the most important struggle in their lives.

This is where we get to the main point of this book. In developing and maintaining an Ego it's usually a given that you're going to get hurt. You're going to come into conflict with other people. There will be some people out there who won't like you, and some won't even accept you. There will be others who will seek to deceive you, lie to you, exploit you, and put you down to make themselves feel better or derive some perceived advantage from the relationship and experience.

But, just as importantly, this is even before we get to the fact that sometimes we are our own worst enemies. We are not only lied to and deceived by other people, we also lie to ourselves and deceive ourselves. We can also cheat ourselves often by not properly thinking things through and trying to take the easy way out, and in so doing we end up complicating our lives and adding additional layers to our own personal struggles.

It's also quite often the case that we fear other people because there's something about us that we fear and we see that what we fear reflected in other people and our perceptions of who they are.

Now this can start very early in life. It might have been the case that you were born to parents who for whatever reason, and whatever issues or struggles they were dealing with, they simply could not be parents or handle the reality of developing a relationship with a child. They might have wanted a child, they might have sought to love and care for their child but for whatever reason issues got in the way and your childhood turned out differently as a result.

It could have also turned out that as a child you turned out to be more difficult to raise than your parents envisaged and your parents struggled to deal with you. I'm not one for blaming children in such difficult relationships, so please suspend all moral judgment, it's just a simple fact of life that babies don't come to order or come equipped with instruction manuals. Nature doesn't give a shit about model family experiences or family dynamics, it only cares about the species as a whole and the simple fact is that we need problem creators just as much as we need problem solvers otherwise we don't evolve as a species.

I know from my own experiences of childhood trauma despite what I went through with my parents and what they went through being together I created just as many problems for them as they did for me. Trust me, I was not an easy child to raise. I'm just throwing this out there for some of you to think about.

Quite often it's the case that there's a situation which arises in the home where the parent is forced to punish or reward the child, and this happens usually early in childhood. The small child is too young and doesn't have enough life experience to process the conflict or rationalize it, but having created the Ego the child assumes that there is something that's bad, or wrong, or somehow unacceptable about them.

This usually happens very early in the development of the Ego and so the child grows up to become someone who is constantly trying to 'correct' or modify their self-image through their life experiences, by looking to others for reassurances and validation. This manifests as a set of motives which can be expressed as various questions:

- Do you like me?
- Am I acceptable to you?
- Have I achieved enough for you?
- Am I good enough for you?
- Are you going to put me down?

- Are you going to hurt me?

These experiences don't necessarily have to happen in the home. They can happen at school or even out in the street with friends or siblings. It could be, for example, a child not being invited to play or attend a party of one of their friends where they think all the other friends are attending. It could be an experience of being singled out for additional chores. It could be an experience of constantly not being picked for a side or a team, or left until last in a situation where sides or teams are picked.

The trigger is always some dysfunction or false perception that gets worked into memory and becomes not just part of the Ego, but also forms part of the perspective.

Rejection is a part of life's experiences, as is trauma, and ageing, and sickness, and death. We come into contact with an infinite number of people throughout our lives, and not everyone has to like us, not everyone has to accept us.

But part of the reason why we develop an Ego is that we get caught up in the various polarities and dualities of existence, and this is mainly due to the moral reasoning which gets worked into socialization and the process of social and mental conditioning. We are all taught the dualities of good and bad, good and evil, right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable, appropriate and inappropriate, and Ego development and the development of self-image is our attempt to navigate this duality to be able to function and go about our lives.

If you are basing your perception of your environment on some moral reasoning and these dualities of good and bad, acceptable and not acceptable, appropriate and inappropriate, right and wrong, and so on then you're bound to be feeling insecure and anxious. This is because you have assumed that there is separateness between you and your environment, and between you and other people, This can only serve to distort your perception and your perspective.

Insecurity

So having gone through a couple of examples of the fears arising out of Ego, such as fear of death and fear of other, let's dig a bit deeper and get into fear a bit more and insecurity.

Insecurity, as well as fear, is part and parcel of having an Ego, which arises out of separateness and is your attempt to compromise between your innermost desires, fears, thoughts and feelings and the wider external societal forces which manifest in your environment.

This is where we get into one of the realities of life, of living as part of a society, and pretty much part of being a human being. Living involves insecurity because part of life is about learning to deal with, and cope with, fear.

There are many things we fear, or at least feel insecure about. Most of us are afraid of death, of dying. We are often afraid of other people, what they might say to us, what they might think about us, and what they might do to us. Probably you have in your mind some people who you feel nervous around, whether they be known to you or not, and there is a certain amount of analysis of different scenarios or hypothetical situations that you might go through as you envisage coming into contact and meeting such people.

Then you have the fear and insecurity connected with not getting your basic needs met. Fear and insecurity can manifest itself in so many different ways when it comes down to the basic, fundamental things we need or desire in life.

You may fear losing your job, getting sick, losing your partner, not having enough money, not having enough food, not having anywhere to live, not having a job, or not having access to your comfort zone. I guess I could go deeper into this but I won't.

This is a book about the relationship between insecurity and fear and the Ego and self-image. I'm going through the various mystical principles involved so that you have a framework or pattern to work with. I cannot write about the things you feel insecure or are afraid of. I'm not you. I don't live your life. I'm not the one who's experiencing your reality. You are. You're the one who's got to examine your Ego and your various fears and insecurities and somehow find some insight or clarity here.

But what I am saying, and what I do want you to think about as a possibility is the fact that much of how you shape your Ego, your self-image, your identity is influenced very heavily by your fears and insecurities. Your Ego acts as a security blanket, a comfort zone, a buffer

zone which you feel somehow protects you from the external social and cultural forces around you. This in turn only serves to reinforce the fundamental separateness out of which you developed your Ego.

This is what determines, to some extent, everything you do, everything you say, everything you think, and the choices and decisions you make in life. This is a very powerful influence on human thinking and behaviour. Who you are, or rather who you think you are and believe yourself to be is going to be completely different when you're getting your needs met and there is not much fear and anxiety as opposed to when getting your basic needs met isn't guaranteed, is threatened, is denied, or is made in some way difficult or even inaccessible to you.

In fact in some cases you're going to be putting out a completely different persona.

All this is exacerbated of course by trauma and suffering, and the times you've been hurt, denied, deprived, neglected, or let down by others. But it's also exacerbated, though somewhat more indirectly, by the times you've hurt others, let them down, rejected them, or you've turned away from others. This is something you also need to keep in mind.

We all have a dark side. We're all just as capable of fucking someone else over, or fucking up their lives, in the right situation and circumstances. This is the other side of the Ego. Most people develop an Ego not just to protect themselves from the world around them and other people, many of us also develop and maintain an Ego to protect other people and the world from the darker side of our nature.

This is something that I feel we always need to keep somewhere in the back of our mind and not try to pretend or deceive ourselves that it is otherwise. Some of the most harmful and toxic people out there are people who are in denial of this basic fact and who give off the impression that they're all love and light, all fluffy pink unicorns and rainbows. How else do you think some people get caught up in abusive relationships?

But another thing I want to put into words here and for you to keep in mind is the fact that a lot of all this isn't down to the choices you've made in life and the decisions, there's also the wider social and cultural influences which you've been subjected to. I'm referring to the so-called perceived mainstream culture and wider social and political influences that play out in our lives and which also influence our thinking, our behaviour, and how we relate to other people.

Your Ego isn't just about your innermost desires and feelings, is it? It's also very much about your perception and perspective on your environment, your community, the society in which you live, and even the world from your perspective. Separateness is an illusion, it's what you, me, and everyone once assumed to be reality, but it also yields other different

illusions, such as permanence and the notion of permanent, unchanging existence. There's also the illusion of continuity and cause and effect.

There's also the illusion of individualism, which is very heavily rooted in separateness. This is the notion that you are somehow totally responsible for everything you've said, everything you've thought, everything you've done. Individualism is in flat denial of relationship as a basis of existence. Out of this you get other illusions, such as self-improvement, the so called law of attraction, and all kinds of illusions which have been developed and worked over again and again over centuries as techniques and tools for social and mental conditioning. These techniques and tools, used by external authority, have been used to shape you, me, and everyone else into Good Model Citizens capable of Widespread Social Respectability, with varying degrees of success.

Therefore it's important to not just consider your Ego and self-image and how you develop it, but also pay attention to the context for the Ego and the wider social and cultural environment which deems that an Ego is vitally important just for being considered a part of society.

To do that we need to look at authority.

Authority



By authority here I'm referring to authority that we create and give to others, or external authority. To understand how authority works in relationship to the Ego we need to get into some symbolism here which means we get into some Tarot and astrology. Please note that I'm not offering any kind of reading or interpretation, but am using both Tarot and astrology in a mystical sense. Therefore it doesn't matter whether you 'believe in' the Tarot or astrology, as we're just going to focus on the symbolism of both.

So we start with The Hierophant. This is the fifth numbered card from the Major Arcana, or the major part of the Tarot deck. All the cards in the Major Arcana are standalone in terms of symbolism and what they signify, and there's 22 Major Arcana cards from The Fool (which is zero) to The World which is numbered 21. These cards are not tied to a suit (pentacles, wands, swords and cups) but are symbolic of a mystical principle in their own right.

I also use the Rider-Waite deck because it's simple and straightforward. What you get on the card is a scene or an image which is symbolic of the principle. What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG) is the guiding principle here.

So as you can see we have The Hierophant, which is a figure of religious authority, clothed in red, seated on a throne between two pillars. In his left hand is the Triple Cross. His right

hand is raised in the sign of benediction, with two fingers pointing skywards and two fingers pointing downwards to the earth, which is symbolic of the relationship between Heaven and Earth. The Hierophant is a symbolic figure of authority based on the relationship between divinity and humanity.

At his feet are the crossed keys to heaven. He is seated between two pillars which are representative of Law and Liberty, or if you prefer, obedience and disobedience. Before him are kneeling two worshippers or followers.

Now if I were teaching a course on how to interpret the various Tarot cards I would tell you that this card in a spread can suggest marriage, alliances, servitude, captivity, mercy, and goodness. But this is not a course in the Tarot, nor is this a book about the Tarot, so we will turn our attention to the Roman numeral 'V' at the top of the card, which indicates a Five.

As the Tarot is relative to astrology The Hierophant is relative to the astrological sign of Leo, the fifth sign of the zodiac, a Fixed fire sign, associated with the Sun. In terms of astrology of course the Sun is a very important planet because it is representative of being - in a social sense - and so Leo as a sign is symbolic of creativity, authority, drama and the Ego.

Development of Ego and self-image goes hand in hand with a need or acceptance of external authority or a belief in an authority figure. Who you are and what you believe are one and the same thing for the simple fact that physical existence is based on the energy vibration.

This relationship or duality forms pretty much the moment you are born and continues pretty much throughout your whole life. No matter who you are, or how you live, or what you believe, you will always have a name, you will always have some kind of identity, and other people will have their own personal beliefs and opinions about who and what you are.

This duality or polarity is perhaps better symbolized in astrology by the two fixed signs of the zodiac, Leo - which corresponds to The Hierophant card from the Major Arcana of the Tarot - and Aquarius - which corresponds to the eleventh card Justice. Leo being the fixed Fire sign, and Aquarius the fixed Air sign, these are two of the four fixed signs which make up the 'hayyoth' or four figures which feature in the corners of two Tarot cards from the Major Arcana (the other two being of course Taurus the fixed Earth sign and Scorpio the fixed Water sign) which manifest as the Ox (Taurus), the Lion (Leo), the Eagle (Scorpio) and Man (Aquarius). The 'hayyoth' is seen on The Wheel of Fortune and The World cards from the Major Arcana of the Tarot.

I just want to point out that I use the symbolism of the Tarot and from astrology to illustrate various mystical principles and bring them to light. The central human reference

point for life and existence is language, and it's important to understand that all such symbolism never ever points to anything more than a common truth or principle. It's just symbolism, language, culture, mere concepts, things which can be used as a platform or basis for further study and investigation to arrive at an individual truth.

For example it's a given that the moment you are born you are in relationship with other people in what can be described as society. The relationship actually began the moment you were conceived and at the point where you ceased to be an ovum in your mother's womb, which is roughly the same point more or less when she discovered that she was pregnant and that she was conscious of some growth in her body which was to eventually become you - the human being.

Without getting too much into the different variables of you coming into being - or incarnating, that is, taking on a physical form - you are always relative or in relationship to other human beings. Between the two polar extremes of love and death your life experiences amount to an entire sequence of life experience which usually matches other human beings in existence.

You experience a childhood, you have parents, you are part of a family, you go to school, you make friends, you celebrate birthdays, you get sick, experience various illnesses and infections, fall in love, get rejected, and so on and so forth common to other people.

These experiences which are common to other people on the planet are symbolized by the fixed Air sign of Aquarius, which as a sign symbolizes humanity, community, and everything we do in relationship with other people. Aquarius as a sign is associated with a planet, Uranus, which in astrology symbolizes sudden, unexpected changes in life, but which I personally associate with sudden unforeseen changes and what happens in your life as a result of such changes.

I get much further into this further in this book, but for now this is just a context for the other sign in the polarity, which is Leo, the sign associated with self, or you the individual in relationship with other people. Leo is all about things which go to make up the Ego and self-image, so it's about drama and role play, it's about playing and childhood games. It's also by extension about toys, just as it's about passions and interests, discoveries, new events and experiences in life and how these events shape you. Leo is also about magic, the pentagram, and summoning things into being. But for most people Leo is also about the Ego, your image to other people, what you do in life, and what you represent as an individual to others out there in society.

Leo as a sign is associated with the Sun, which is actually a star and not a planet, but in terms of astrology it is perceived as a very important planet which is symbolic of being and

existence. Central to developing a horoscope or birth chart, which was a form of psychotherapy to people back in ancient times, it was believed that the exact time, location and date of your birth created a relationship with 'the heavens' or the solar system and your life was pretty much mapped out.

This belief in a pre-determined life experience and 'life script' has persisted right up until the 1950's and even further and was revised by Freud who was the father of psychoanalysis into the Ego and the three states of Ego, the super-Ego, the Ego itself and the id.

The Ego is not Mankind's greatest achievement. It's actually the most popular tool of oppression because it's a concept which can be used by anyone in a perceived position of authority to suppress pretty much anything, patterns of behaviour, intelligence, creativity, empathy, sexuality, human diversity, and so on and it can be used against anyone.

By far the clearest example of this is the role of the Ego throughout the centuries to suppress women and subjugate them to a role and social function which amounted to little more than being chattels or 'human objects' to be exploited for the purposes of procreation and domestic and sexual servitude. This is something which can be traced right back to the Fall of Man and has been going on through millenia - thousands of years - and in the last millenium was used as a tool for the rooting out of the Sacred Feminine Principle. This was notably done by followers of the three Abrahamic religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

Even today there are no significant female voices of spiritual or religious authority on a global scale. Yes you had Queen Elizabeth II as the head of the Anglican church, but her role was symbolic, as no more than a figurehead. You're far more likely to encounter female spiritual authority in the occult where it is kept obscure and hidden.

Rather than seeing the Ego as this wonderful liberating phenomenon which can be described as 'my unique personality' I strongly suggest you start seeing the Ego for what it is in reality, a toxic, and ugly tool of oppression used by various people in positions of hierarchy against the individual human being designed to cheat said human individual out of their birth right, their individual human experience, and much of what we understand to be human intelligence, human creativity, human empathy and human diversity.

Even before you are born various people and entities have already laid claim to your being and authority and power over you, who you are, who you become, and what you are able to do in life. This is the whole cut and thrust of the anti-abortion movement. This has got nothing to do with the sanctity of human life, as many people claim, because you only have to take a good look around you to see just how much we humans respect the 'sanctity of human life'. Rather the anti-abortion movement, promoted by various institutions,

organizations and other collectivities, is far more about laying claim to your persona, your Ego and your being.

For example it assumed that - even before you are born - that you will somehow work and serve society through service to the Economy, and that you will be a taxpayer and therefore a worker. This is a fairly basic assumption that gets made in the halls of government finance, taxation - because it's also assumed that you will be a willing participant in the Economy through consumption, being a consumer and a happy little shopper.

Another example - for those of you interested in buying cake and alcohol for your next gender reveal party - of common societal assumptions made even before you are born - relates to sex and gender. It's not enough for a woman to be pregnant and just having a baby. This stuff runs deep. It's incredibly important what body parts the baby is born with, whether it is born with a penis or a vagina, because that also modifies the various societal assumptions and expectations relating to your being.

The criteria for Ego and self-image differs radically if you are born with a vagina than if you are born with a penis. The vagina born in society are generally expected to serve, to settle, to please, to provide a basis for others and generally start out with a much smaller window of opportunity, or possibility, than the penis born who face an entirely different set of societal expectations.

This brings us to another aspect of the duality or polarity between external authority and the Ego and self-image, and that is the reinforcement of boundaries, limitations, things you can and cannot do, things you should and should not do, and all manner of caveats, exceptions, societal rules that seem sacrosanct, and things which are shrouded in doubt, mystery, the so-called 'occult' matters of life, and the general mysticism.

What I'm writing about here is a set of common societal assumptions which are perpetuated through tradition and passed down through the generations and which are completely independent of your being and your physical existence. Your Ego or self-image has got nothing whatsoever to do with who you really are. You only think it does because you've been conditioned to believe that this is the case, by your parents, by your teachers at school, by the government and politicians, by the media, by popular or mainstream culture, by various businesses, institutions and organizations, and even by your friends and people with who you share social relationships with.

I hope what I'm writing here is very clear to you, all Ego, all images of humanity, all personality, all character traits, and pretty much everything you think is you, and what you associate with the words 'I', 'me', 'myself' and whoever it is you're referring to when you talk

about yourself is purely conceptual. It's an illusion, a myth, and one that is created by authority.

This is something that I will admit that I don't point out or explain as much as I should, and this is simply because I haven't found a way of doing so, but the process of individuation has got nothing whatsoever to do with individualism. The starting point or premise for my deep interest in mysticism and magic was the fact that we really don't know who we are in reality - actual reality - because we are under enormous amounts of societal pressure to live up to a fake image of who we are by various forms of authority coming at us from various collectivities, institutions, organizations, hierarchies, just so that we can appear to match up with a vast multitude of various societal and cultural beliefs.

This is something I first became aware of as a small child, when I learned that there's a discrepancy between what is said, and what is often felt, and what there actually is in reality. The context for these feelings were my parents' marital difficulties and the various conflicts at home in childhood. I didn't get an angle on this, despite throwing myself into Theravada Buddhism in my teens, until I was late into my 20's. I turned to Theravada as a system or framework for hundreds of unanswered questions and I was left feeling even more non-plussed than I was at the start.

Nobody is born intelligent. We are all born profoundly ignorant, we are all stupid, we are all completely unaware of the reality of our lives. Intelligence is only special or remarkable in comparison with stupidity and ignorance, but no kid is born any more intelligent than another kid. In fact I have my doubts as to whether intelligence is an actual trait, because to believe it so is to believe that some people have some unfailing ability to transform insight into knowledge and if you're going to go down that rabbit hole then you really need to follow through and claim that all psychics are oracles of truth from a higher dimension or plane of consciousness.

You might believe this, and you are perfectly at liberty to do so, but I do not share your opinion. From my individual perspective and observations on humanity and life there is nothing that's special or unique in terms of any individual human being. What makes someone a dangerous criminal is the same as what makes someone else a well known guitarist in a rock band, or a political leader, or a mother of five children, and that is the degree and level of possibility, opportunity, and social and cultural environment they were born into and grew up in.

Intelligence is something that we all learn and we are all capable of. It's not a character trait, it's not something that you or I was born with, or anyone else. Some people learn intelligence through developing habits of being able to transform insight into knowledge and awareness, and some people don't.

To claim that some people are born intelligent is also to state that some people are born stupid and cannot amount to much more than idiots. I think when you take a step back and think about it you should find that it's pretty much even when you consider that examples of human stupidity are just as numerous as examples of human insight, ingenuity and intelligence. There's a polarity going on here. How many times have you felt that you had a brilliant idea, a brain wave, for it to later not work out as you thought it would, and you end up asking yourself "What was I thinking?"

Way back, very early in my mystical journey, when I became very heavily interested in astrology, which was in the early 1980's when I was turning 20 or thereabouts I read a couple of paperback books on astrology. One of these books was by an American astrologer and poet Linda Goodman and was titled 'Linda Goodman's Sun Signs'. This was a best selling book at the time. Linda Goodman was actually called Mary Alice Kemery and she hailed from Morgantown in West Virginia. Her book 'Linda Goodman's Sun Signs' was the first popular best selling paperback on astrology and gave you an in-depth psychological look into people on the basis of their Sun signs, i.e. the zodiac sign the Sun was in when they were born.

She also wrote another best selling book titled 'Linda Goodman's Love Signs' which was also published around the same time as her best selling paperback.

I also read another paperback on astrological sun signs by obscure English author Poppe Folley which seemed to be a parody of the best seller by Linda Goodman and focussed lots more on negative traits but in a fun way with lots of humour.

While both books served to inculcate curiosity and the asking of questions, which is the starting point for all things esoteric, mystical and spiritual, both books promoted the belief that we are born with certain traits and abilities. While there is some entertainment value to be had from going down these rabbit holes, they also reinforce with some degree of authority the notion that we are born knowing certain things and have special talents and abilities.

This is not the case, as we will explore in subsequent chapters of this book. But for now what I want to leave you with in this chapter is the fact that the Ego and self-image is a tool of authority and is a fundamental part of domination culture.

Ignorance



We start this chapter with another Tarot card. This is the first Tarot card from the Major Arcana, numbered Zero, so not numbered, and is known as The Fool. There is no astrology in this chapter as The Fool is not connected with any astrological sign. However instead we're going to take a journey through the symbolism of the Major Arcana because when we examine two or three cards together we find a narrative or a story about life and existence.

So this is the start of a story.

So what we have in The Fool, using the Rider Waite deck, is the hero, as we can see is a youth or young man setting out on a journey. The youth is carrying a bundle, or his worldly possessions wrapped up in a cloth and tied to a stick in his right hand, and a flower in his left hand. To his left is a small white dog.

The youth or hero is about to step off a precipice or the edge of a cliff. He's looking skywards and probably not paying attention to the dog probably barking furiously at him.

This card from the Rider Waite deck is a sanitized version of the original card from French and Italian decks in the Middle Ages where The Fool was either a beggar or a vagabond. This gives you some idea as to the background and history of this card.

While the scene and the image is simple and straightforward, this is one of the most ambiguous and vague cards of the Major Arcana when it comes to interpretation. On a basic, fundamental level the card symbolizes emptiness, a void, or space, but space can be emptiness, it can be ignorance, it can be foolishness, it can be opportunity, it can be possibility. It can be so many different things and different ways of interpreting a void or emptiness.

It requires a significant amount of mystical awareness to see that as the youth is at the start of a journey yet clearly about to step off a cliff it's about death, birth and rebirth, or reincarnation, and the differences between reality and possibility, and the division between existence and non-existence.

However it takes significantly more mystical awareness to understand that The Fool is also symbolic of the division between gnosticism and agnosticism. The story we're about to embark on is the Fool's journey through the Major Arcana - through all of the 22 cards which make up the Major Arcana from The Fool, and the start of the journey, to The World, numbered 21 but the final card of the Major Arcana.

If you are familiar with my work and have read some of my other books, then you will be familiar with my habit of teaching various mystical principles from the starting point of the Major Arcana of the Tarot together with the corresponding symbolism from astrology. While I am capable of giving anyone a Tarot reading, just as I'm capable of making reference to the I-Ching and doing a horoscope and functioning as an astrologer in my shamanistic work I tend not to do any of these because my main means of divination is numerology.

My technique of using The Major Arcana of the Tarot and astrological references is something I have developed in my own way from occultist A. E. Waite's story titled 'The Fool's Journey' which paints the Fool as the hero in a journey through all 22 cards from the Major Arcana. The Fool here is the character of the Querent, the one seeking knowledge, and the point of the story is to introduce the Querent to the symbolism, references and meanings of all the cards in the Major Arcana.

My own personal journey as a mystic is two-fold, and embraces the gnosticism of Theravada Buddhism and eastern cosmology and also the agnosticism of magic which is my

primary interest when it comes to the occult. Magic is essentially the esoteric, agnostic sister of yoga. The two achieve pretty much the same thing, but through different means.

Some books do this more than others, then there is '14' which is pretty much all about the journey or story but only takes you some of the way.

But getting back to this journey, in this book, to give us an insight into the Ego... There's two things about The Fool card which I feel are incredibly important or significant.

The first thing is the position and behaviour of the small dog. Yes we are born ignorant and unaware, but we are only unaware of our social and cultural reality. Small children and babies are very much aware of their environmental reality and they are also very naturally curious. For sure small children, specifically toddlers are ignorant when it comes to conceptual reality, the nuances of interpersonal social relationships, such concepts as time, the past, and they don't have a clue what's important and what isn't important. Everything matters to a toddler, and they do not differentiate the same way adults do.

The way a three year old behaves is no different to the way any animal behaves. If you let a dog or a cat into a new environment or space, the dog or cat is naturally curious, and they will check out everything about the space first before they decide whether they are comfortable in that space or not. They will become immediately aware of anything which is perceived as a threat and they will respond.

Small toddlers behave in the exact same way. They will explore everything in a new space or unfamiliar environment. Small children touch things, try to eat some stuff, try to pull other stuff apart, and this is down to simple straightforward curiosity. If intelligence is innate, as so many seem to believe, then we would not need fireguards, gates, and other preventative stuff to prevent small children from harming themselves.

The second really significant thing about The Fool is that he is looking skyward, and not at where he is going. This is a reference to gnosticism.

This brings us to the thorny issue of religion. I don't really want to get into religion, because religion is a massive labyrinth of different mazes, puzzles, rabbit holes and dead ends. Theology is vast, like philosophy. There's hundreds of different organized religions, most of which diversify, and while some are agnostic in nature, most are in some way gnostic. It's also a subject where I don't have any specific knowledge as I'm not particularly religious. I'm a mystic. If push came to shove and I were ever forced to pick a religion to follow, I would probably pick Sikhism.

Some people talk about the Judeo-Christian tradition, on which all our political ideologies in the West are based, as if it's one long, harmonious tradition going back but it's not.

Nothing of the sort. Judaism is much closer to Hinduism than Christianity. Judaism like Hinduism is a great deal more than a religion. It's an entire culture, a way of life, just like Hinduism, and goes right back to the start of religion as far back as the Bronze Age, maybe 5,000 or even 10,000 years ago.

But for now in this chapter let's stick with The Fool, setting out on his journey, looking skyward to the heavens and about to step off a precipice. He's not knowing, not aware of what is going to happen, which is what I mean when I use the word 'ignorance' as I'm referring to a lack of awareness and insight. Consider that ignorance commonly is seen as a bad thing, because knowledge and intelligence are seen as innate traits, and then you have moral reasoning which separates everything into good and bad, good and evil, and so on.

But what is ignorance if not an understanding or awareness of possibility? Creativity and interaction is never a done deal. It's not possible to know everything. It's not even possible to understand reality, and to assume that we do is to negate the existence of possibility.

This is something that I will leave you with. Let us now follow The Fool on part of his journey through the Major Arcana and examine the next card in the relationship.

Gnosticism



Let me start by saying that The Fool did not die after stepping off the precipice. He survived. Journeying on through the Major Arcana he came to a huge black mountain.

This is where he encountered a winged creature, half man, half goat, perched on a pedestal. Chained to the pedestal are naked people, engaging in every indulgence imaginable; sex, food, drugs, drink, money. The closer the Fool got to the scene the more he feels his earthly desires rising in him. These were carnal desires, a hunger for food, for sex, for power, and a desire to indulge in greed and selfishness.

"I have given up all such desires," the Fool roars at the goat-like figure, resisting the power of the beast with all his might. The Fool is sure that this is temptation and a test of his new found spirituality. This is where he feels he needs to prove that the temptations of the material, physical world cannot sway him.

The creature looks on the Fool and his defiance with mild amusement. "All I am doing is bringing out what already exists within you," the creature says, "Such desires and feelings

are nothing to fear, nothing to avoid, and nothing to be ashamed of. Indeed, they are even helpful in your desire for spirituality. However there are some who may try to pretend otherwise."

The Fool points angrily to the naked men and women chained to the pedestal. "You say that even though it is clear that these men and women are enslaved to the material world."

"Take another look," says the creature, pointing out that the chained collars that the men and women wore were wide enough to be taken off and slipped over their heads. "They can be free if they wish to be," the creature says, "They remain here because they wish to be controlled by their base, bestial desires. There are however others..."

The goat-god turns and gestures to the peak of the black mountain. "Others have used the same impulses to succeed and climb to the top of the mountain. They would never have got there if they had denied those desires."

The Fool on hearing this considers that he has misunderstood the goat-god. 'This is not a creature of evil' he thought, 'but one of great power, the highest and lowest, both of beast and god. Like all power it is frightening and dangerous, but it is also a key to freedom and transcendence.'

So here we have The Devil, numbered 15 in the Major Arcana, which, like Death (13) is one of the widely misunderstood and misinterpreted cards in the Major Arcana.

Even the title of the card, The Devil, is misappropriated. Devil is the modern term for the personification of evil and comes from Persian, from the Mughal occupation of India in the Middle Ages. In eastern cosmology, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism, 'deva' means god. In samsara, or the Wheel of Life and the endless cycles of reincarnation and karma, death and rebirth, 'deva' is a realm of existence of the gods which is equivalent to heaven. In fighting and oppressing the Hindus, the Mughals (Muslims) took the word 'deva' and transformed it into what we now understand to be the devil.

The Devil in this card is derived in part from Baphomet, a famous illustration in a book published in 1855 by the French occultist Eliphas Levi titled 'Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie' (Dogma and Ritual in High Magic). The Devil in question, or Baphomet, has goat horns, bat wings, breasts, a lowered left hand holding a torch, and combined human and bestial features. An inverted pentagram is shown above his forehead. and is seated on an altar.

The Devil card in the Major Arcana is often associated with the sign of Capricorn and the astrological symbolism of Capricorn.

I dispute this, or let's say I disagree and do not associate the Devil with either Capricorn or Saturn. For me the numbers do not stack up. Capricorn is the cardinal Earth sign and symbolizes ambition, direction and a kind of trajectory you get from karma. For me Capricorn is a sign associated with karmic process, who you once were and who you are now is always relative to who you will become. Materialism and physicality is very much within the domain of the Earth signs (Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn) and counter-balances the meta-physical aspects of being of the Water signs (Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces), I tend to associate Capricorn with The Wheel of Fortune and not the Devil.

I can see why some people would associate The Devil card with Capricorn and Saturn, but I associate The Devil far more with the Ego and sense of self. If you were to examine the negative traits associated with the astrological sign of Leo, the fixed Fire sign, the egotism, narcissism, self-indulgence, abuse of power and autocratic nature, you will come right back to what The Devil card is all about.

But this is going too far into the symbolism, and there has to be a point to this journey or story. There has to be a relationship between these two cards in the Major Arcana.

This is one of at least several disputes I have when it comes to the symbolism of the Tarot and astrology. This symbolism comes out of the mysticism and the occult but some of it comes from religion and various religious beliefs. Most of this is coming from what I refer to as the evolutionary period of religion around the start of the millenium when we switched from BC to AD and all sorts of things were happening in India, in China, in the Middle East, in Greece and in Rome and the Roman Empire.

We like to think of organized religions as well.. organized, but this was not how religion started out. Way back say around the times of Jesus Christ - just to give an arbitrary reference point - there were all kinds of different cults and sects. You had mystics and gurus from the east and India teaching yoga in the Roman Empire, there were various Jewish sects and cults, you had Hellenic syncretism, and a vast multitude of different belief systems.

But what I want to pick out from the various belief systems, myths and rabbit holes is gnosticism. Gnosticism is essentially the reinforcement of separateness (which I have written about previously). What gnosticism boils down to - however which way you look at it - is that we humans don't belong here on this planet. We are strangers on this Earth. Something terrible happened and that is why we're here. We were destined for a much better deal from existence, or Creation, and something went terribly wrong. This is the central principle of all gnosticism.

Of course gnosticism has taken on many different forms and mutated into different philosophies and belief systems. Some are pragmatic, some are far more baroque. I don't think many present day gnostics who on the whole seem happy and positive are really that conscious of the roots of gnosticism and how it developed.

One such example is the 2nd century philosophies of Bishop Valentinius. These philosophies were based on the premise that there were 36 different archons or demons of progressively lessening power that had somehow interposed themselves between Mankind and the true nature of God. The last of these demons, the 36th archon if you will, was Sophia, the only archon who was female. There's a tremendous sexual ambivalence in gnosticism which is resolved in different ways.

Sophia looked upwards towards the higher god and saw him bring forth creation of which she was the final manifestation. In her heart an avarice grew, a desire or a wish to create in the same manner as the highest on a par with God. Sophia brought forth an abortion, she self-fertilized, she did not understand the requisites of creation. She turned inwards towards herself and brought forth a monstrosity. This monstrosity is the God of the Old Testament, Jehovah, Jahweh.

When she had saw what she had done she had brought forth this monstrosity she flashed through a whole bunch of emotions very quickly - horror, guilt, rage, fear, agony, and similar such emotions. These emotions of the errant Sophia condensed as in the material world over which El Dabola was given dominion.

So what you have is the notion that the physical world, the material world, is seen as the emotional fallout and the debris from the horror of the 36th archon Sophia upon witnessing her own creation who is then made God over this universe. Even though this tragic scene is a tale of horror and misery it still somehow maintains a tenuous connection to the All Father, or God, in the form of what is known as the scintilla, the spark, the soul spark of divinity.

Therefore the goal of gnostics who are born into this unfortunate world is to gather the light together. This becomes all about the salvation of the light, because the light is defiled by its presence in the world of material existence. Therefore the light must be saved. This becomes the central concern, or the key to salvation, which is to preserve the light. Therefore the whole point of gnosticism is to gather and harness the light, and this is what makes the whole theology all about what is the light, how to gather the light, and once you have the light what can be done with it.

There is a lot of gnosticism tied up in the development of religions. Buddhism was founded on a belief in gnosticism and was developed as an alternative philosophy to aestheticism,

which at the time was popular in India and is based on the notion that as there is suffering in the world we are born to suffer. The original Buddha, Prince Shakyamuni Siddhartha Gautama apparently woke up after several years of austerity and extreme self-deprivation to achieve enlightenment out of which was developed the Middle Way.

So once again we're back on the subject of the light, how to find it, how to gather it, and what to do with it. Buddhism is a series of lists - the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts, the Three Marks of Existence, and enlightenment is a concept developed on the basis of gnosticism.

Similarly you find a lot of gnosticism in Christianity and the perception that we are here on sufferance and the whole concept of heaven and hell. The Book of Revelations is based on a fantasy of some utopian 'kingdom of God' being established on Earth only for the true, deserving believers with the others, the sinners and people who fall short, being destroyed.

Then you have the works of Freud who, in complete denial of many of the basic, fundamental mystical principles of existence - Freud hated mystics - believed that human beings were an evolutionary fluke. We were a species of ape which should not have happened according to the laws of nature and biological evolution, and the only way to survive in a natural environment controlled by forces of libido, or blind lust, was to do battle with it.

Out of this we get the concept of a universe and world controlled by the 'stupid and ignorant' forces of Nature, the concept of super-Ego, Ego and id, the Parent, Adult and Child personas of psychoanalysis, and a lot of psychological claptrap. Coming a little more than a century after Adam Smith and his division of humans into wealthy owners of capital and property who were to be served by a subservient worker and servant class of human, you get the basis for domination culture and much of the basis for capitalism.

As well intentioned as it was as a social commentary at the time, Adam Smith's seminal work 'An Enquiry Into The Wealth of Nations' - which appears to be the textbook or handbook of many modern politicians - amounts to nothing more than a long, garbled treatise of The Devil card from the Major Arcana of the Tarot.

Possibility



So we come to the final part of The Fool's journey. As he is about to arrive he looks and finds himself once again at the edge of the precipice in the mountains. He is surprised and he takes another look. But yes, he is definitely at the edge of the cliff where he almost stepped off, falling far below.

But on the other side is another cliff edge, meaning that between the two is a rather narrow abyss. He has previously thought that he could separate mind and body, spirit and mind, belief and truth, the physical and meta-physical, just as he also felt that he was the creator of his own destiny. What he didn't think about didn't matter. He was in control.

But ultimately, life is all about relationship, mind and body, self and spirit, physicality and meta-physics, and one's relationship between self and the world, and self and others.

Pleased with his journey and the fact that he has now found himself, the Fool tosses his bindle across the abyss. He then scoops up his little dog and takes a running jump across the abyss, setting the dog down on the other side.

Which brings us to the 'Yoni', within which a naked female dancer is seen dancing in the sky, holding two staffs. The Yoni is depicted as a cervix-shaped laurel wreath, symbolizing

Mother Earth or Mother Nature, and the dancer has a leg crossed depicting the number 4. This is the central element of The World, the final card in the Major Arcana of the Tarot.

Some people in their interpretations relate this card to the astrological symbolism of Saturn. I don't. But even though I don't I feel I need to expand on this relationship and provide some insight as to why some might see a connection.

If you've been reading my books you will be familiar with the shared symbolism between the Tarot and astrology. Astrological symbolism is of course based on the twelve signs of the zodiac and their associated planets, or planetary rulerships.

The Major Arcana of the Tarot, like the zodiac, completes a circle. Whereas the first card in the Major Arcana, The Fool, symbolizes emptiness, a void, space, ignorance and possibility, so too does The World, but the key symbolism here is with complacency. You have completed the cycle, or squared the circle, you have gathered the knowledge and evidence, looked at the different variables, options, and so, firm in your convictions, you make your choices and decisions and develop your beliefs.

Okay, so what about unforeseen circumstances?

So where does the connection to Saturn exist? Well among astrologers Saturn, which is about discipline, is referred to as 'The Old Schoolmaster'. Even the English composer Gustav Holst (1874-1934) in his Planets Suite titled his piece [Saturn - The Bringer of Old Age](#). What I writing about here is something known as The Saturn Return and the perceived effects of the Saturn transit.

Saturn, associated with the sign of Capricorn, has an orbit of between 28 and 30 years, which means that it passes through the signs of the zodiac every 28-30 years to come back and aspect it's natal position (where it was in the zodiac when you were born). The significance of Saturn in your horoscope - depending on its position, sign, house, and aspects - is said to indicate what you need to work on in your life. Without going too much into this, it could be something like relationships, money, the way you address matters of health, or employment, or whatever.

It is believed that in the years of a Saturn Return, usually when you are aged around 28-30, 56-60, your life becomes more difficult or conversely, it becomes easier. Most people experience two or three Saturn Returns in their life, with the third one occurring around the age of 84. Saturn is named The Old Schoolmaster because with each Saturn Return you are being tested as to how well you've done in life and how far you've come when it comes to resolution of karma.

Now please keep the number 84 in mind - it's a very significant number, and it is a magical number.

So let us return our attention to The World card. Another thing The World card is about is reincarnation. We all must pass through a cervix in order to be born, and when we die - our death is the traumatic event which sends us to a new cervix and new life. This is the whole point of reincarnation, it's the interaction between consciousness and energy, or physicality. Energy cannot be created or destroyed, as we are aware from physics and the works of Einstein. Energy is a matter of energy vibration, made up of different cycles, or waves, so is wavelength, frequency and how it relates to consciousness.

The female Dancer in the card is the opposite of the Yoni or the Wheel, which rotates like a Ferris Wheel, but the world, of which we are part in terms of our physicality, goes round and round like a carousel. The World card is very similar to samsara in eastern religion and philosophy, for example the Buddhist Wheel of Life with its six realms of existence.

With each new life cycle - where cycles of life make up a kind of existential vibration which is fundamentally the real you - you are the universe and the world existing in the form of a human being, very much like a biological cell is part of a complete human body - you can go up and down. This means you can be born into a life which is easier or more difficult.

So let us move towards the way I personally interpret this card.

One thing about the Tarot is that everything you see depicted in an image on the card has some kind of relevance or significance which in some way is relevant to everything else. So we look at the legs of the female Dancer, which is shaped to represent the number 4. This relates to the 'hayyoth', the four figures in the corner of the card.

Sometimes what you see on one card is also depicted on another card. The crossed legs of the female Dancer here is the same position of the legs in The Hanged Man, the 12th numbered card from the Major Arcana.

The 'hayyoth', i.e. the four figures in the corner of the card, also features on the 10th numbered card, The Wheel of Fortune. These four figures are symbolic of the fixed signs of the zodiac. Starting from the bottom left corner and going round counter-clockwise we have:

THE OX

The Ox is symbolic of Taurus, the second sign of the zodiac, the fixed Earth sign

THE LION

The Lion is symbolic of Leo, the fifth sign of the zodiac, the fixed Fire sign.

THE EAGLE

The Eagle is symbolic of Scorpio, the eighth sign of the zodiac, the fixed Water sign

THE MAN

The Man is symbolic of Aquarius, the eleventh sign of the zodiac, the fixed Air sign. Please note that the astrological symbol for Aquarius is the Water-Bearer.

So what do these four figures symbolize or represent? Why do they feature on this card, The World, and also on the Wheel of Fortune?

Together they all symbolize relationship:

- The Ox symbolizes relationship with nature and physicality.
- The Lion symbolizes relationship with self.
- The Eagle symbolizes meta-physical relationship.
- The Man symbolizes relationship with society and the world.

It does not matter who you are or what your life is about, you are in relationship with all these four things.

Personally I associate this card with the astrological symbolism of the planet Uranus and its associated astrological sign of Aquarius, one of the symbolic signs in the hayyoth. Now I need to go into why I'm convinced that this is the right association and the right symbolism (right here means the most appropriate, rather than a moral sense). Please work with me here. Maybe you will gain some insight into just how much of an illusion the Ego and self-image really is.

But what does Uranus in astrology symbolize? Uranus symbolizes change, sudden unexpected change, insight, enlightenment, insight, new ideas, new ways of doing things, breaking with the past and tradition. This is why it is associated with the sign of Aquarius, the sign of humanity, community, justice, equanimity.

This brings us to the important nature of the polarity between Leo, the fixed Fire sign, the sign of creativity, drama, play and the Ego, of self-hood, and the fixed Air sign of Aquarius, the eleventh sign, which embraces everything about your relationship to others in society.

More than anything, this polarity is specifically about the two constant relationships in your life. The first relationship you have is with yourself and your immediate needs, your home, your family, your inner circle of friends, and the various aspects of your life which are all about you. This is symbolized by Leo, which is associated with the Sun. You see just like the Sun, your life revolves all around you, your home, and your present circumstances.

This is not the same as the home or you as symbolized by Cancer, the previous sign. Cancer is a cardinal Water sign, cardinal implies flow, movement, a trajectory, so Cancer is

symbolic of your past, your background, your past karma, and its associated planet the Moon about your emotions and feelings. Leo is a fixed sign, so Leo symbolizes the present moment, the here and now, what's going on in your life today, this moment. See the difference?

The second relationship which you are always a part of is with your environment, with society, with other people, and ultimately, with the universe. This is why you have the four figures of the hayyoth (the Ox, Lion, Eagle and Man) looking on the Yoni and the female Dancer.

The Yoni and the female dancer symbolizes you and the World or the cosmos, and the hayyoth symbolizes 'other', i.e. not you, which is further symbolized by the sign of Aquarius and the planet Uranus.

But this still leaves the number - XXI or 21 at the top. This cannot be disregarded. Everything which is depicted on a Tarot card is significant, every last detail. If you ever go for a Tarot card reading, whoever is giving you the Tarot card reading should be able to give you insight from everything on the card, and they should be able to explain what everything symbolizes on the card. Everyone starts out from the same deck, which is usually the Rider-Waite deck, which I also use to explain mystical principles in my work.

So we have the number 21 at the top. Below this we have the female Dancer's legs arranged into a number four, and this suggests a connection to the four figures of the hayyoth. Twenty one is a two - symbolizing duality or polarity, and a one, which symbolizes unity through consciousness, i.e. existence, so twenty one can only relate to the hayyoth.

But what if we multiply 21 by 4? Would that work?

$21 \times 4 = 84$. It just so happens that the planet Uranus passes through all the signs of the zodiac once every 84 years, which means that it orbits the Sun once every 84 years.

It's believed that Creation has happened 84 times, which means that the universe has happened 84 times, or the Big Bang has happened 84 times. Of these 84 different versions of the universe 63 versions no longer exist, but 21 versions of the universe do exist, in varying degrees, up to and including the current version of the universe as it is now.

Please keep in mind as you read this, I'm writing about - as I titled the chapter - a possibility. I'm writing about possibility throughout this chapter. Just as a reminder.

You see throughout the West we have been taught, according to traditional science, that the universe started out with a Big Bang, the Big Bang Theory. But see too, spontaneous combustion does not amount to reality. Modern science understands that the basis of

existence is consciousness, and the basis of all physical existence, is the energy vibration, and energy cannot be created or destroyed.

So how can the universe start out of non-existence and all of a sudden exist? If energy cannot be either created or destroyed, then you have to conclude that something existed before the Big Bang.

What this means, is that existence has no beginning and no ending. Creativity and interaction, the only constant in existence, is always incomplete. Any beginning is also an ending, because an energy vibration - the basis of all physical existence - is made up of energy waves, cycles and particles. Physical existence is a rhythm, a pattern, a combination.

You see we can extrapolate on this, and state that it is possible that if the universe has existed 84 times, then following the same pattern you have lived 84 different lives, 63 of your previous lives there is no trace, but apparently 21 of your life cycles, up to and including the current life cycle, have some form of existence and can be traced through memory imprints.

This brings us to the subject of reincarnation and karma. Reincarnation isn't just about being reborn into another life after death. Reincarnation is all about the relationship between consciousness and energy. The clue is in the word - reincarnation, as in 'RE-incarnation', i.e. going into physical form over and over and over again.

Karma is physical activity, or physical action, and nothing more than this. What I'm hoping that you understand here is that reincarnation and karma always go together. Both apply not just to life as a complete experience of existence and death, because life and death are two aspects of the exact same experience of existence.

Life and death are coexistent because you cannot have one without the other. Probably like most people you think of death as a complete experience or event where all of a sudden you die and no longer exist in your present form. You're looking at this from the position of Ego and self-image, because you understand your own existence in terms of Ego and self-image, and you imagine death to be your non-existence.

But if you're looking at life and death from the extremely limited and narrow perspective of Ego, then you probably believe that you have one constant physical body and have had your physical body ever since birth. How do you know that?

Biological cells which make up your body - skin cells, hair cells, brain cells, and so on, die all the time to be replaced by new cells. I would strongly suggest that you have no idea how many times all the biological cells in your body have replaced themselves, how many times your body has replaced itself completely, and this is because you're perceiving your body as

a complete form, a whole, and not as an environment or universe of billions of different biological cells all coming together and separating again in a vast multitude of different energy cycles and vibrations.

Please also keep in mind that I'm still writing about The World card, the final Tarot card from the Major Arcana.

This brings us to the subject, within this chapter about possibility, of reality. What is reality? Furthermore, what is so great about reality? You hear people talking about facing facts, facing up to reality. Why do human beings generally and collectively have a bee in their bonnet about reality? Where is this all coming from?

Why is being out of touch with reality such a bad thing?

Despite the fact that we exist in a universe in constant flux, where change - creativity and interaction - is the only constant, human beings collectively have a weird obsession, a fetish even, for reality. When you stop a think about it, reality is a strange concept.

What I wish to point out here is that reality is a concept. When the central human reference point for life and existence is language, then reality cannot be anything other than a concept. Reality is far more the domain of philosophers and politicians, and not so much scientists, mystics and shamen. Why is this?

Well science, the enterprise of mining insight out of ignorance, has satisfied itself that reality cannot be understood and this point was reached somewhere towards the back end of the 20th century.

It's become much harder to discover something which is new and concrete.

We can see the effect of the Omega Principle, which I've developed over the past 20 or so years (if you check out my website you should find a free copy of the e-book) when we look at the relationship between science and culture.

Most of Western science and with it social values follows a kind of reductionist, or deconstruction type model. You take a specific situation, or a phenomenon, and you break it down until you find a concrete immutable reality. This comes from Newtonian physics, from Sir Isaac Newton, one of Britain's most eminent scientists.

Back in the 18th and 19th century the world was believed to be based on atoms and predominantly physical in nature. The basic atom was likened to a billiard ball. Earth was composed of cube shaped atoms, water was balls, fire was made up of pyramid shaped atoms and so on. Then at the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century you had Emmy Noether's work in mathematics on symmetry which led to Einstein's Theory of Relativity. But during this period of Noether - who figured out that

if something existed in the universe then it's polar opposite must also exist elsewhere in the universe - and Einstein, you had Freud and his work on psychoanalysis and psychiatry, the Ego, which is based on Newtonian physics and scientific principles, and this type of thinking has got into medical science.

Even today in medical science doctors don't always see the human body as both an organism and an environment. Many doctors adopt a somewhat mechanistic attitude to the human body, seeing it far more like a machine than a biological environment. So you have hospitals with different specialities - orthopaedics (bones), gastroenterology (the digestive system), ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat), chest (lungs and breathing), cardiology (the heart and circulation) and so on.

Many doctors will also take a reductionist or deconstructionist attitude to illnesses and diseases, focussing mainly on the body, blood tests, and there is very little connection between physical health and mental health, which is somehow seen as less important than physical health. This seeps into our culture which is why you find people working out at the gym and jogging and only very recently in the West has there been an interest in developing consciousness and mindfulness.

There is usually very little investigation or examination into environmental factors when it comes to illnesses and diseases.

Please keep in mind that way back in the early 19th century many people believed that the world was created by God in 4000 BC, space was made up of cylindrical atoms which kept the planets and stars in their places and the steam engine was the most powerful technology out there. Nobody travelled faster than galloping horse speed because to travel faster would result in death from suffocation.

From the perspective of people in the early or mid 19th century AM or FM radio would be seen as witchcraft, electricity as the occult, and the internet as the work of Satan.

The point I'm making here is that we're reaching a point in the karmic process of human evolution, development of human culture and consciousness where we need to shift our focus away from reality and far more towards possibility.

Please consider that in the past 150 years through science and development of culture we have made more progress than in the previous 3,000 or 5,000 years. Nobody today believes that the world and universe is 6,000 years old. The steam engine is considered archaic. We understand that machines heavier than air can fly. We no longer need divine intervention or some angry God to destroy the planet. We in the West have the technology, the bombs and the weapons to destroy this planet all by ourselves.

This is where we get into the Omega Principle. Creativity and interaction as it happens in the universe is not a linear process. We perceive creativity and interaction in nature or in the universe as a linear process, but it is a multi-dimensional spiral of different escalating energetic or karmic processes. This means that the universe is expanding and changing faster, and faster, and faster, across many different dimensions.

This is where we get the 'lag' between different processes and cycles. In the West our social and cultural values are a mish-mash of different epicultural processes ('epi' as a prefix here means on top of, predominant, exerting an influence) across different centuries. Each generation of new human beings bring fresh consciousness and fresh conscious awareness, from different perspectives coming into the human melting pot, and each generation is socially conditioned to embrace cultural, political, scientific and religious doctrines and dogma from the past few centuries.

The main thrust of my mystical and shamanistic work, especially in recent years, is to break down and even destroy existing belief attachments, such as the Ego, and also such as objective reality, to shift the focus of attention far more onto possibility and a much stronger emphasis on the primacy of individual human experience.

We have had at last three centuries of objective reality, the Ego, the bottom line, reductionism, deconstruction, analysis, and it's got us nowhere. Not only is it not leading us anywhere that's beneficial to the human condition, but it's also exacerbating the chaos and confusion of whatever present day reality of what many people are going through right now. This is what is motivating the current decline in cultural and social values and also the social fragmentation.

Dead people have nothing to offer us. Their ideas and beliefs from the 19th and even 18th century have little or no relevance to where we need to be going right now in the 21st century.

This is where we get to the Omega Principle on a social and cultural level. The further you go back in time, the simpler culture and society becomes. Some of you might remember growing up in the 1960's, 1970's and even the 1980's when there was not much in the way of digital technology or widespread access to the internet. Everyone had to communicate through a landline (wired) telephone, physical mail and letters, and if you were in business a telex or fax.

Today many people have direct access to the internet in the palm of their hands or a room in their home. You have the internet, you have smartphones, you have email, you have online chat, you have social media, you have text, and fewer and fewer people have landline phones, or actually sit down and write letters to send via physical mail.

As a result children have to process information a lot faster than previous generations. But without the emphasis on possibility and the primacy of individual human experience, due to our social and cultural values, that processing of consciousness, insight, and learning still has to take place. The energy has to go somewhere, the thinking has to be done, the experience has to be felt, and it can go nowhere else but into the Ego.

This is where you are getting the cultural decline and social fragmentation. Our social structures and infrastructure was developed for 20th century society, not for a 21st century society.

Something somewhere has got to give. All that collective energy has got to go somewhere, but where? How?

Objective reality fell out of favour around the end of the 20th century when astrophysicists figured that they could not keep pace with the expansion of the universe which kind of coincided with the development of quantum physics.

Quantum physics, and I'm no expert here, is a mess because to understand it you need to employ two forms of logic. You have conventional logic, which animals use, which is linear, and based on polarities and dualities. If something was not then, then is it now? If something is not A, then it is B, and that sort of thing. Then you have a new Boolean type of logic which you also need to apply somehow simultaneously.

Then you have unconscious or subconscious biases which distort your perception and perspective. We all understand that there's such a thing as the subconscious, just as we understand that there is such a thing as consciousness which is fundamental to living existence. You cannot function or have autonomy if you don't have sufficient levels of consciousness. If you have no consciousness then you are quite simply dead, inanimate.

But just like consciousness, nobody can define the subconscious or really explain what it is. The subconscious is often the chief suspect when behaviour and thinking patterns defy rational or logical explanation.

This is particular issue when it comes to the paranormal, and paranormal phenomena. Now back when I was in my 20's back in the 1980's and heavily into my 'occult' phase of life, I got very heavily into the paranormal. I even tell the story of trying to perform an exorcism for people who were claiming poltergeist phenomena in a house in Cricklewood in London. I went up onto the hill in Gladstone Park nearby and cast a spell intending to invoke a spirit, and ended up making the poltergeist activity much worse.

Even today, some 30 years later, I still cannot provide a rational explanation accessible to common logical understanding about what happened at the time. Was there actually any

poltergeist activity? Was there a spirit? Did the magic spell work? Or was this all a case of my individual subconscious getting out of hand and bent out of shape?

The more I think about it, the more I'm inclined to believe that something somewhere coming out of my subconscious coincided with what was going on with my environment, a hunch, a feeling, intuition, insight, and I went with it, distorting my perception and perspective of what was actually going on.

This tends to happen a lot when it comes to such paranormal experiences. I have this theory that the subconscious isn't something which exists in your head, it's purely environmental and is closely connected to the environment, residual energy (the energy you project outwards into an environment) and whatever is going on in your mind.

Wherever you spend a lot of time in your life, such as your home, places where you have residual energy, which is energy in your environment which resonates with your natural energy, this is where the subconscious exists. It also gets into the clothes you wear, your shoes, the stuff you use, everything.

On this basis we have psychometry. Psychometry is the ability of someone to gain insight from contact with residual energy about someone or something else which is unconnected. For example I can walk into a building and simply through walking through the rooms, say in a house, I can determine if someone has ever died in the house. You pick up something belonging to someone else, and you get a definite sensation which changes your perception of the energy out in the environment. Something feels good. Something feels off.

This is what psychometry is all about.

It's like when you go to visit friends, say a couple, in their home, and immediately before your visit they've been arguing. You did not witness the argument. In terms of their behaviour they're just as welcoming and friendly as always. But when you go to the living room and sit down you get a definite sensation that something is off. There's a kind of tension which is giving you a sense of unease.

You might even remember a similar experience from your childhood. You come home. You haven't even seen your parents, you've just stepped inside the front door, and you get a sense of feeling that you're in trouble. If you're married and coming home from work you might be able to sense an argument brewing the minute you step foot inside your house.

So that, just to turn this example in back on itself, you reach a point in life where someone close to you dies. I'm not referring to a public figure here, but someone from your immediate family, a parent, a spouse, even a child - incredibly deep bereavement and

shock. Grief overcomes you, it overwhelms you, and it does so in waves because it's energy vibrations which build in intensity and fall away again.

In among all this shock and grief which you're experiencing, you focus on your own mortality, think about the issue of life and death, so again you're feeling vulnerable and raw. You were accustomed to a very close relationship with whoever died, then all of a sudden they're gone. It's during these early stages of bereavement and grief that you can think you have paranormal experiences. You may see something out of the corner of your eye, or you hear a noise, or think you hear a voice. You feel changes in temperature, and maybe even sense a presence or someone watching you.

The conclusion I reached, sometime in my 30's when I moved past my interests in the paranormal is that there is such phenomena in existence, just as there are many well documented cases of NDEs or Near Death Experiences, or mystical experiences to give them their other term. But what is actually paranormal, genuinely paranormal, is a lot less than some believe there to be.

You see a lot of the insight you pick up on is not necessarily coming from your environment, but is coming from your subconscious. People talk about being psychic, and extrasensory perception, and intuition, as if there is some special power or ability that we have to derive insight out of consciousness in our environment and somehow transform it into knowledge and truth.

But what I'm trying to point out to you here, and what The World symbolizes, is that this might not be the case. You only think of memory and knowledge in terms of your experience in this life cycle. Okay, so what about the other previous 21 past live cycles?

What about the imprinting of memory through the felt sense of immediate experience and thinking? Of course there is recall memory, where you can recreate experiences from your past in your mind and remember them. You can remember what happened when you got up in the morning. You can remember stuff from your childhood. You can remember stuff people have said, things you have done, where you have left your keys, and where you can buy the best loaves of bread.

But then you have implicit memory which is non-verbal and far more closely related to the subconscious. There are well documented cases of children who were given up for adoption shortly after birth - like within weeks - who grow up into children and adults with a deep sense of abandonment and isolation. They were adopted as new born babies within weeks of their birth, so it would not have been possible for them to have any recall memory or recollection of the experience. But the experience was however imprinted into their

memory all the same and from these subconscious memories and experiences come very real feelings and sensations of abandonment and alienation.

What I want to bring to mind is another possibility. Let's say you have a phobia of snakes. But you're born into the UK where there are just two snake species, the grass snake and the venomous adder, and you have never seen a snake in your life. So where is the phobia coming from? Well it comes out of memory, and the karmic process as it is learned behaviour. Nobody is born afraid, or anxious, just as nobody is born intelligent. This is all learned behaviour.

But what if, at some point in a past life, you were attacked and bitten by a snake? Maybe you even died as a result of envenomation. But you would have no way of knowing because it was coming from a past life and only manifests from a karmic memory imprint from your past, from some time before you were born.

Human beings have existed in some form for the past 1.8 million years. Up until say 100,000 years ago we were as deeply embedded into nature as other species, such as the fox, the ant, the wolf, the polar bear.

Being primates, or rather apes, throws up the thorny issue of male dominance. Male dominance and domination culture was not a cultural phenomenon. All primates have alpha males in the species and this is as true for monkeys as it is for the apes.

We transcended male dominance and alpha male culture as a species some 25,000 to 10,000 years ago and in this period started to become aware of ourselves and the fact that we could become self-conscious. There are various theories as to why this happened but I feel that this had something to do with our large forebrains and ability to develop culture, language and community in ways which are not shared by the other primates.

This is something which has connections with shamanism and various plants, such as marijuana and hallucinogenic plants. Around 10,000 years ago was when we first developed what can be described as the Ego. The Ego comes out of self-consciousness and self-awareness, but it is a strange phenomenon where allegiance and loyalty shifts from the community and other members of the species to the self and the individual.

This is how various hallucinogens such as common reeds (which yield DMT) and mushrooms (psilocybin) growing in the savannah, grasslands and wetlands in Africa became used by shamen as an inoculation against the male Ego. Out of this culture of shamanism and hallucinogenic plants we developed drama, language, culture, nomadism, a more agrarian settled lifestyle and social roles which enabled us to evolve out of the previous hunter-gatherer culture and lifestyle that was typical for humans.

Then what happened was that these hallucinogenic plants became less available, because they were being used by humans, but also because of climate change. What we understand to be the Sahara Desert in Africa was once savannah and lush grasslands throughout prehistory and even as late as Roman times. The Roman historian Pliny referred to the Sahara as the bread basket of Africa.

The point I wish to make, or rather the possibility I'm trying to get across to you - just to bring this somewhat oversized chapter to a close - is that in the biological and environmental reality and context of our existence, the actual reality, the Ego and concept of self that we all seem to be so attached to and so focussed on in our lives is largely insignificant and irrelevant.

There is no need to wonder what your previous lives were like, because at the most fundamental ground of being, you are but a tiny miniscule fragment of consciousness attached to physical form going through a life cycle which resembles previous cycles and future cycles and makes up a whole vibration of your existence.

Sure, as The World card suggests, or symbolizes, through each of your incarnations you take on different physical forms, in different environments, different cultures, but yet have to process the same karma and have the same karmic process as before.

There is no good and bad, no better and worse, because Nature abhors a vacuum, and the universe does not make any mistakes. Moral reason and morality has even less significance here, in the grand scheme of things, than the Ego. Has the sun ever failed to shine? Have you ever seen a badly shaped cloud? Has water ever failed to make you wet or provide moisture or hydration.

Everything is transient, so much of what you witness and experience is illusory, and ultimately everything falls apart, decays, disintegrates, and dies. If you can really get with that, and somehow find a way to wrap your mind around the impermanence and insignificance of everything, and yet understand that whatever system is in place in the universe is unailing, then you are some way to being in a state to return to your natural state of mindfulness.

Karma



As it's somewhat boring to finish a book with a conclusion, I've decided to start off this final chapter with the middle of The Fool's journey through the Major Arcana. Just to give this book a nice little twist.

A little over half way through his journey the Fool was concerned with finding his spiritual being. So he comes to rest beside a tree. So he decides to sit in the shade of the tree and meditate. For nine days he sits and meditates, not eating, not moving. The world carries on without him. People walk by. Animals pass by. The rain falls. The sun shines, between rising and setting, and the days are as bright as the nights dark.

On the ninth day he gets the urge to hang himself from the tree. He climbs the tree, ties one ankle to a branch, and dangles from the tree upside down. In that moment the Fool has let go of and surrendered everything about his being - all that he knows, all that he believes, all that he desires or wants, and all that he cares about. He does not even care where his little white dog has got to.

As he hangs upside down coins in his pocket fall onto the ground. He looks at the coins on the ground, not as money, but as round pieces of metal.

Somewhere inside him he gets the notion that his perspective of the world has completely changed. It's as if in hanging himself upside down he sees the meta-physical and not the physical, and finds the spiritual rather than the mundane. He realizes that the spiritual and the mundane are both one and the same.

It is a moment of insight, a brief flicker of enlightenment, and what it once was he now cannot remember. It's gone. He also realizes that he cannot continue hanging upside down. He needs to rejoin the world and find his little dog. He also becomes aware that when he does eventually climb down, despite not being able to remember the insight which came from his flash of enlightenment, his perspective on the world, on life, on everything has changed, and cannot ever change back to what it was.

Which brings us to another card - The Hanged Man.

The Hanged Man is all about karma. Much of the symbolism in the Major Arcana of the Tarot is aligned fairly closely with the symbolism of astrology. Being the 12th card in the Major Arcana, the Hanged Man is closely related to the 12th astrological sign of Pisces and Neptune. Also, just as Pisces is the polar opposite to the 6th sign Virgo, The Hanged Man is polar opposite to the final card of the Major Arcana, which is The World.

If you remember from The World card the legs of the female Dancer at the centre of the Yoni were arranged to suggest the number 4. Note that the legs of the Hanged Man also suggest the number 4. While The Hanged Man is a simple card in its depiction or scene, it is a fascinating card for the different interpretations which can arise from it.

Some believe that The Hanged Man is related to the legend of the Norse god Odin who offered himself as a sacrifice in order to gain knowledge. Hanging from the World Tree, wounded by a spear, given no food or drink, he dangled for nine days. On the last day, he saw on the ground runes that had fallen from the tree, understood their meaning, and, coming down, scooped them up for his own. All knowledge is to be found in these runes.

Others have a more traditional interpretation of this card relating to the 'pittura infamante', the Italian traitor from the Middle Ages, as such traitors were hanged upside down from trees as punishment for their treason. This would suggest that the The Hanged Man symbolizes the past karma and consequences arising from our past actions and choices, specifically for our misdeeds, crimes and wrongdoings, as well as for that which we are condemned. Others believe that The Hanged Man symbolizes the human in the womb, pre-birth, about to be born into a life of karma.

It's probably also significant to point out that this part of the story involving the Fool (above) and the story of the Norse god Odin bears more than a passing resemblance to the legend of Prince Shakyamuni Siddhartha Gautama, the original Buddha, who practised

austerities and meditated for several years under a tree in northern India and who, on 'waking up' - experiencing the same kind of realization as the Fool and Odin - became 'enlightened' out of which we get Buddhism.

The Hanged Man superficially points out a fairly obvious truth - you will always have a past and you cannot escape your past. Everything you think, everything you say, everything you do, it all becomes you and who you are. It all becomes your karma, simply because it is physical action and physical activity. So does everything that happens to you as a result or a consequence. This is also karma. Karma is memory first and foremost.

But when you dig deeper and get into the astrological symbolism more things come out of this. On the Hanged Man card the position of his legs arranged into an inverted four is significant. This aspect alone (not the whole card) implies a connection to Cancer, the fourth sign of the zodiac, the cardinal Water sign associated with the Moon, which symbolizes our feelings and emotions.

We create our environment from our emotions and feelings. This is where the Ego and belief in authority distorts our perception and perspective. Let's take the situation where you are feeling angry. Are you different from that anger? If you are consumed with jealousy, are you not jealousy? Let's try this by looking in the mirror. Can you see yourself as the object of your emotions rather than the subject? Are you the person having the experience? Or are you the actual experience? Think about the relationship here between your thoughts, your emotions, and your feelings and you.

You see as long as there is a division between you and your emotions, where you see yourself as the subject of your experience, your emotions and your feelings, then there also has to be conflict.

Out of this conflict and the division between you and your emotions and feelings you have created new karma. If you see yourself as being separate from your emotions and feelings, i.e. you are feeling angry and you are experiencing anger, then you have to somehow work with that anger, go with it, suppress it, or avoid it.

Please keep in mind here that karma, being physical action and activity, is just as much choice as it is memory.

But see if there is no separateness or division between you and your emotion, then you are anger in the present moment, there is no conflict, and if you do nothing the emotion of anger will pass and fade into memory.

We can extrapolate or expand on this example. Let's say we have two people. One is a Jew. The other is an Arab. There is conflict between the Jew and the Arab, because the Jew identifies themselves as a Jew, and they perceive the other person as an Arab. Likewise the

Arab perceives themselves as an Arab and they perceive the other person as a Jew. So once again we have separateness, division and conflict.

But if these two people identify themselves as individual human beings and fundamentally, one and the same, there is no conflict.

Do you see what's going on here?

The conflict is coming from Ego and belief in external authority. This is how we are conditioned to think, from our education, our process of socialization, from culture, especially mainstream culture, from various authority figures such as politicians, from our upbringing, and even from the language we use.

There's an awful lot of conditioning and socialization in language itself. Many languages are gendered, male, female and neuter, just as many languages, including English, are structured around subject, verb and object. So it's common to think of yourself as the subject of an experience or an action directed towards an object, or the object of the experience.

This creates a lot of confusion between being, doing and experiencing, between what you do and what happens to you, and this is one of the reason why many native speakers of English have a hard time properly understanding reincarnation and karma.

Think about this.

Why do we say?

- My heart is beating.
- I am thinking.

Why not "I am beating my heart"? Or "My brain is thinking?" Why do we grow plants and flowers, but the grass grows all by itself? Note that we also say "My hair is growing." But we also say "I am breathing." Why do we say someone farted rather than gas has escaped from someone's body? I mean, have you ever said to yourself or someone else, "Please come visit me later as I plan to fart sometime between 10am and 11am."?

Therefore there's a lot of confusion between what we actually do and what happens to us. Only very rarely do we understand that what we do and what happens to us are one and the exact same process and that process is karma. This is the key difference between morality and moral reasoning and karma. Morality is based on division, karma isn't.

Morality is in itself an interesting concept, primarily because as a concept it doesn't work. You cannot use moral reasoning in any way without engaging in moral relativism, and moral relativism negates the whole concept of morality, which is supposed to be absolute. What is right and what is wrong is arbitrary, because our moral standards are based on what we were taught at home, and we were all raised differently. The same applies to good and evil, and good and bad. It's all arbitrary.

Yet belief in moral reasoning is so widespread among people that everyone to some degree uses it, despite the fact that there is no social value whatsoever and all it results in is blame, fault finding, division, conflict, disagreement, social stigma, finger pointing, discrimination, bigotry, emotional trauma, pain, hurt and suffering.

Together with the Ego and belief in authority, morality is what keeps you locked into dualistic thinking, and looking at the world and everything in terms of polarities. It's out of all this thinking, and thinking in ways people do all the time throughout their lives, that we are perpetually locked into conflict and division, not understanding who we really are, not understanding what is going on around us, and not understanding other people.

It is because we are socially conditioned to be locked into such mindsets, not understanding ourselves, each other, or what is really going on around us, that we buy into many other illusions; permanence, continuity, cause and effect, freedom of choice, the law of attraction, self-improvement, freedom of speech, and so on and so forth.

All these illusions, all this conflict, all this division, it all complicates our lives because believing in all these illusions not only distorts our perception of ourselves, each other and the world around us, we also need to develop all kinds of thinking strategies to try and circumvent our struggles, such as avoidance, compensation, discounting, which in turn create further karma through fear, anxiety, worry, scepticism, all of which further reinforce Ego, belief in authority, role attachments, belief attachments, and so on.

Much of my work, both to community and to various people on a one to one basis, as both a mystic and shaman, is to find ways of challenging these illusions, stripping them away, right down to the fundamental, metaphysical basis, what I also refer to as the core essential, so that people can start again and rebuild their lives and thinking on a solid metaphysic.

This is a karmic process of stripping away, or trying to, lots of unnecessary karma and belief attachments to get to a fundamental truth and meta-physic. This is so that people can become real. Real is what I would define as actually living on the basis of your individual truth where all your beliefs, actions and interaction with the world and others is somehow relative to your individual truth.

This is where we get into the specific astrological polarity associated with, or relative to The Hanged Man. The Hanged Man is associated with Pisces, the last sign of the zodiac, the mutable Water sign, associated with Neptune. This is opposite to the sixth sign of the zodiac which is Virgo, which in turn is associated with Mercury.

Let's start with the sign of Pisces, which is a sign with a lot of symbolism and mythology attached to it. The sign is symbolized by two fishes swimming in opposite directions, and this symbolism comes from the ichthyocentaurs, sea-dwelling centaurs part man, part horse and part fish, who aided the goddess Aphrodite who was born in the sea.

There's a lot of eastern cosmology tied up in Pisces. The most obvious example is how the symbol of two fish swimming in opposite directions is very similar to the symbol of yin yang from the Chinese school of yin yang, a simplified movement of the I-Ching.

Pisces is also associated with Neptune and Poseidon, Aphrodite, Eros, Typhon (who features on the Rota Fortunae in The Wheel of Fortune card), the Sumerian goddess of love, war and fertility Inanna, and the Hindu god Vishnu.

Pisces, meaning 'fishes', is one of the oldest of the astrological signs, with the two fish appearing as a symbol on the lid of a coffin as far back as 2300 BC.

According to one Greek myth Pisces represents the fish, sometimes a shark, that Aphrodite transformed in order for her and her son to escape Typhon. Typhon, the "father of all monsters," had been sent by Gaia to attack the gods, which led Pan to warn the others before himself changing into a goat-fish and jumping into the Euphrates.

In Hindu cosmology and mythology Vishnu, the pervader, is one of the three important deities along with Brahma, and Shiva, the destroyer. In Hinduism Brahma is the godhead, characterized as an actor who plays out different roles as all the living beings, so fundamentally we are all an incarnation or character of Brahma. Shiva is the goddess who is depicted as holding a sword in one hand and a severed human head in the other, and Vishnu is the god who appears during troubled, apocalyptic times in several incarnations to save what needs to survive - hence the association with Pisces.

The symbolism of Pisces is also present in Christianity. Purim is the Jewish holiday which falls at the Full Moon in Pisces which is set by the Full Moon in Aries, the following sign (and first sign of the zodiac, so a new cycle). The story of the birth of Christ is said to be a result of the spring equinox entering into the Pisces, as the Savior of the World appeared as the Fisher of Men. This parallels the entering into the Age of Pisces.

Which brings us to Neptune. In Roman mythology Neptune is the god of the sea, which is roughly the same as Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea, earthquakes and storms.

Astrologically speaking, Neptune is associated with the collective consciousness, idealism, dreams/fantasy, projections, undoing/dissolution of the status quo, evolutions, artistry, empathy, and illusion/confusion/vagueness on the way to discovering universal truths.

Just to wrap up the astrological symbolism here we need to take into account the symbolism of the opposite sign of Virgo, the sixth sign of the zodiac, associated with Mercury. Virgo is associated with the Greek goddess Astraea, Astrea or Astria. She is the virgin goddess of justice, innocence, purity and precision. She was the last immortal to flee the Earth when the gods escaped to Olympus.

The key thing to understand about this polarity, and The Hanged Man card, is that they both symbolize and signify the mystical transaction between the individual and the environment. Who is the subject of your experience of life? Well of course, you are. But who are you? Who is the real you here?

Who do you really believe you are?

Are you really your Ego, your 'self' and nothing more than this? If you believe this to be the truth, and that you really are your physical body, and all that what you identify as yourself then yes you will die and cease to exist. But that is to deny the existence of consciousness, the meta-physical aspects of your existence, and the deeper more fundamental aspects of your being and existence. I'm referring to the 'you' here that does not die, is not affected by death, and continues to exist into your next life cycle.

People tell me that they don't believe in reincarnation. Fine. I'm not you. I do not live your life. I do not share your perspective. I do not experience your reality. I am not here to tell you that you are wrong or to dismiss your beliefs. If you want to go through life creating conflict, division and live in a world of duality, polarities and opposites that's entirely your prerogative.

But in my role as mystic and shaman I feel that in response all I can do is reflect back to you the reality of your beliefs and your thinking.

If you don't believe in reincarnation, then you also don't believe in karma. For you the trees that shed their leaves in autumn to live out the winter with bare branches remain bare in the spring and the summer also. If you don't believe in reincarnation then you don't believe in being able to wake up in the morning after going to sleep the previous night. You don't believe in thinking, you don't believe in habit, you don't believe in routines, and you don't believe that your heart beats. All these examples follow the mystical principle of reincarnation.

So what about it?

You see there's another polarity or duality going on here and that is the duality or polarity between creativity and alienation. This is an incredibly important duality, or a polarity which touches on every single aspect of your life.

But what is creativity? Quite simply creativity is transcendence of the ordinary. It is going beyond what is known, what is familiar, what is normal, what is regular and what is habitual to see something differently to the way you previously saw it. Just like the Fool who became the Hanged Man, just like Odin, just like Buddha, you see something in a new light, or you learn something new.

Creativity is always relative to space, emptiness, a void, because emptiness and space is really consciousness that exists beyond the limitations of your perception and perspective. This means that creativity is all about overcoming barriers, limitations, dissolving boundaries, breaking new ground, and going into the unknown.

This is also something I'm going to put into words here and leave you to chew over. What if you are incapable of change? What if the only thing you can change - to get past all this self-improvement bullshit - is your perspective? What if it's not you that changes at all in life, but your environment, and everything in your environment, and it is whatever that's in your environment is what actually changes you?

Think about this.

I want to bring to mind something that my friend Hannah once pointed out to me. Hannah is a disembodied female friend. She's a Polish Jew from Lodz in Poland and died at Auschwitz-Birkenau. She speaks through a friend of mine, Julian, who is an autistic Jewish guy but she also crops up in my dreams from time to time.

"Time is money because time is space." she said, "That's why the living hold the dead in authority."

Now what I'd like you to do is to focus on the above statement, and not whether Hannah exists, who she is, whether Hannah is my friend in drag, or whether I'm being off the wall here. Insight is insight, irrespective of the source. Please also take into account what I've previously written about the subconscious and the paranormal.

I've been thinking about this statement for some years now. What I'm feeling is that this is perhaps now the conceptual gets all caught up in actual reality so it is often difficult for people to be able to differentiate the two. We are creatures of the mind.

Take the concept of virtual reality. People often think of virtual reality as something connected with the future. I'm fairly sure that virtual reality has been a major part of

human culture for the past 5,000 years. Consider that life in major cities such as London, Birmingham, New York, San Francisco, Mexico City and Mumbai is based almost entirely on virtual reality.

I live close to Central London, and I don't even know how far I have to travel or how long I have to travel to get completely away from human civilization and to be completely alone with nature.

The internet is also virtual reality, so if you are at all online you are experiencing virtual reality pretty much at source. Everything you see and experience has originated from human imagination and human thinking before it took on some physical form.

As I wrote in my previous book language, culture, external authority and the Ego can very easily all come together to form an invisible prison from which it appears no escape is possible. the title of this previous book is 'The Invisible Prison'.

Yet all these things can be the platform for a great deal of freedom and liberation if, and this is the big if, you understand what it's really all about.

What it's really all about is you - you as in your individual conscious perspective. You are always the centre of the universe from your perspective and you are not marginalized in any way. There is complete equanimity between you and the universe because you function on the exact same principles and have the exact same relationship between consciousness and energy.

I will even go a step further here. You are the universe that is coming into being.

But the message you are being given from culture and society is that you are marginal, that you are insignificant, that you are no more than your Ego and your physical being, and without authority you are nothing and nobody.

You are socially trained and conditioned from very early childhood to seek guidance and direction from authority and institutions. You are convinced that you need authority and these institutions in order to live. Go to school. Pay attention to the teacher. Do your work. Study hard. Get qualifications. Get a job. Obey the law. Vote in an election. So it continues and goes on and on and on without let up until the day you die - which is life experience for most people.

In going through this socialization process and being required to create and develop an Ego - because you don't get a choice in this matter - you get hurt, you get deceived, you are played for a fool, played for a clown, and you can very easily fall into a life of struggling, of conflict both internal and external, experience misery, suffering and yadda yadda yadda.

So you seek to escape this through some kind of divine intervention or some method which gives you a way out. It may be religion, it may be atheism, it may be yoga, tantra, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, it may be politics, but something which gives you a sense of inclusion, a higher sense of purpose and meaning.

But see, you're still in the situation of The Hanged Man. Sure you can see things differently, as a Buddhist, through practising wu wei in Taoism, through capitalism, through socialism, through environmentalism, through religion, but you're still living on the basis of Ego and still seeking your meaning and purpose or calling from mainstream culture and an organization and institution.

Only your perspective has changed, but like The Hanged Man you're still hanging yourself upside down from the tree. Can you see what I'm getting at here? Do you understand that the tree represents the external authority from which you're hanging yourself?

All the while you're clinging to your cultural illusions, illusions of authority and Ego, you're not living in your power, you're not participating in your mystical transaction, and you're constantly stuck in a zero sum, no win situation where you can only resolve past karma by creating new karma which immediately becomes your past karma.

But this is not a linear process, because life is based on vibrations and cycles. So you end up living like a dog that is constantly chasing its own tail. But you're not doing this just in this life cycle, but in every life cycle. What this means is that the life you are living now is probably not much different to the lives you were living previously, and is probably not going to be that much different to the next incarnations of you. This means that whatever issues or trauma you have faced in this life is going to repeat itself in the next life cycle or incarnation.

I'm not saying with any certainty it will, but you've got to consider the possibility. Nobody knows what happens after we die. We can only extrapolate from that what we know and experience in the here and now, or believe in some cultural fantasy based on the Afterlife or The Other Side.

What you need to take on board is that ultimately, you are the final arbiter of your experience of existence, both in terms of life and also in terms of death. There is no other way round this. You have to climb back down off the tree and rejoin the world. You have to get past your Ego, belief in external authority and belief in cultural illusions.

But this is where I give you the final piece in this jigsaw puzzle. Understand that your perspective is never manifest. What I'm telling you here is that you, the real you, the part of you which keeps coming back for more and more life cycles, has no physical presence or being. It's consciousness, emptiness, a void, a space.

Once again, if you can really get with that, wrap your mind around the fact that the ultimate you has no physical form, and learn to fully embrace this fundamental truth, then you are in a position to transcend whatever physical experiences and reality you go through.

Some would call this enlightenment, but I wouldn't be prepared to go that far. I'm writing this from my experience as a Theravada Buddhist shaman (trained) who has actually gone through the whole Forest Tradition, and I have a deeper understanding than most of the differences between actual reality and conceptual or cultural reality but I have never ever experienced a continuous state of enlightenment.

Enlightenment for me has always been fleeting, momentary, a split second. I've done maybe around two decades of 'practice' Vipassana meditation, and I can switch between different states and levels of consciousness. I'm just as consciously aware of my environment when I am asleep as when I am awake. But I have never, ever, ever experienced enlightenment as anything more than a flash of insight or a chill in the spine, or a brainwave, just the same as you probably have.

What many would call enlightenment or that higher realm of consciousness I would argue quite passionately that this is no more than a realm of becoming, or the state of being a hungry ghost messing about with a physical body in a physical world in a predominantly physical universe. Yes I am giving you a plug here for my next book 'Ghostly Hunger' where I go into more detail of this realm of becoming.

But I also want to point out that in order to be able to experience enlightenment and receive insight, you first have to be receptive in your own mind for such insight, there has to be almost complete mental clarity and non-attachment or complete attachment from memory. Most people are not anywhere close to this state of mind, and no amount of meditation, yoga or spiritual practices is ever going to lead you to be anywhere closer to this realm of becoming.

So much for that higher state of consciousness, eh? But see it sells books, gets people to sign up for courses, and makes people money. I'll leave it to you whether these gurus are in a state to share any wisdom or they're just skilled bullshit artists. I make no such claims outside of if it cannot be experienced by anyone and everyone, then it's probably not possible.

But to embrace what I'm telling you here to get past Ego I also wish to point out that you will need to embrace and take on a certain amount of alienation. I just wish to point out where this alienation is coming from.

The alienation is coming from the fact that if you are significantly more consciously aware you're setting yourself apart from mainstream culture and a society which is dumbed down,

ignorant, stupid, inconsiderate, materially greedy, mindlessly self-focussed and self-interested, exploitative and abusive.

There's not a lot of choice here. Either you become consciously aware, cynical, and somewhat more liberated and freer than you were before, or you remain a mindless, slack-jawed useful idiot chained to constant performances as a clown in the Great Societal Circus for the benefit of the circus owners.

This is a particular issue for parents and grandparents. I mean how do you raise children to be well-adjusted, prosperous and yet empathic and consciously aware without seeing them being transformed into mindless clowns forced to participate in the circus? This is why I created Qultura and Qultura Core as an esoteric, mystical community to share mystical insight but also provide asylum from cultural and societal oppression.

Oh before I forget it's also important to understand that all this cultural illusion, external authority, and emphasis on Ego, role attachments and belief attachments, out of which we get all the separateness, division, conflict, misery and suffering, you're actually being cheated out of your life experience.

Let me ask you a question here.. Okay? How much time do you spend actually living and experiencing life? Now how much time do you spend thinking about life, considering life, learning about how other people live, focussing on what other people believe and how they live and how they identify themselves?

How much time do you actually spend living in the present moment? How much time do you spend thinking about the past and not actually being in the moment and living?

Do you see where I'm coming from? If you're living on the basis of Ego then you are living in the past and cannot claim to be living in the present moment and actually experiencing life, simply because memory is dictating everything you think, everything you say, and everything you do. When you get locked into such a cycle all you are doing is recreating your past into the future so that the future becomes the present, and whatever actual experience of life fades into nothing and becomes nothing more than a missed opportunity.

Here I don't even need to ask, because I'm confident that you have memories of 'What if' and if I made it possible for you I bet there would be experiences from your past that you would love to go back to and give it another shot.

Similarly if you're functioning on Ego and focussing on the differences and identity of yourself and others, like the Jew and the Arab, then you're living in the past. Jusy like the Jew and the Arab (from my example) you're still buying into the cultural illusions, and for

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as long as you buy into the cultural illusions you will be forever dis-empowered and playing the clown, and not really experiencing what can be regarded as real life.

I will leave this here for you to mull over.

About the author



Stella Baker is a mystic, shaman, dramatist and former Buddhist scholar who in November 2009 in London developed Creative Law and from that created Qultura and started the Qultura community.

Back in 1983 at the age of 17 she was introduced to Theravada (Tibetan) Buddhism by an elderly Bangladeshi master who she refers to as 'Babu'. Under Babu's mentoring and guidance she was trained semi-monastically in Theravada Buddhism where she was directed to become a 'sramana' a shaman in the Buddhist tradition and encouraged to study mysticism and pursue a shamanistic path in life.

After the death of her mentor at the start of 1986 she explored deeper into mysticism and began to study the occult and magic, together with other esoteric subjects.

Then in the early 1990's she emigrated to eastern Europe, eventually settling in Poland where she became involved in alternative theatre writing and directing plays on social realism. During this period she got to know of Polish psychologist and charity worker Marek Kotanski and became interested in his pioneering work supporting people affected by addiction, social exclusion and social stigma. During this time she was also involved with Ole Nyadal's Diamond Buddhist community. She wrote and directed plays on social realism and began running drama workshops in the middle of 1996 after briefly teaching English at a Rudolf Steiner Waldorf school in Warsaw.

It was also during this period that she started to become much more heavily involved in humanitarian activism on such issues as anti-death penalty issues, social exclusion, addiction, equality for the LGBT community, and work against the stigma of people with disabilities and mental illness.

In the first few years of this century she focussed much more heavily on her drama workshops working with the homeless, people with addictions and people with mental health issues, managing to establish a couple of successful small community theatres working with people affected by social exclusion and social stigma.

It was after returning to London and working with the homeless through drama workshops that she discovered that trauma was negated by drama and that social interaction, creative

activities and involvement in community cultural development was the most natural and efficient way of developing consciousness.

In November 2009 she developed Creative Law and founded the Qultura community which was originally defined as an empathy based community. through her shamanistic work she developed Qultura methodology as a derivative of Theravada Buddhism. While Qultura is similar to Buddhism for its acceptance of reincarnation and karma, it is based more heavily on the I-Ching and four simple universal principles developed out of Creative Law. Therefore Qultura is much simpler, far more straightforward and much more focussed on connection to community and the environment.

Since 2009 Stella Baker works as the Core Facilitator of Qultura Core in London, which is the core of the Qultura community and is working with a growing number of volunteers and activists to promote Qultura and the Qultura community both nationally and internationally.