

QUEST FOR THE UNREACHABLE

The angels keep their ancient places;-
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

The Kingdom of God by Francis Thompson

To begin a quest for an understanding of higher intelligence, it is seemly to quote from an 'expert' in the field, and none better than St. Thomas Aquinas. He presents a rational argument for the existence of angels as intellectual beings of a higher order than humanity. From *Summa Theologica* I, 50, 1: 'Is there any entirely spiritual creature, altogether incorporeal?' by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

Article 1

There must be some incorporeal creatures. For what is principally intended by God in creatures is good, and this consists in assimilation to God Himself. And the perfect assimilation of an effect to a cause is accomplished when the effect imitates the cause according to that whereby the cause produces the effect; as heat makes heat. Now, God produces the creature by His intellect and will (14, 8; 19, 4). Hence the perfection of the universe requires that there should be intellectual creatures. Now intelligence cannot be the action of a body, nor of any corporeal faculty; for every body is limited to "here" and "now." Hence the perfection of the universe requires the existence of an incorporeal creature.

The ancients, however, not properly realising the force of intelligence, and failing to make a proper distinction between sense and intellect, thought that nothing existed in the world but what could be apprehended by sense and imagination. And because bodies alone fall under imagination, they supposed that no being existed except bodies, as the Philosopher observes (*Phys. iv*, text 52,57). Thence came the error of the Sadducees, who said there was no spirit (*Acts 23:8*).

But the very fact that intellect is above sense is a reasonable proof that there are some incorporeal things comprehensible by the intellect alone.

. . . Incorporeal substances rank between God and corporeal creatures. Now the medium compared to one extreme appears to be the other extreme, as what is tepid compared to heat seems to be cold; and thus it is said that angels, compared to God, are material and corporeal, not, however, as if anything corporeal existed in them.

. . . an angel is called an ever mobile substance, because he is ever actually intelligent, and not as if he were sometimes actually and sometimes potentially, as we are.

The idea of an 'ever mobile substance' in association with intelligence helps us suspend in our thinking any naïve concept of a being or beings moving around and acting, in the manner that we as organic beings do. In essence, it corresponds with the idea of John Bennett – which we will be discussing later – of intelligence as a substance or energy. It also has some correspondence with David Bohm's concept of holomovement. Aquinas is describing a kind of 'translation' between an ineffable realm of pure possibility and a more finite realm, such as ours, subject to limitations.

Any idea of intelligence 'higher' or 'more' than human must entail a corresponding idea of our limitations. How far can our intelligence reach? Is there any sense in saying that there could be an intelligence that reaches further than us? By 'reach' here we mean to grasp and hence influence and even control. If we grasp a branch of mathematics we can do calculations based on it. If we cannot, then we are impotent in that region. So we begin with the idea that the 'unreachable' is relative to us as we are in this time.

We have made considerable strides in reaching across space and time and into the depths of the construction of matter. But we seem to reach problems when we come to the limits of time, space and matter. No one can – at least yet - claim to know the initial conditions of the universe, or even if there were any. Whenever we reach a question of creation, our reasoning comes to an impasse; even though, on this side of creation, we can accomplish and understand a great deal by thought, calculation and experiment. To speak of 'creation' in this rather old-fashioned way need not imply anything divine or the existence of a God, simply that there is an action in which 'before and after' ceases to apply and from which all else arises. This is very close to some of our instinctual feelings of 'nothingness'. As the erratic mathematician Spencer Brown once put it, "Only nothingness could be sensitive to nothingness and produce something".

Questions of the origin of the universe or the deep structure of matter are fairly obvious examples of

where we reach some kind of limit to what we can cope with, but there appears to be a general result of growth in exact knowledge: it enables us to more and more precisely indicate what it is that we cannot understand and/or handle. It might even be a concomitant of any increase in precise knowledge – the intangible and unreachable also increases accordingly. Once in mathematics the transfinite numbers were unreachable, now it is things we cannot decide or give a reason for. A prime example, to make a poor pun, is given by the prime numbers. We do not know how to predict them. But what could appear more evident than a prime number! It is relatively easy to find out if a given number is prime, no matter how big it is. It is quite another to be able to say what the next one will be. The image here of the landscape of prime numbers was produced by Stanislaw Ulam. It is made by plotting numbers in a square spiral and putting point for every prime. We can see that there is some pattern without being able to calculate precisely what it is.

Lack of power of prediction can make some of us feel a sense of the mysterious, or of a hidden fabric in the nature of things to which we are not yet privy. We know that we are missing something, some insight. We know this because of advances that have been made. But, for the moment, what is missing for us represents a higher mode of thinking than what we have at present. If we had that insight, we might well understand physics and mathematics quite differently and even see them as much more the same than before. There are many speculations as to what such an insight might mean but at this time, as St. Paul said, “I see as through a glass, darkly”.

To say that this insight already in some way exists is to affirm the existence of higher intelligence. On many fronts, science and mathematics face into the unknown but with the confidence that much more can be discovered. We can imagine that there is a cloud of reachable insights that attenuates into the completely unreachable and it is in these regions that higher intelligence exists. But, in what form we do not know. Are new scientific and mathematical truths carried around by angels? Or, are such truths what angels really are? Is the relatively reachable to do with higher powers, while the unreachable is what we should call ‘God’? What is for most only a conceptual abstraction is for others a living power of superior intelligence. For most people, the fact that at this time we cannot know the initial conditions of the universe or predict the next prime number is of no interest. However, the same consideration applies to ourselves. Where do we start from and what are we going to do next? We face the deep mystery of time.

For as long as we humans have as we say been ‘conscious’ we have faced an immeasurable problem in understanding where our actions and impulses come from. The simple answer is just to say that, ‘Well my actions and impulses are what they are because I am me, I am made like that’. But still we cannot see where they come from or how they arise. If I am me, how am I made? When we look at that question, we can fly off into a number of diverging paths. We now know about genetics, about the brain, about social conditioning and so on even though our knowledge is far from complete. Each of these provides or seems to provide some basis for explaining why we act as we do, though in practice we can never compute our acts in advance of them.

In our human life together, we find that at times we act very badly or very well without having any understanding of why. Of course, how we actually act is always being covered up by a process of internal explanation that continues to rationalise our behaviour and make it seem consistent. When we cannot explain how we act, this is taken as an aberration indicating mental illness. But there is much in psychoanalysis that suggests that the ‘inexplicable’ is more common than we think.

In earlier times, it was taken for granted that a man was subject to impulses not of his own devising. The heroes of ancient Greece would be overcome with states and impulses that they regarded as coming from the ‘gods’ or from what later become known as their ‘genius’, the creative irrational part of their nature, which was the source of both good and bad. The ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ were impulses that could not be explained, that deviated from the norm. This ancient idea became superseded in the era of modern consciousness by the supposition that something was happening ‘inside’ us beyond awareness but still intrinsic to our own nature. The ancient idea of genius was expressed by Socrates as an encounter with his own ‘daimon’ and it is not for nothing that the Christian church identified this with ‘demon’ and treated it as from the devil and sinful. When Freud brought in his concept of the unconscious it was in a milieu that would regard this unconscious as the seat of irrational and perverse forces. While most people scorned the idea of an unconscious dictating what we did, the world lurched into the madness of world war!

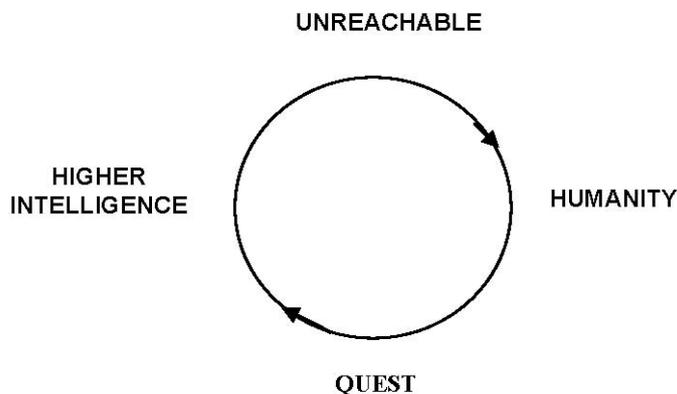
The unconscious still carries some stigma with it, but over the last century it became to be regarded as having enormous potential for insight and wholeness, as argued in the work of Carl Jung. And it also became regarded as the source of creativity, an idea which was prominent even among scientists such as Poincare. At the same time, it became realised that what we call ‘consciousness’ is not an opening up to

what is going on in us but a closing down. We are able to be conscious because nearly all of what is happening in us is cut out of our awareness. And this is absolutely essential for us to function at all. Consider how we speak. We are totally unaware of how words come up for us to deliver. We can of course, to some degree, stop ourselves using a certain word but we cannot start the word in us, because the only way of summoning a specific word is by that word! Whatever is moving in us and interesting us, including other words and what other people say, comes out in us in what we say, but we do not know how this happens. We might as well admit that one word speaks to another in us rather than we make speaking happen the way it does.

If we know something is coming up in us it is possible for us to stop it. But this only applies when something is already on its way. I am sitting here at the keyboard, paying attention to some questions, often waiting for something to form in me. Some of the sentences I write down are later deleted, something I can do while writing but is hardly possible when I am speaking. When I am about to speak I can inhibit myself but once I have spoken it is irretrievable: "The words just came out of my mouth, I didn't mean it" we will say. This has led some to conclude that we do not have any real identity at all. The one who blurts something out is not the one who then regrets what they have said.

The Russian mystic Ouspensky wrote a novel *The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin* to express the idea that even if we knew the future we would not be able to change what we did. When in life we do not do what we set out to do, then we explain this in terms of a reason that avoids recognising that we are not able to do.

Not only are we not aware of where things start in us but we are also not aware of what will happen next. The simplistic argument is that if I know what I will do next I could always not do it. This is simplistic because it does not take into account the fact that we can be aware but incapable in fact of changing what is happening or going to happen. It is one of the 'horrors' of consciousness that we can 'see' ourselves doing things that we judge as being 'bad' or 'stupid' without being able to stop ourselves. This is a third kind of unreachable that has to do with accessing what can be called 'will'. I say that I want to do X but I end up doing Y. We sometimes admit to ourselves that we do not really know what we want. So, even if we knew what we will do next we do not know what 'we' this entails or whether it is



really us at all. When we come to the next moment, will we properly remember this one? In a pragmatic sense, yes, because we function according to a continuity of self. In any deeper sense, No. What is really going on remains in the unconscious, which we have to infer by noticing lapses of memory, inconsistencies of behaviour, and surprising impulses.

The unconscious is unreachable. If it were reachable, 'we' would cease to exist at all. If we seek to extend our consciousness into the

unconscious we become unconscious! This is not to be taken in an absolute sense. There is a 'fuzziness' between conscious and unconscious.

The principle of unreachability is reflected in the physical universe, according to the principle that no computer could be built in the universe capable of computing the state of the universe. We are not able to demonstrate or even argue this here and we ask you just to imagine that such a computer would have to be built out of something and have storage capacity and operating systems and so on, analogously with your own PC, but would have to compute the beginning and end of all things! It would be an 'apocalypse' machine in the true sense of the word - 'lifting the veil'. Such a prospect has been wonderfully satirised in Douglas Adams' masterpiece *The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, where the Earth is really a supercomputer run by white mice to answer the question of life, the universe and everything only to require an even greater computer able to compute what the question is! He could well have gone on to suppose a greater computer still to work out the meaning of the question, and even greater still to calculate why the question was asked in the first place! Of course, the suggestion here is that intelligent life (such as us?) is the equivalent of Adams' white mice computer programmers and we have in principle the whole physical universe to build from. As far as we know, no one has yet proved that no physical

system can fully compute itself. It reflects on the apparently inevitable sense we have that self-knowledge is limited by some kind of barrier perhaps defined by the physical nature of thought. Such a limitation might be expressed in terms of a velocity, or in terms of a 'size' of content, or in terms of complexity, though there has been insufficient measurement of thought. A physical system that devotes some of its energy to computing itself can be called 'conscious'. Consciousness then appears as energy transformed into self-information. Such information is inherently incomplete, which then implies what is beyond any consciousness, or *will*. Will *cannot* be within consciousness.

The quest for the unreachable points towards beginnings and endings, towards will and self-knowledge, towards the realm of creativity and madness.

Countless humans believe that higher powers intervene in their lives. In a more sophisticated way, some believe that our very aims and purposes have been stimulated in us by a superior order of intelligence. This was given the most sublime expression by Jalalludin Rumi, the Sufi poet of the 13th century, in his Mathnawi. In this book of many stories there is one about a man praying who is tempted to question whether his prayers are being answered. The hidden teacher Khidr appears, representing God, and chides the man for his lack of understanding – that, in fact, he would not be able to pray to Allah unless Allah had 'answered' him by giving him the impulse to pray in the first place.

Simone Weil made a point of insisting that in the Gospels we can find no reference to man seeking God, only to God seeking man.

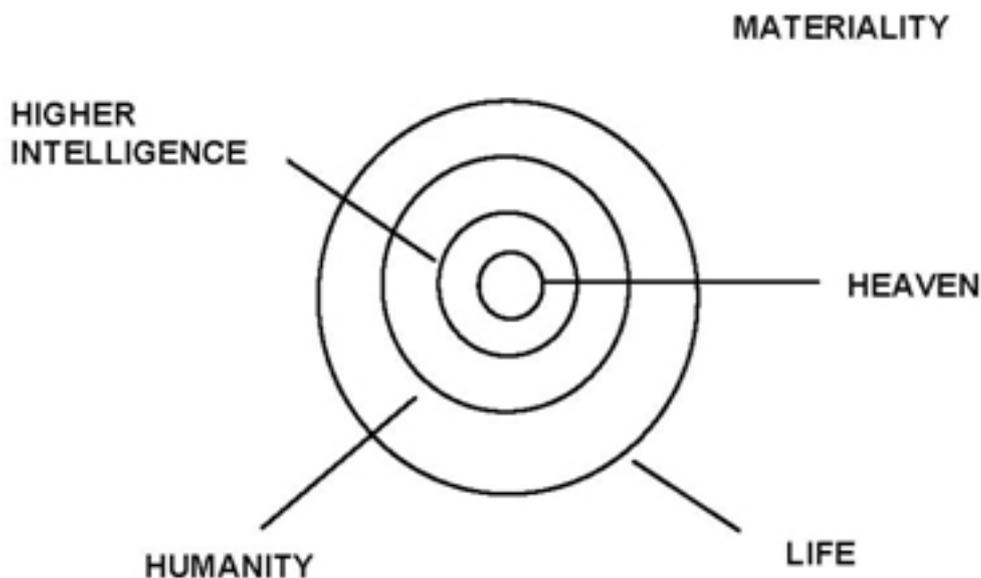
If we could see from where our initiative starts, then we could change it and it would no longer be the origin. This is tantamount to changing the past. As it is, it is just because the origin is unreachable that we can act at all. This may not be apparent at first. After all, our common language is full of absurdities which are used everyday. Prime amongst them is the phrase 'use my will'. This is absurd. Will is that which acts and originates. The phrase is tantamount to saying 'I will my will' or even 'will wills my will'.

Religious people believe in a 'higher will' and the possibility of a relationship between their own will and this higher form. An action such as prayer is supposed to exemplify this relation. But in the example of the story from the Mathnawi the relation does not originate in us but in the divine. It is even felt that when we pray or act in some way to reflect the relationship, that this has already been done in the divine sense and we are merely carrying out what is already accomplished. In traditional religion there is never any sense that we can reach God. In fact such a proposition is consistently treated as heresy, and for a good reason. The consistent teaching is that although we cannot reach God, God can reach us, as in the Islamic saying, 'Man takes one step towards God and God takes ninety-nine steps towards man.'

The quest for the unreachable is, of course, the quest for God. The hint from religion we get is that the unreachable is capable of reaching us! In the little diagram above, ourselves and our search appear in only part of the whole. This is an unusual portrayal because it suggests that we and our intelligence simply play a part in a whole that is vastly greater than us. We could play around with such imagery, for example to suggest that we humans operate within a certain bandwidth of intelligence. For such ideas we have no proof, only an extrapolation from our experience of other life forms on this planet. Incidentally, 'quest' represents us at our best, giving it our best shot, not the statistical average.

The image of a circular action can be replaced by a fractal one. To make the concept familiar, we can think of the coastline of the British Isles. As we look at this coastline in more and more detail, its effective length gets larger and larger and approaches infinity in the limit while the area of the land remains the same. It is another image of the unreachable in an almost literal form. There is a saying that 'God is in the details'.

The issue of complexity is prevalent. As we said, our consciousness is founded on a massive filtering of information, so that we deal with the merest outline of what is going on. An interesting concept is that we, as complex and highly organised entities, must exist somewhere near regions of very low entropy. According to physical law, it is possible for highly ordered states to exist even though they are of low probability. We cannot exist 'too far' – and this is a kind of 'distance' – from such regions. Our sense of time is said to derive from the entropy gradient between lower and higher regions of entropy. One consequence of this view is that we will always tend to think in terms of a 'creative origin' of the universe – such as a Big Bang – and this is not so different from thinking in terms of a 'creator god'. The highest state of lowest entropy would also correspond to our intuitions of 'heaven' or the 'angelic realm'. It is a feature of the lore of angels that they are not subject to decay! Religion then appears as founded on a real sense of *qualities of order*.



We are of course acting in a cavalier way with all kinds of concepts from many sources. We are now asking you to consider an understanding of higher intelligence in terms of diminution or relative absence of entropy. One of the tricks of higher intelligence is to get from a state of greater entropy to one of lesser entropy. In traditional spiritual paths, we come across an extreme version of this such as 'liberation' and 'immortality'. But, if we try to imagine what it would like 'in heaven' we find it hard. We have some hope in terms of how 'this life' might look from the standpoint of heaven. Perhaps we can have actual tastes of higher intelligence. Our 'position' whatever that is in the scheme of things may not be single-valued.

This is a liberating concept. It means that heaven is here and now, though in a very 'fractional' way. It means that we ourselves actually do participate in higher intelligence, although this might be quite 'unconsciously'. We could easily come to ascribe this to our 'unconscious' if we are modern people, or our 'daimon' if we would be Socrates. Speaking of that, our broad notion of higher intelligence includes such a possibility. From the standpoint of heaven every one of us might be, in some slight sense, Socrates.

When Dante in his *Divine Comedy* finally enters Paradise, he doubts where he is. The higher powers then command him to speak of heaven. The fact that he is able to do so 'proves' that he is in heaven. It is interesting that he is guided to the gates of heaven by Virgil, the higher intelligence, but taken in by Beatrice who is more than that.

".....the end point of the universe comes when the maximum information storage is reached" In their book *Anthropic Cosmological Principle* Barrow and Tipler refer to the question of whether the universe is "open" or "closed". They state, "it seems on anthropic grounds that the universe is more likely to be closed than open, but this is only a weak prediction". Their scenario for the end of the universe is thus based on this assumption of a closed universe. In that scenario, life eventually engulfs the entire universe; and the end point of the universe comes when the maximum information storage is reached. At that Omega Point, no further activity is possible. In a note, the last words of text in the book, they add, "A modern-day theologian might wish to say that the totality of life at the Omega Point is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient!"

Donivan Bessinger, *The Psychology of God*

The idea of regions of low entropy or 'heaven' does not easily let us consider a most important feature of higher intelligence, which is perception of reality. In our human experience, we have to 'make do' with inference to arrive at knowledge of phenomena hidden to our senses. It seems that we do not directly perceive quarks, nor motions near the speed of light, nor the fields that surround us. It is not obvious that

a region of low entropy must include a different order of direct perception to the one we have. Some have speculated that we call 'mind' corresponds to a mode of perception that has not yet become part of our organic nature. It is not for nothing that this mind finds expression in artefacts and relationships outside of our bodies. Of course, the standard view is that this mind is not to do with perception at all but is a kind of inner processing that takes place in the dark cave of the brain! So, for some thought is what we 'do' or 'make up' while for others, a minority, it is something akin to a perception of 'what is there'.

It is a feature of our present human life that we set thought and perception apart, as if they were two different kinds of thing. This has immense influence on how we regard ourselves and our relation to reality. This is because, in such a separation, we have to take thought as private, subjective, artificial in contrast with perception that is of the 'world', objective and natural. But in higher intelligence these are not at all separate. There is the intuition or belief that higher intelligence can see what is *really going on*. This idea is not confined to religious systems. Science sometimes makes use of the idea of a 'cosmic intelligence' able to see the real structure of the universe, even though of course, this does not mean that scientists actually believe in the existence of such an observer. However, the concept is used to argue a view of the universe that is contrary to our 'normal' experience. Just as we came to realise the earth was round, rotating and in orbit by a long chain of inference, long before we could actually see this from space by going there, so we anticipate what we might see from a much greater perspective than we can have at this time as organic beings. This includes the greater perspective of long periods of time. It is totally extraordinary that we can contemplate processes over billions of years, something that has only been possible for just over 100 years.

We are now much used to scientists telling us about all kinds of strange and 'invisible' things, but it is surprising to what extent this is accepted. For example, the vast majority of people rapidly accepted the discovery of a hole in the ozone layer, even though this was entirely outside any possible human experience through the senses. However, when it comes to things such as depicted in relativity and quantum mechanics, they are so radically different from what we expect that we find them difficult to take on board. The reason is that they demand of us a change in the very way we see how things happen. In the end, we only go along with such theories because of such things as the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

It is interesting and not trivial to draw a parallel between our relation to relativity and our relation to religion. At least in the past, we looked to miracles as evidence of our faith in what we could not actually see as real for ourselves. So we look for spectacular manifestations of the scientific 'theories' - that are dealt with in ways we cannot possibly grasp - to convince us that they are 'real perceptions'. Such manifestations amount to creating events in laboratories on Earth that could not otherwise take place here. They are practical and reproducible 'miracles'.

It is both in the domain of the very small and in the domain of the very large that we are most lacking in terms of direct perception. We should add to this short list the domain of the very complex, because we do not see what is 'really going on' in natural processes but have to compute them in indirect ways. In the domain of the very small we have the underlying structure of matter and, in the domain of the very large, the nature of the fabric of the universe, the very structure of space, time and energy. The scientist does imagine himself in the role of cosmic intelligence, however modest he may be.

An important point to add here is that there is very little evidence for any mystic or religious prophet giving us any substantial information about the universe other than that available in the time they lived. This is an awkward point for spiritual people to answer: if you claim to develop different orders of perception where is the evidence? Of course, there is a plethora of fringe activities purporting to do just that but none have stood up to any strong testing. Science has now commandeered the domain of the 'unseen' as its province. And what is coming out of science is challenging just about every 'common sense' view of things.

The most commonly cited example of this is the cheery claim that 'matter is mostly empty space', a saying that came out of research into atomic structure. We think this table is solid whereas 'in fact' it is made of atoms separated from each other which are also composed of particles whirling around each other at relatively immense distances. This persuades us to think in terms of our actual perception being defective. So also with regard to recent ideas about the nature of the universe. It is becoming a more and more common contention that our experience of time is an illusion. Now, this really strikes a blow against our common sense! What is strange is that assimilating this idea can change how we interpret our experience so that time actually feels differently to us.

Whatever one's attitude to the 'truths' of science, it remains the case that what is suggested to us is that the way we see things is as best partial and that a totally different view could be much nearer to how

things are (some scientists like to play at God, while others seriously believe that the universe is governed by a higher intelligence). While we are organic beings, dependent on structures that have evolved on this planet through natural selection, it is not possible for us to directly perceive or in some sense 'see' how things are. We cannot see the structure of matter and we cannot see the structure of the universe. These things are unreachable as perceptions. We can only 'think' about them, or just 'imagine' how they might be. It is not for nothing that Einstein relied heavily on what are called *gedanken* or 'thought' experiments, as well as on calculation and observation.

Now, what if 'mind' were a rudimentary organism of emergent character? Would not such an organism have its own corresponding perceptions? And then, would not these perceptions be similar to what has been proposed for higher intelligence? We might even here appeal to a very unscientific person in the form of William Blake, for whom the human imagination was the divine itself!

Because of the split in science between the way that 'visions' or, more austere, 'hypotheses' are generated and the way in which we test them against measurement and observation, the reliance of scientists on such things as 'physical intuition' is minimalised. The human power of imagination is generally supposed to operate without any reference to how things really are, being considered something that arises in the brain or private mind. Because the results of imagination are often found to be 'unreal' and not correspond with the facts, it gets dismissed out of hand. In practice, scientists – such as Einstein – draw upon this power to do their work. Scientists at the beginning of the twentieth century were conscious of attempting to 'project' themselves into atomic structures to understand what they were like. This was even given a special name – *projicience*.

The general argument here is that our minds have fuzzy boundaries in which we exercise powers similar to those supposed to be the property of higher intelligence. However, we also take into account that, in us, these powers operate in us in a sporadic and uncertain manner. We can say that every act of imagination is valid but that we often do not know in what way it is valid. Hence strong convictions can arise about the nature of things that have some substance but are misconstrued. This leads to the idea that what is 'broken' in us is 'whole' in higher intelligence. The brokenness of our condition represents a higher entropy than that of higher intelligence.

There are hints of a perception of reality breaking through the veils of disorder, as it were. But, for us to access these in more than a fleeting way, we need to build up corresponding energies to support them. This is a rationale for science, in which great amounts of work go into providing a suitable vehicle for imaginative insights. In quite another way, some yogis and mystics claim that they can do inner work that provides them with the power and an apparatus to see a deeper reality. An unprepared mind lacking instruments is unable to register higher events.

If we imagine that human beings are in fact operating simultaneously in different worlds of perception, then we need to suppose that our 'presence' in some of them is very small indeed but that, still, our multiple presence leads to these various perceptions interfering with each other. When we try to 'reach' a region of higher intelligence, or very low entropy, the way we do this makes it impossible to achieve. Our 'trying' sends us further downhill along the entropy gradient. To get round this, we have turned to the means of using artefacts such as mathematics which themselves have very low entropy. A similar but more subtle example is that of works of art. This leads us to consider the unreachable in aesthetic terms as well as scientific ones.

One of the great appeals of a genius such as Mozart is the apparent ease with which he could produce masterpieces, as if they just flew out of him complete, as Athena broke forth from the head of Zeus. Although these days much is made of the sweat and tears that go into most works of genius, there remains the feeling – and we believe it to have validity – that the real art comes of itself without effort. At this point, we do not want to dwell on the contradiction here. We want to focus on the possibility that real works of art, which have their own 'truth' and being, come of themselves into human life. An important idea is that our sweat and tears do not concern the making of the art but enabling us to bear its manifestation in us.

Intimations of this conception of higher intelligence are to be found in Rilke, the German poet, especially in his masterpiece *The Duino Elegies*.

Who, if I cried, would hear me among the angelic orders?
And if one of them suddenly pressed me against his heart,
I should fade in the strength of his stronger existence.
For Beauty's nothing but beginning of Terror we're still able to bear
and why we adore it so is because it serenely disdains to destroy us.

Every angel is terrible.

And this then leads us to suppose that in higher intelligence we have something like a beauty machine: a way of producing beauty that is akin to just ‘turning a handle’. At the same time, we have in this realm a perception of beauty that is infallible. Of course, such suggestions are unproven and almost certainly unproveable: to be able to prove them would be to contradict them; but there are such things in mathematics also. We have to realise that Beauty is more than something that pleases us, as the poet Rilke declares. In fact, we have to say that we do not see beauty as it really is. In saying this, we very much go against contemporary culture, in which all things of value are considered subjective and unrelated to the nature of things. We say that just as it is difficult to see what the facts are, so it is to see what the values are. Beauty, truth, goodness and so on may be far more than the sensations and emotions that we have can support. What we see of them is the mere outline of what they are.

Values figure predominantly in any traditional spiritual view of things. It is fairly common to regard the realm of higher intelligence to be *composed of qualities*. Further, that it is only in this realm that they can be seen for what they are. In our realm of experience, they tend to manifest through what is most frail and fleeting. Their embodiment in works of art is only a partial realisation and, even then, as we indicated, the circumstances of their making are often fraught with difficulties, as the life of Mozart exemplifies. In his book *Hazard*, J. G. Bennett argues that such things as virtue have to manifest under extremes of uncertainty. His realism here is striking, since the general tendency is to regard virtue as some kind of personal possession, an attitude that lends itself to self-deception.

Let us stay with the conception of the realm of low-entropy higher intelligence as one in which the truth of how the universe is seen in a way that puts both fact and value on the same footing. For us they are of separate natures. For the higher intelligence, they are not. Some people have intimations of this. They insist that ‘understanding’ the universe must include a direct perception of beauty, goodness and truth; that these values are not some ‘gloss’ on things that arises from superfluous aspects of our experience. The essence is in the possibility of seeing fact and value as not-different. The world is as it is because it is beautiful. We can also remember the words of *Genesis* in which God ‘sees that it is good’, an understanding that was first given religious expression in Zoroastrianism.

Naturally enough, in spite of the fact that many scientists are not immune to a sense of beauty and goodness, they would never consider these are criteria of scientific truth. In spite of which, we can still come across scientists and mathematicians who appeal to a sense of beauty to justify their work. The general scepticism has one great virtue: that it does not allow us *to impose our sense of beauty on reality*. Nevertheless, without some contact with beauty, goodness and truth, we might well be lost, even when engaged in research into what appear to be matters of fact. Poincaré said:

The scientist does not study Nature because it is useful; he studies it because he delights in it, and he delights in it because it is beautiful. If Nature were not beautiful, it would not be worth knowing, and if Nature were not worth knowing, life would not be worth living.

Beauty, goodness and truth are an important aspect of what is (relatively) unreachable for us. Some of us have the experience of something beautiful as if it were torture! We say, even of something fairly common such as the sight of a beautiful sunset, that ‘it hurts, it is so beautiful’. This has to do with what we can bear. We have dallied with this aspect and it is time to state it more directly: we cannot dwell in the realm of higher intelligence because we could not bear it. The realm of values is unreachable, or ‘relatively unreachable’ because it renders us unconscious because it is unbearable! So we come full circle. What we cannot reach is in our ‘unconscious’ – though whether this ‘unconscious’ is the same as the psychoanalytic one is questionable and any attempts to reach it renders us ‘unconscious’. This may be just a matter of getting used to *another kind of consciousness*. One value of the psychoanalytic view is that it suggests that we are ‘sort-of’ conscious of a great deal that we do not allow ourselves to access in a regular way, but have to come to through such indirect means as dreaming and imaginative art, or through some ‘shock’ that awakens us to what we have suppressed, in what is unique and fleeting.

People ask why, if there is a higher intelligence, does it not come forth and speak to us and help us? The reason offered here is that it might render us inoperative.

We have talked about the unreachable in terms of the far reaches of space and time, in terms of the basic structure of matter, in terms of complexity, in terms of our own nature and in terms of qualities and values. What remains?

We mentioned in passing that we enable ourselves to deal with higher intelligence by creating artefacts,

which can 'carry' the higher information safely. These are such things as mathematics and art – and, as we shall explore later, language. This is most important. What it implies is that *we are simulations of higher intelligence*, where the term 'we' includes the meaningful adjuncts to ourselves that enable us to see beyond what we are able to see unaided in separate organic bodies. In this sense, our science, art and technology really are manifestations of higher intelligence and it is possible to look at human history as a hazardous attempt to bring us into closer communication with higher intelligence. The fact that recent advances appear to have made belief in higher intelligence recede is par for the course. What may be under way is a communication with higher intelligence that is far more 'realistic' than ever before. We can adopt the view that higher intelligence is trying to get through to us and that it is our very own nature that is making this difficult.

So, we turn our quest in its head: we are unreachable as far as higher intelligence is concerned. One of Gurdjieff's many pithy sayings was, "If a man can make shoes one can talk to him". Contrary to contemporary assumptions it is only possible to communicate to someone significant 'know-how' if they already are able to do something for themselves! The historical equivalent of 'making shoes' is our science and technology. Of course, if someone is identified with making shoes, we have a problem!

Spiritual lore has it, of course, that some of us are able to detect influences coming from the realm of higher intelligence and that it is not unreachable. Still, the link is portrayed as tenuous in the extreme, as if through faint shining threads. From our side, following back the 'luminescent threads' (see below) to their origin is an act of decision and faith. It can have no justification from 'our side' of the relationship. It requires an act of 'as if' – in this case to act as if we were ourselves the higher intelligence. The apparent 'barrier' to communication is created by our own nature. We are that barrier. So being told about a communication is of little use to us, because the operations involved cannot be explained.

It will be useful to give an example of a very important way in which a 'communication-gap' between ourselves and higher intelligence must arise. If we can associate higher intelligence with a 'greater vision' than we have as organic beings this vision will have a very significant property: as our span of attention is to be measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days at best that of a higher intelligence may well be measured in years, centuries and millennia. Imagine an intelligence for which one action or meaning embraces many of our centuries. How would it be possible for such a vision to be transmitted to us?

According to the 13th century Andalusian Sufi Ibn Arabi there exist 'delicate tenuities' that stretch between heaven and earth like Jacobs-ladders - and the 'meanings' which descend along these tenuities are like angels . . . if the meaning that appears in the tenuity is real, it can be traced back to its source which is real - or real enough for our present purposes - and this tracing-back is called (by the Ismaili gnostics) *ta'wil*, or 'Interpretation.'"

Hakim Bey, *For and Against Interpretation*

We are well aware of the tendency towards short-term thinking that prevails in just about every human activity. Attempts to artificially claim a vision beyond that of a year or so seem to enjoin us in disaster – as in the five-year plans of the Soviets and the dreadful nightmare of the Third Reich. In contrast, a real perception that would embrace a thousand of years seems so unlikely as to be dismissed out of hand. Yet we do have experience of a narrowing and broadening of the scale of our own subjective present moment. With this, we also have the experience that when we are in a 'longer' state, that it is next to impossible to communicate to ourselves when we are in a 'shorter' state. We then lose contact with our own vision! In times of great meaning for us, we can even experience the poignant pain of being unable to ensure that we will not forget what we have seen. Even if we write for ourselves a 'message' we will find ourselves unable to decipher its true meaning when the moment has passed. It is one of the greatest arts to be able to communicate with oneself in a future state of relative oblivion.

So could it be for a higher intelligence that sees what we cannot see. There is just not enough 'room' in us for this kind of information. This does not mean that it never happens but that it must happen in unexpected ways. The evidence is that we have made little or no progress in managing our side of the communication. But the best things are not easy – on either side. To be sure, the result of any communication between ourselves and higher intelligence should increase meaning in the whole. The hardest thing to grasp, we feel, is that even though there may be a higher intelligence, superior to our own, still it must lack something that only we can provide.

. . . man has not yet learned how to communicate with an ant. When he does, will the questions put to the world around by the ant, and the answers that he elicits contribute their share, too, to the establishment of meaning?"

John A. Wheeler in 'Information, Physics, Quantum: The Search for Links' from *Complexity, Entropy and the Physics of Information*,

This idea can be turned on its head to regard us as the 'ant' relative to higher intelligence.

One of the aspects of a view of higher intelligence that includes in it the power to perceive across hundreds of years in a single act of attention is that it entails that history is meaningful. By this we mean that events stretching over hundreds and thousands of years, perhaps longer, have a wholeness that we cannot easily see. If we do not see it, it might be argued, then why bother to consider such a possibility? One argument is to extend the ideas that surround the issues of quantum mechanics, some of which focus on the act of measurement or observation as a crucial and integral part of the reality that is taking place. If we accept that we do not see the pattern in the greater whole, we may still be able to accept that something does. That there is a seeing that embraces our history – holds it in trust as it were – and that without this seeing our history would indeed be a record of madness, as some of us feel.

One of the most extraordinary features of some experiences of expanding consciousness has been the sense that it is not our consciousness that is becoming greater but that we come into some rudimentary awareness of a consciousness that is aware of us. It is something like this that informs the sense that some have of being watched over and even cared for. It is perfectly logical, of course, still to ascribe this to ourselves, as an aspect of a multiplicity of consciousness in us. However, if for the moment we accept this as a genuine insight – that is, if we choose to do so knowing full well that we can never demonstrate this to another person – then we can come to understand that it is in being seen that we are enabled to see anything for ourselves.

We are not used to thinking that 'mere' seeing can have a real effect on what is. We tend to treat 'seeing' as if it were either a passive response or an active fabrication. What if it is neither? This is the kind of view we can now find in regard to quantum phenomena. What if it can be applied to ourselves? We ask only that you visualise this prospect and simply imagine a consciousness able to be aware of you, a consciousness that 'knows' you from childhood to death, your ancestors and descendants, your place in history. This may be what is sometimes labelled 'destiny'.

Would a higher intelligence be concerned with you or us? In the Bible it is written, "Not a sparrow falls but that the Lord they God knows it." But this is the highest god and maybe the higher intelligence is not capable of such a feat of attention but can only have it partially. This is a question we will follow through as best we can.

Awareness of complexity over a myriad of years may even extend deeply into the cosmos. We can imagine that throughout the fabric of the universe, but not in a guise we can readily grasp in terms of our own time-experience, the seeing of wholeness is carried by vast intelligences capable even of perceiving the destiny of a galaxy. This does not determine what will happen – nor even what has happened! - because any act of communication on whatever scale produces new meaning. If a higher intelligence sees what is possible, we on our part have to make what it is actual. Just as a provisional analogy, imagine that there is a theatrical director/writer who has a script in mind but must allow us to play our parts as we see fit. A skilled director will allow this to happen and not impose his own set ideas; and, by doing so, the drama is enriched. It may well be that, by playing our seemingly humble part, the unreachable reaches us.

Our own time-experience reflects the kind of present moment we have. Our thinking about time is a projection based on what we regard as 'now'. As is acknowledged in physics, the current view of physical reality in science does not admit to any sense of now in the special sense it means for us. A few scientists are beginning to question this and make the sense of 'now' as a fundamental aspect of the universe and the concept we have of linear time as a very partial and distorted reading of what 'now' means.

Julian Barbour in his *Ending of Time* argues a model of the universe he calls 'Platonia', in which 'instants' or 'time-capsules' are nested in each other to embrace the whole. Then there is no such thing as a 'movement' from one instant to another. This was in fact anticipated by Descartes who said that each instant is connected to others only by God. If we accept a kind of perception and attention that can embrace the phenomena of a thousand of our years, then this cannot be located in our standard concept of linear time. It leads to the contradiction of something knowing our future while we yet remain free to act otherwise. It is necessary to look for an understanding of time that does not rely on there being any one single track of time along which all phenomena can be 'located'. A similar sort of requirement is in front of anyone who wishes to believe in reincarnation, or many lives. These are usually presented in terms of an assumed line of time so that one life follows after another along a single track. We learned from relativity that 'simultaneity' is questionable – the idea that something happening here is 'at the same time' as something happening for that moving object over there - and it is a truly revolutionary insight. In

spite of that, even physicists cling to the idea that there is some universal time line that embraces the whole universe. Once we give up on the idea of Newtonian absolute time, we can begin to accept a multiplicity in time values. It may well be that such a multiplicity is the basis for impressions of many lives.

A higher intelligence will not see time as we do (we should remember our contention that perception and thinking will not be divided as in us). By trying to place higher intelligence in our usual concept of time we get it wrong and, consequently, cannot understand anything about the influence of higher powers on our lives. It is to be regretted that, as far as we know, nothing has been realised of this in the plethora of documents purporting to be derived from contact with 'angels' in which conversations are reported in terms of human time.

The linear time concept brought us factories and western scientific-technological expansion. It still governs our thinking in all regions of human activity. Some writers have harked back to what they see as a more archaic view of time in terms of 'circularity', as in Mercia Eliade's 'Myth of the Eternal Return' as the only alternative. It is not so. There is a third concept that is just emerging, allowing for time to be multiple and in which both linearity and circularity can be seen as partial aspects. The third concept can be seen as 'descending' into human consciousness from the supra-mental, the name given by the Indian Yogi Sri Aurobindo to higher intelligence. We can go along with this term since it basically means what is in our own present moment beyond our minds.

The unreachable of one moment may not be unreachable in another. Nevertheless, we may always find that we have to return again into our own basic present moment to do what only we can do. This is, of course, just the same as we can find in a methodology such as Buddhism: the *mahayana* or 'greater path' is to return into life again after liberation to help the liberation of others. This return is echoed in Christianity by the megamyth of Christ as the Son of God, coming into human existence to bring salvation. John Lilly, famous for his work with dolphins, underwent an intense series of experiments involving drugs and isolation tanks to enable him to enter into higher (or at least different) world views. In doing so, he reports encountering higher intelligences who instructed him to return to ordinary life and learn how to be a human being!

From time to time we have touched upon religious questions and have intimated that God is beyond higher intelligence. Even higher intelligence cannot reach God. God is the supreme unreachable that we cannot get to but, yet, can get to us. And, in the sight of God, higher intelligence, human beings, other life forms, etc. are all equal. This kind of equality is unthinkable for us. This is largely because it demands of us that we abandon all concepts. The reason for this is that concepts remove uniqueness. We cannot imagine a reality in which everything is regarded in its pristine uniqueness. This would conjure up an image of such overwhelming complexity that we could not bear it.

Many traditions make it clear that higher intelligence is not to be identified with God. Even the Thomist view of angels as intellectual creatures between us and God is not enough. There is nothing between us and God, even though we cannot reach the perfection of God. Our exploration has considered the universe to be like an unfinished symphony. The direction of perfection is located in every moment and is not the same as conveyed by shallow views of evolution, which presume there is a single line of time. When we appeal to the idea of higher intelligence, this is just a beginning and not an explanation that can let us rest. The ultimate unreachable is *who we are*.