

# Beyond Space and Time - The Unbounded Psyche

Dr. Andrew Powell

**Abstract:** *The author describes how therapeutic approaches such as past life regression, spirit release and soul recovery can be used to work with the emergence of material from the collective unconscious. In such work, the ordinary limits of space-time are transcended. The pre-eminence of archetypes, synchronicity and the significance of psi are discussed in the light of quantum theory and the primary role of consciousness in the collapse of the wave function, extending Jung's own early researches of half a century ago.*

**Key-words:** *Active imagination, consciousness, non-locality, past life regression, quantum theory, reincarnation, soul loss, soul recovery, spirit, synchronicity.*

---

A good many years back, I was taking part in a group meditation, which began with a guided fantasy. We were asked to imagine ourselves walking in a field in the countryside on a summer day, with birds singing, bees humming and the smell of grass and flowers. Then we were instructed to look around until we saw something of special interest, to go towards it and let the experience take us where it will. This is where it took me:

*I am standing before a majestic and mysterious tree. It has the appearance of a sequoia or giant redwood and soars up into the sky. As soon as I come close to the trunk I begin ascending rapidly, as if I am going up in a fast lift. I shoot past the top of the tree and suddenly find myself scrambling up a rocky outcrop. At once I know exactly what is going on. This is Arizona, the year is eighteen forty-eight, my name is Tom McCann and I am being hunted down by a raiding party of Apache Indians. I heave myself up onto the flat top of the rock. I can hear the Indian braves a short way below and I know they will get to me in a couple of minutes and have my scalp. I pull out of my pocket a worn leather wallet and gaze for the last time with sadness and longing on the picture of my wife and two young daughters. Then I take out my gun, put the muzzle to my head and pull the trigger. There is no sound and no impact. I simply find myself floating peacefully up and away from the body lying on the top of the rock.*

At just this moment the person leading the group exercise said it was now time we came back to our bodies. I burst out laughing, for the remark could not have been more apt! The memory of that experience is etched as sharply in my mind now as the day it happened. It was my first taste of what popularly are called past lives.

Consciously, I had known nothing about this period of American history but while preparing this paper, I looked up a few facts. Eighteen forty eight is the year the war ended between the USA and Mexico with the USA seizing control of what are now the states of New Mexico and Arizona. American Indians were given the right to vote but most remained at war with the white man for another twenty years. I also found that the name of the sequoia tree comes from a Cherokee Indian, Sequoya, who pioneered the first written language for North American Indians. Yet at this same time the Cherokee were being driven west of the Mississippi by the

federal troops of the US army, a shameful chapter of history known as the 'trail of tears' during which more than four thousand Cherokee died of starvation and disease.

Sceptics consider past lives to be nothing but instances of cryptomnesia, the historical facts having been once known and then stored away in the unconscious until they happen to surface in vivid phantasies. I would concur but with the proviso that the 'facts' emerge not from the personal unconscious but from the collective unconscious as described by Carl Jung. In my case, the guided fantasy had set in motion what Jung called 'active imagination' (Chodorow 1997). The alchemical tree, an archetype of transformation, had transported me to the realm of the archetypes of death and rebirth in which a stream of images welled up in the psyche over which I had no control

Jung wrote '...the Collective Unconscious is anything but an encapsulated personal system: it is sheer objectivity, as wide as the world and open to the entire world. *There I am the object of every subject, in complete reversal of my ordinary consciousness, where I am always the subject that has an object*' (Jung 1954:22). This fits perfectly with what is found in past lives; the drama takes a course that the ego has no power to change, for things are as they are and the entire script is set out from start to finish. There is no sense of one doing the thinking. Rather, 'it thinks me', through to the end, when death supervenes and consciousness invariably separates from the body.

The archetypes of the collective unconscious can never be apprehended directly. They are the primordial potentia, which give structure and meaning to consciousness through the formation of symbols and images. Symbols and images fall within space-time but the archetypal realm itself does not, for it functions as though time and space as we know them do not exist. Yet we certainly experience archetypal images in an entirely personal way since they are constellated according to the psychic reality of the individual. An example would be the poignant theme of loss in the past life fragment I have just given. The scene affected me deeply, for I too had a 'trail of tears' to contend with in my life at that time.

The breakthrough of archetypal material has a profound and often disturbing impact. Take Jung's account of the events, which occurred in nineteen sixteen immediately prior to his writing the Gnostic text 'Seven Sermons to the Dead' under the mysterious inspiration of Basilides of Alexandria. Jung records, 'There was an ominous atmosphere around me. I had the strange feeling the air was filled with ghostly entities.' He goes on to relate how his children also saw and felt these entities. 'Then the doorbell began ringing frantically.... it was a bright summer day.... there was no one in sight.... I not only heard it but saw it moving...then I knew that something had to happen. The whole house was filled as if there were a crowd present, crammed full of spirits. They were packed deep right up to the door, and the air was so thick it was scarcely possible to breathe. As for myself, I was all a-quiver with the question, 'For God's sake, what in the world is this?' Then they cried out in chorus, 'We have come back from Jerusalem where we found not what we sought.' Then it began to flow out of me and in the course of three evenings the whole thing was written. As soon as I took up the pen, the whole ghostly assemblage evaporated. The room quieted and the atmosphere cleared. The haunting was over' (Jung 1961:215).

Accessing the collective unconscious also gives rise to uncanny coincidences to which Jung gave the term 'synchronicity', when two or more

causally unrelated events turn out to have the same or similar meaning. Jung describes three kinds synchronistic phenomena (Main 1997). The first is when a psychic event and an apparently unrelated physical event occur in the same place and at the same time. Jung tells of a patient who had just been recounting a dream of a scarab beetle when a scarabaeid beetle tried to fly in through the window of the consulting room (1952:439). Such strange coincidences are not rare, though we tend to brush them aside. Here is one I remember well from my own life:

*I was feeling both apprehensive and excited because it was the start of my first day as a hospital consultant. I searched the building looking for my room but when I did find it, the door was locked. I tracked down the professor's secretary who took the Yale key off a large ring, gave it to me and I put it in my jacket pocket. It was a big moment for me, for I was now about to take possession of my room. I went back down the corridor and pulled the key out of my pocket. To my astonishment, the shank of the key had bent on itself through ninety degrees. I could not enter my sanctum until I had clamped the key in a doorframe and straightened it out with brute force.*

The episode of the key can be interpreted symbolically as reflecting my heightened anxiety on my first day as a young consultant that I would not be able to live up to what was expected of me. We no longer have the benefit of rites of phallic initiation to prepare us for manhood, as did our tribal forefathers. But the classical laws of physics cannot account for the bent key I stood staring at in amazement, the more so since Uri Geller was not yet a household name.

The large body of evidence for psychokinesis that has accumulated since is still ignored by most scientists, who prefer the comfort of the familiar. Jung showed astonishing prescience when in nineteen fifty-four he wrote, 'Despite the materialist tendency to understand the psyche as a mere reflection or imprint of physical and chemical processes, there is not a single proof of this hypothesis..... *There is thus no ground at all for regarding the psyche as something secondary or as an epiphenomenon*', and also writing, '*Sooner or later nuclear physics and the psychology of the unconscious will draw closer together as both of them, independently of one another and from opposite directions, push forward into transcendental territory, the one with the concept of the atom, the other with that of the archetype* (Jung 1954:58).

Jung's second variety of synchronicity deals with non-local phenomena. Here is an example from clinical practice:

*I had been supervising a trainee psychiatrist with her first psychotherapy patient, a young woman named Gillian. Gillian longed for closeness but was deeply mistrustful of intimacy. The therapy went well and after a few months, Gillian decided to track down her mother, whom she had never known. She followed up various leads only to discover that her mother had died a year or two earlier. This was a bitter blow but she took it well.*

*A couple of weeks later, my trainee attended for supervision. She seemed flustered and somewhat embarrassed. She said, 'I want to tell you something, you'll probably think its stupid of me'. She went on to say that on the previous Sunday, which she had been spending at home with her family, she had suddenly experienced a terrible sadness. It came on inexplicably at three in the afternoon and she could not shake it off. Then at about six o'clock the feeling vanished as quickly as it had come.*

*On Monday, she saw her patient Gillian who told her that since the last session, she had found out that her mother had been buried in a London cemetery*

*and that on Sunday she had gone there to try to find her. For hours she had searched in vain but at three pm. she found the grave. She spent the next three hours there, crying for the mother she had never known.*

According to Newtonian physics, this exact coincidence of emotions at a distance can only be due to chance. Yet we know that when two people who share an empathic rapport are separated and electromagnetically shielded from each other, an evoked electrical potential stimulated in the brain of one by a flashing light is instantaneously mirrored in the brain of the second subject by a transferred potential. This correlation of brain waves is independent of the distance between subjects. Nor can it be accounted for on the basis of information passing from one subject to the other through physical space because it occurs simultaneously (Grinberg-Zylberbaum et. al. 1992).

This takes us to Quantum Theory and the famous EPR thought experiment of nineteen thirty-five. Albert Einstein argued that two electrons, which first interacted and were then separated in space, would, in theory at least, still be related even if light years apart by virtue of the common wave form they had once shared. Einstein though this must be patently untrue but in due course he was proved to be wrong. In nineteen seventy two, John Clauser experimentally showed that reversing the spin of one particle instantly reversed the spin of the other and then in nineteen eighty two Alain Aspect demonstrated that this synchronicity, which transcends the speed of light, holds true even when the electrons are widely separated in space.

There is a lively debate going on about how non-local correlations can take place with large structures like brains but there is strong empirical evidence that psi occurs, as shown in a host of Ganzfeld experiments (Radin 1997). In one such experiment, the subject is required to describe a target picture or location which has been selected, and which may be in a remote place, hundreds of miles away. Honorton (1989) has extensively researched this phenomenon and the findings of his meta-analysis of the research evidence are compelling. Even more extraordinary is the work of Helmut Schmidt demonstrating that subjects show precognition of the target *before* the target itself has been selected (Schmidt 1986). *The conventional rules of not only space but also time are violated.*

Jung would have applauded these findings. He was intrigued by instances of synchronicity in which a psychic event relates to a physical event that takes place in the future. Nor are they so uncommon. I vividly recall one instance, which happened to me twenty years ago:

*My wife and I were due to drive down from the North of Scotland. During the small hours of the night before the journey, my wife had a fearful dream. In it, we were overtaking on a country road when suddenly a car came speeding head on towards us. She could see clearly that it was a green Austin A40. She awoke just before the impact. My wife was not given to superstition but so powerful was the dream that she was very reluctant to travel. I promised her I would drive extra carefully and assured her I would keep a close look out for any green Austins that might be around! Half way across Sutherland, on an empty country road, I was held back by an ancient tractor. As I swung out to overtake, I remembered the dream and pulled back. The next instant a green Austin, the first car for many miles, hurtled round the bend and past us.*

Jung did not, to my knowledge, describe a fourth category of synchronicity, when a psychic event occurs with the corresponding physical event in the remote

past. Here is an account of what one of my patients, Alice, experienced a few months back:

Briefly, this 43-year-old lady came with a ten-year history of sarcoidosis, which was causing her to go blind. She was now increasingly reliant on her husband, John. Theirs was a loving marriage and she said of him with a smile, 'He was a good catch!' All her life Alice had been a resourceful person. Now her loss of sight was challenging her to try to make sense of her misfortune. Recently she had heard about past life regression and wanted to see if it could provide any clue.

The sarcoid had begun with blinding headaches and in the session we went back to that time when she lay exhausted and crying, holding her head in her hands in a darkened room.

*I ask Alice to find words for the terrible pain in her head. If her headache could speak what would it say? She cries out, 'Let me alone. Let me be free.' I suggest she gives in to that longing and see where it takes her. Her face relaxes and she lies with her eyes closed and a smile on her lips. She finds herself transported to an idyllic, warm ocean, swimming lazily in the calm water. I ask her to look around. She can see the sandy shore line some way off and beyond that, dense vegetation covering the lower slopes of distant mountains. Next, I ask her to look down at her body. She says with astonishment, 'I'm like a fish' and can feel herself leaping exultantly out of the water. Then she exclaims 'No, I'm not a fish, I'm a dolphin!' Her expression is one of intense pleasure. After a pause, I ask if there are any other dolphins nearby. It seems this young dolphin had disobeyed her parents; such was her longing for adventure, and has swum off on her own. But she has no fear, for she is in her element.*

*I then ask her to go forward in time to the next important thing that happens. It is now late in the day. She finds herself lying on the sand, unable to move. (Alice's body makes ineffectual jerking movements on the couch). She does not know what is happening to her. I ask her to check her body and she finds a large hole in her side. Now tears begin to trickle down her cheeks. There is no pain but her strength is ebbing away. She looks up and can see the prow of a boat a few feet away. Standing on it and staring at her is a fisherman with a painted face and body, holding a spear in his hand. Then the boat slides away. As darkness falls, she grows calm. Suddenly, to her surprise, she finds herself rising up into the sky and looking down, without emotion or regret, at the lifeless body of the dolphin on the beach.*

*Does she need to face this fisherman who had killed her with his spear? At first she is reluctant, saying 'It wasn't his fault. He never killed another dolphin'. Then she agrees that it could be important. So she waits there for a while until his turn comes to die and he crosses over. Now she can see him coming closer.*

*At this point in the session, Alice starts retching, cries out, 'I'm going to be sick' and has to rush to the lavatory. When she comes back she says she has been sick, with diarrhoea. We continue where we left off. Involuntarily, she finds herself going forward and embracing the fisherman. I ask her to take a good look and see if she recognises him. She cries out in amazement, 'Of course, it's my husband John' and begins laughing and crying at the same time. 'He caught me and now I've caught him. We are together and this time he is here to take care of me!'*

The account of Alice's past life as a dolphin has to be taken for what it is, psychic reality, along with its karmic meaning, which made such patently good sense to my patient. On the other hand, scientific enquiry into reincarnation has depended on meticulous fieldwork. Professor Ian Stevenson has intensively

studied not only historical evidence but also cases of children claiming to remember past lives who bear physical birthmarks which correspond to the site of physical trauma in the past life, usually the injury which brought that life to an end (Stevenson 1966, 1997).

Sceptics hold the view that over ninety per cent of information revealed in past lives can be readily accounted for by fantasy but there remains a stubborn minority where the facts defy such explanations. There is the phenomenon of xenoglossy, speaking a language unknown to the subject, which Stevenson (1984) again has researched as well as a number of well documented case studies (Ducasse 1960, Tarazi 1997) which contain obscure but verifiable historical detail. One objection raised concerns the many times when the lives of the same handful of famous historical personages have been recounted and we have to question whether an account of a past life can be said to belong to any one individual alone. It may be that we are dealing with shared access to the archetypal contents of a transcendent realm through some kind of sympathetic resonance.

When working transpersonally, a plane of existence is regularly reported between lives corresponding to the spirit world in Theosophy and the Bardo in Tibetan Buddhism (Newton 1994, Woolger 1999). It frequently holds the key to powerful therapeutic insights (Powell 1998), as when my patient Alice recognised the fisherman to be her husband John. But sometimes we find a limbo in which the spirit wanders confused or lost. Here is such a case:

Barbara, the patient, had been visiting a well-known museum and wanted to go upstairs to look at the paintings on the first floor. There was a big central staircase with stairwells on both sides. Halfway up, she started feeling dizzy, was flooded with anxiety and could not proceed. Since that time, open spaces and heights triggered severe panic attacks.

*I ask Barbara to close her eyes and imagine herself back at the bottom of the staircase. She becomes visibly tense. Then I ask her to focus on the sensation of fear and go with the feeling to the very first time it happened, wherever that might take her.*

*To her surprise, Barbara then reports that she seems to be standing at the bottom of a stone pyramid with big steps leading upwards and a sheer drop on each side. What is she wearing? Rough leather sandals and a long cotton skirt. I ask her what she is doing there. She says she is going to be sacrificed. By whom? The chief priest. Where? She can see him, waiting for her at the top of the pyramid. What is he going to do? He is going to cut her throat.*

*How come she has been chosen for the sacrifice? This takes her back to the scene in the village the night before. There had been a meeting and the elders pointed to her and said 'It might as well be her'. She had no relatives to protect her and so she was dragged away. I ask her to go back further, to her childhood in that lifetime. The name she answers to is Miria. She recalls a life of hardship and drudgery. She is a solitary child by nature who likes best playing alone in the forest. She grows up and is expected to marry according to the tribal custom but she is fiercely independent and scares away her suitors. This is why she had no status in the village and no husband to protect her.*

*Now she is standing at the foot of the pyramid and knows what she has to do. As if in a trance she climbs slowly upwards. The height makes her dizzy. At the top she is lifted onto on a stone slab. The priest raises his ceremonial sword. What next? Suddenly she is free. It is over. She feels no pain or fear. She is moving away and has no further interest in the body lying on the stone slab.*

In past life work, the subject may be flooded with emotion or remain detached, for defence mechanisms feature in past lives also. In this case, as Miria mounted the steps of the pyramid, she was protected from the overwhelming terror of her execution by going into a dissociative state. But as Freud declared, sooner or later the repressed must return, as it did in this case for my patient Barbara, with the breakthrough of severe anxiety as she climbed the museum stairs.

At the transpersonal level, what Barbara experienced can be understood in a number of ways. It could simply be the emergence of phantasy constellating the archetypal theme of ritual sacrifice. But then, if every event in space-time sets up an everlasting vibration in the collective unconscious, akin to what Rupert Sheldrake has called morphic resonance (Sheldrake 1999), could Barbara have tuned in to Miria's death through some kind of sympathetic identification? Alternatively, Barbara may really have been visiting a life she herself once lived, leaving her psyche with a wound that her body, though not her conscious mind, recalled. Last but not least, had we uncovered the source of a spirit attachment, which was afflicting my patient?

*We return to the moment of death and again Miria floats away from her body. But she remains suspended in a shadowy, featureless world, without any sensation of space or time. I ask her to look around and tell me if she can see anyone. At first there is nothing. Then Miria looks down and sees a five-year old girl playing alone in the fields behind some houses. As she comes closer, she sees that it is Barbara as Barbara was in the childhood of this present life. Miria feels attracted to the little girl and so she merges with her, staying with her from that time on and enjoying the companionship, for there seems to be nowhere else to go.*

In view of this account, I concluded that Miria's fate had been to remain an earthbound spirit. The history is typical (Baldwin 1992) with a traumatic ending to life, the failure to move on to the light after leaving the body, a resulting limbo state and then the attraction to a sympathetic soul, for Barbara too had been a solitary child. There had been no symptomatic disturbance until the day, many years later, when museum steps had triggered the breakthrough of Miria's unresolved terror and had rooted Barbara to the spot.

*Once this was explained to Miria, she readily agreed to leave, for she had no wish to inflict her fears on Barbara. I encouraged Miria to look upwards. After a while she reported that she could see a point of light way above her. She found herself moving rapidly towards it and then was gone.*

In psychodynamic therapy, terms such as projection and introjection serve us well as explanatory metaphors. But our modern psychology has its roots in deep soil, for shamans have been dealing with soul loss and soul retrieval for thousands of years. Such methods, when used, are no less effective today.

Sally is in her mid-fifties. Despite successfully raising a family, she has suffered from treatment-resistant depression for twenty years, tormented by feelings of guilt and unworthiness. Her problems began during early childhood, which was blighted with insecurity. The coup de grace came when she was seven and fell into the hands of a fundamentalist schoolteacher, Miss Edwards, who terrified the child with threats of hell and damnation. Sally had recurring visions of flames licking around her bed and the red face of the devil would appear at night and in her dreams.

In adulthood, Sally seemed to overcome these fears, but following major surgery, which left her body, scarred, she once again succumbed to these

hallucinations and lived from day to day in a state of sheer panic. I was asked by Sally's psychiatrist to see her for a therapeutic consultation.

*I encourage Sally to visualise her soul. She locates it inside her chest but it is a feeble thing, not much more than a glimmer of light. Then I ask her to look carefully to see if there are any strands or cords running out from it into the darkness. She finds a cord, so I urge her to follow it and see where it leads. After a moment she looks up and says she can see Miss Edwards, looking very old but as fierce as ever, holding the end of the cord tightly in her hand.*

*I then have a frank discussion with Miss Edwards, speaking through the agency of Sally. Miss Edwards insists that what she did was right, the child had to be controlled and if she instilled fear in her, it was for her own good. I point out that instead of helping, it has led to a lifetime of misery and torment. Is this what Miss Edwards as a Christian really intended? She falters for the first time and I press home my advantage. She herself is nearing the end of her life and will soon be facing her Maker. How will he judge her? Then Miss Edwards becomes fearful. She hadn't intended harm. She hopes God will have pity on her. I put it to her that she can start making amends right now by letting go of Sally's soul and giving it back to her. Miss Edwards agrees and lets go of the cord. I ask Sally to draw it back into herself, after which we spend time giving healing to her soul. Afterwards, to Sally's immense relief, she finds the red devil has lost his power over her, the fear has gone and she can move on to the next phase of her therapy, mourning for her lost childhood.*

The clinical examples I have been giving all point to one thing. When we move beyond the constraints of sense perception and the bounds of physical space-time, we enter a domain in which *all time is now and all space is here*. I want to enlarge on this concept, for it re-instates the sixth sense, which three hundred years of western science discounted and even scorned.

Newton's laws of motion and gravitation, together with Rene Descartes' dualism of mind and body, gave rise to a science of material realism that profoundly shaped how we think about the nature of reality. We conceive of an enduring physical universe out there, a stage on which we live our lives and make our exit. The physical realm is held to be the primary one and consciousness is seen as a miraculous by-product of evolutionary biology. Anyone holding the view that we are eternal souls in physical bodies has been obliged to hypothesise another parallel but non-physical world in which the soul resides. This has led to all kinds of problems, such as where heaven is situated and why no energy transfer has ever been shown to take place between the two worlds. On the other hand, the science of material realism has advanced apace, its world firmly bounded by the five senses and all that it contains.

Just when it begins to look like game, set and match to material realism, physicists discover quantum theory, which tells a different story. The wave-particle experiment breaks with three hundred years of certainty. *Depending on the way the experimenter sets up the light experiment, particles become waves and waves particles*. We find we have two realities with equal validity. If two, why not twenty? If three dimensions, why not four? Some mathematicians assure us there are at least twenty-six dimensions, all but four of them curled up into a space smaller than a millionth of an inch. That is, of course, looked at from the point of view of our space-time. From within that multi-dimensional world, our whole physical universe might look like a mere drawing on a piece of paper!

Electrons are no longer thought of as particles spinning around the nucleus of the atom like a miniature solar system. Instead, the electron is smeared throughout all of space as a probability wave, which only collapses into its space-time location when a conscious observer makes a measurement. Nor can the velocity and position of the electron be known at the same time, for this is a world of uncertainties. There is only a statistical probability that the electron will appear where you expect it to be. It may just materialise hundreds, thousands or even millions of miles away and when it does so, it takes zero time to get there.

Both space and time are bypassed. Such fundamental non-locality reveals the breath taking interconnectedness of the cosmos. Here is what three eminent physicists have to say. First, Henry Stapp: *'The fundamental process of nature lies outside space-time but generates events that can be located in space-time'* (Goswami 1993:61). Second, David Bohm: *'Ultimately, the entire universe (with all its particles, including those constituting human beings, their laboratories, observing instruments, etc.) has to be understood as a single undivided whole, in which analysis into separately and independently existent parts has no fundamental status'* (Bohm 1980: 174). Last, from Amit Goswami: *'The universe exists as formless potentia in myriad possible branches in the transcendent domain and becomes manifest only when observed by conscious beings'*. (Goswami 1993:141)

The new cosmology sweeps away the old dualism of mind and matter. Goswami names it monistic idealism after Plato, remarking that 'between observations, the electron exists as a possibility form, like a Platonic archetype, in the transcendent domain of potentia' (Goswami 1993:59). Indeed, all of quantum reality is unbounded potentia until consciousness collapses the wave function, *when mind and matter arise simultaneously*. Together, they form a tangled hierarchy, like two sides of one coin, a complementarity called by Mark Woodhouse 'energy monism' (Woodhouse 1996). *Each individual consciousness is now identified with its own bodily existence in space-time, from which singular vantage point it goes on to play its own part in contributing to further innumerable collapses of the wave.*

We have to conclude that the old-style Newtonian universe is an illusion, for there is no such thing as an external world 'out there' that exists apart from consciousness. Everything is mind. We are not part of the universe, we *are* the universe. More extraordinary still, it is we as conscious observers that bring the world of the five senses into being. Along with all creatures of consciousness, we are co-creators of the physical universe.

According to Goswami, the brain-mind, being two sides of one coin, is unsurpassed in combining both Newtonian and quantum properties. By means of its classical Newtonian function, it brilliantly performs as a measuring instrument, obeys the law of cause and effect and provides us with memories, a personal history and a stable identity. It can do this because the wave function collapses in line with the maximum probability according to all the countless collapses that have previously taken place. Our physical world has structural stability because the probability wave has been generated by millions of individual consciousnesses pooled together over time. Consequently, you can expect to find your home still standing where you left it when you went off to work this morning. But also, since the wave contains everything in potentia, there is no limit to what is possible. A mind of great power can collapse the wave uniquely, apparently miraculously, on one notable occasion turning water into wine.

The brain-mind's quantum function is one of endless renewal, drawing on a transcendent realm in which everything that has already happened, is happening now and someday will happen, co-exists. The opaque window of space-time obscures from us what ultimately comprises this realm, yet mankind intuitively divines it in the archetype of the Imago Dei (Powell 1993). The part we play in the cosmic drama is no small one, for in our collective creation of the physical universe, we provide a stage for the self-realisation of God, just as the Christian Gnostics always asserted.

In the case histories I have given so far, specific therapeutic interventions were called for but Nature in her wisdom provides a powerful tool for self-help in the form of dreams. Here is an account of one such dream brought to me recently:

The patient in question had survived an early childhood of great hardship, having been rescued from the streets aged four by Bob, a neighbour who took the boy in. From that time Bob was father in all but name. Everything he had, he shared with the boy and the boy loved him like no other.

The boy grew into a man and made good. He married, had a family and moved south where he did well professionally. But he often went back to see Bob, now ageing and alone but fiercely independent. Then the time came when Bob grew so frail, his neighbours had to come in and start washing and caring for him. Bob couldn't bear it. One day he got himself upstairs to the spare bedroom, lay on the bed with cap on head as ever, took tablets and died.

My patient was devastated at the news. He kept dreaming Bob was still alive and then, every time on waking, the shock of his death would hit him all over again. He fell into a severe depression.

He then told me that just a few days before coming to see me something had happened which had knocked him for six. He had dreamed again of Bob but this was different.

*In the dream, he knew for the first time that Bob was dead. Yet there was Bob, sitting across from him, large as life, cap on head, just the way he always sat. My patient asked him outright, 'Bob, are you dead?' Bob answered him as direct as ever, 'Yes!' His next question was, 'Is there life after death?' Another emphatic 'Yes,' came right back. Then he challenged Bob head on. 'Prove it to me!' Bob pulled out a book that looked like a bible with some detailed drawings in it and sure enough, the proof was all there.*

Then he awoke. All day he could intensely feel Bob's presence. He found his emotions welling up and although in one way it hurt more than ever, he could say to me in that first meeting 'I know I'm getting better'.

This far, I have drawn on a number of case studies and a modicum of theory to highlight the clinical perspective. When it comes to the intriguing question of whether our individual identities as we know them continue forever in the discarnate realm, it is worth noting that our Newtonian habit of mind leads us to look at things in a dichotomous way. For instance, a great many people believe that there is no individual consciousness after death. Since the collapse of the wave is probabilistic, a stable body of opinion forms which heuristically is most likely to reinforce itself with further collapses of such a wave. On the other hand a great many people hold the opposite view, that individual identity survives death and they too are reinforcing their own probabilistic collapse of the wave. Humankind then tries to resolve these differences by turning the whole thing into a dialectic in which the opposing views compete for the truth.

There is another way to look at this, not with the 'either-or' but the 'both-and'

solution that lies at the heart of the wave-particle experiment I mentioned earlier.

Within the quantum realm, everything that has been, is now and ever shall be, exists as one coterminous whole. When viewed from the standpoint of self, its contents assume the form of archetypal personifications, which sustain our belief in the continuity, and survival of individual identity in spirit. Buddhists, on the other hand, see such desire for continuity of selfhood as a sign of attachment to ego standing in the way of enlightenment. With the realisation of nirvana, subject and object merge, giving rise to the awareness of total connectedness sometimes called at-onement, a paradoxical state of emptiness and fullness in which all the trappings of individual identity dissolve away.

It follows that we must give equal weight to both kinds of experience. Indeed, reports of the near-death experience suggest there are many mansions to be visited according to our need. By all accounts, those who need angels will see them, those who yearn for family and friends are welcomed by them, while others who know where they are going head straight for the Divine source.

Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious, as Freud famously remarked. By way of ending, here is a lucid dream, which took the dreamer self-aware into the enchanted realm and then showed him why he could not stay.

*In the dream, I found myself back at my old school. I decided to go up to the roof so I launched myself into the air and floated gently upwards. Now I was at treetop level and looked down at the woods all around the school. It was crystal clear, like a still autumn day, the sun shining and with the leaves red and gold. I descended some way and floated along, following a path through the woods. Everything was inexpressibly beautiful, more vivid even than in waking life. I somehow knew that I had created this experience and that I could make happen whatever I wanted to happen. It was sheer beauty and perfection. I felt joy, like when you hear beautiful music. At the same time I had a profound realisation, which brought a kind of sadness. I saw that because I could make it all happen without any effort, like being God, I wouldn't be meeting any situations, or other real people, that would really challenge me. There would never be anything to learn and I would always be alone. I found myself longing for that other 'real' world again. Then I awoke'.*

However intriguing and captivating we find the primary nature of consciousness, we are equally indebted to the physical universe, for without it there would be no such thing as experience. The same apple that tempted Eve could not then have fallen at Newton's feet and both science and religion would have been the poorer. Our task is to bring the instrument of human consciousness to bear on the quantum wave with the greatest care, for whether we do it in love or hate literally determines whether we create a heaven or hell. We can surely rely on finding our individual identity where and when it is most needed, within the bounds of space and time. Beyond that, in the quantum realm, there is a more important truth to be discovered, that we are one. If humankind should ever learn that what belongs to one belongs to all, heaven on earth will be assured.

## References

- Baldwin, W. (1992). *Spirit Releasement Therapy*. Headline Books Inc.  
Bohm, D. (1980). *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. Routledge: London.  
Chodorow, J. (1997). *Jung on Active Imagination*. Routledge: London.

- Ducasse, C. J. (1960). 'How the case of the search for Bridey Murphy stands today'. *J. Amer. Soc. for Psychical Research*, 54. 3-22.
- Goswami, A. (1993). *The Self-Aware Universe*. Putnam: New York.
- Grinberg-Zylberbaum, J., Delaflor, M., Sanchez Arellano, M.E., Guevara, M.A., Perez, M., (1992). 'Human Communication and the Electrophysiological Activity of the Brain'. *Subtle Energies*, 3. 3. 26-43.
- Honorton, C., Ferrari, D. C. (1989). 'Future Telling: a Meta-analysis of Forced-choice Precognition Experiments, 1935 - 1987'. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 53. 281-308.
- Jung, C.G. (1952). 'Synchronicity: an Acausal Connecting Principle.' in *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. C W 8.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1954). 'Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious.' in *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. C W 9.i.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1961). *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. New York: Random House.
- Main, R. (1997). *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal*. Routledge.
- Newton, Michael. (1994). *Journey of Souls*. Llewellyn Publications, USA.
- Powell, A. (1993). 'The Psychophysical Matrix and Group Analysis.' *Group Analysis*, 26. 4. 449-468.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1998). 'Soul Consciousness and Human Suffering.' *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 4. 1. 101-108.
- Radin, D. (1997). *The Conscious Universe*. Harper Edge.
- Schmidt, H., Morris, R., Rudolph, L. (1986). 'Channelling evidence for a PK effect to independent observers.' *Journal of Parapsychology*, 50. 1-16.
- Sheldrake, R. (1999). *New Science of Life - The Hypothesis of Morphic Resonance*. Park Street Press: US.
- Stevenson, I. (1966). *Twenty Cases suggestive of Reincarnation*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1984). *Unlearned Language: New Studies in Xenoglossy*. University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1997). *Reincarnation and Biology*. Vol. 1: *Birthmarks*, Vol.2: *Birth Defects and other Anomalies*. Praegar.
- Tarazi, L., (1997) *Under the Inquisition: an Experience Relived*. Hampton Roads Publishing Co.
- Woodhouse, Mark. (1996). *Paradigm Wars*. Frog Ltd: USA.
- Woolger, R. (1999). *Other Lives, Other Selves*. Bantam Books

*Paper presented at the Conference 'Beyond the Brain: Does Individual Identity extend beyond Birth and Death?' The Scientific and Medical Network and the Institute of Noetic Sciences, St. John's College, Cambridge, UK, August 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> 1999.*

Published as chapter in '*Thinking Beyond the Brain – A Wider Science of Consciousness*' pp.169 –186 Editor David Lorimer. Floris Books, Edinburgh 2001

Dr. Andrew Powell, former consultant psychotherapist and honorary senior lecturer, Warneford Hospital and University of Oxford, is founder chair of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group, Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK. ([www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/sig/spirit](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/college/sig/spirit))