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SURVIVAL: DEATH AND AFTERLIFE IN CHRISTIANITY, BUDDHISM, AND MODERN SCIENCE

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SURVIVAL: DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

IN CHRISTIANITY, BUDDHISM, AND MODERN SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Survival is the theory that some significant part of man continues after the death of his physical body. This dissertation studies philosophical argumentation of Christians and Buddhists, and analyses the latest available empirical data, to determine which if any forms of survival are most probable.

Part I finds insuperable philosophical difficulties with the purely materialistic resurrection theory. If there is no unique carrier of conscious personal identity between death and resurrection, then the re-created body is at best a replica for which living man need feel no identity nor responsibility. Survival of disembodied minds as pure process is equally problematic, because the slightest rest would spell extinction to the process. Examination of modern philosophers' and theologians' arguments about survival shows that to make sense, resurrection requires postulation either of invisible bodies as carriers of conscious identity, or of a next world of Berkeleyan or Leibnizian idealism entered immediately at death.

Part II studies Buddhist insights on survival. Early Buddhism proposes the alternatives of perpetual rebirth and transcendent nirvana. Despite their doctrine of "no-self," Buddhists accept invisible material and psychological levels of reality which enable karmic continuity between rebirths. However, nirvana is found not to be personal eternalism nor annihilation; it is a state beyond person-

hood, defying the categories of positivist analysis and ordinary language philosophy. So nirvana is not personal survival, and rebirth shares with resurrection the need for an invisible carrier of identity from old man to new. Pure Land (Mahayana) Buddhism propounds objective idealist heavens accessible both in meditation and at death. Descriptions of these Pure Lands are found both in the sutras, and in the experiences of Buddhists temporarily thought dead. Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism further defends the mind-dependent nature of the intermediate state between rebirths. To make sense of survival, Buddhism too requires either invisible bodies or an idealist next world.

Part III examines empirical evidence indicative of survival: (1) claimed memories of former lives; (2) apparitions and OBE's (out-of-body experiences); and (3) visions of people or other worlds at death. Subject matter is screened to exclude dubious or irrelevant material; then evidence is presented with sample cases and experimental results. Numerous alternative hypotheses are adduced to interpret the data. (1) Where children claim to be someone who has lived before, exhibit memories unique to that person, show linguistic and athletic skills characteristic of the deceased, and have birthmarks peculiarly like the corpse's, the hypothesis that consciousness has been reborn into another body is provisionally acceptable. (2) Laboratory experiments on OBE's show that something is actually external to the body and present in a target area when the subject is conscious of being there, outside of his body.

Moreover, the fact that most apparitions of the living correspond to conscious mental processes of those living people leads to the hypothesis that many apparitions of the dead correspond to conscious mental processes of dead people. (3) Finally, the paranormal knowledge and similarity of detail found in deathbed visions in disparate cultures gives rise to the theory that they glimpse another realm to be experienced after death. The evidence that some subjects have experiences while "brain dead" shows at least the falsity of the mind-brain identity theory, and is strongly indicative of survival.

Some scientists still resist inquiry and evidence on survival. Part IV considers survival research as a case history of resistance to counter-paradigmatic scientific theories. Conservatism and change in science proves more sociological and psychological than objective and logical, and survival is found compatible with modern science. The study concludes that at least some consciousnesses probably survive in ethereal or idealistic states. Broader generalization is dangerous before further empirical studies have been completed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART III: EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON SURVIVAL

PART IV: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

PART V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to advance philosophical knowledge on the issue of survival, through reference to Asian and Western philosophy and contemporary scientific research. Survival is defined in philosophy as the theory which maintains that some (usually conscious) entity outlasts the death of a man's physical body. Traditional theories of eternal life thus include survival, but a survival theory may be compatible with the non-eternalist view that the surviving element eventually disintegrates.

The concept of survival as used here does not include the idea that persons might continue to exist only in the memories of other living people, or in the continuing influence they might impart through their investments, art, or writings which remain after their deaths. Many moral and theological arguments have been adduced to "prove" survival, ranging from the justice of the universe to man's need for fulfilment in future lives. Such appeals to religious or aesthetic predilections shall also be excluded from the scope of this work.

In this book, we shall study survival from three perspectives: (1) the logical debates among modern Western philosophers; (2) the contributions of empirical research; and (3) the insights of the Buddhist traditions: Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Finally, we shall examine the implications of the philosophy of science for our conclusions on the nature of survival. This is not a polemic, but a philosophical analysis of the issues and evidence related to survival.

PART I: THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE ON SURVIVAL

CHAPTER I: RESURRECTION OF THE MATERIAL BODY

A) The Traditional Resurrection Theory

The most widely held interpretation of the after-life in Christian countries prior to the twentieth century is the doctrine of bodily resurrection. This doctrine says that at some future time, the dead will be raised from their graves, and their physical bodies restored to their former conditions. It might be argued that the traditional resurrection theory is more properly called a doctrine of immortality than of survival. However, there is nothing inherent in the resurrection theory which requires that resurrected material bodies must live eternally, nor that the resurrection day will only come at some distant future time.

On the contrary, if the resurrected body is really material, then it is more likely to expect that it will again corrupt and decay as does any other material body; and the resurrection theory is more credible if it pertains soon after death than many millenia later. In fact, this was the interpretation of the earliest Jewish proponents of a resurrection: not that all men would be resurrected for an eternal life, but that certain self-sacrificing Jewish military heroes might have one more earthly chance to see the kingdom of Judaea re-established.[1] Later thinkers have also subscribed to the doctrine that, although all are initially to be resurrected, only those who have led a Christian life will be preserved, and the others eliminated.[2] So resurrection need not imply immortality.

1) The Importance and Appeal of Resurrection

a) Biblical scholarship

The doctrine of resurrection has undergone somewhat of a revival in recent decades. An interest in Biblical scholarship is one of the strong contributing factors in this reconsideration. In the early part of the twentieth century, historical and hermeneutic studies of the gospels flourished, with an emphasis on humanizing or "demythologizing" the Biblical accounts. In the process of trying to come to grips with the "historical Jesus," and to understand better the context in which Jesus lived and worked, scholars like Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann re-interpreted (and in some cases, analysed away) many of the miracles and doctrines of Jesus.[3] By their accounts, much of what Jesus is recorded as preaching should be reinterpreted as metaphor. In particular, references to the "kingdom of heaven" should be understood to refer to a particularly blessed or enlightened state of being here and now in this world, and not to some future state beyond the grave.[4] Alternatively, others postulated that the heaven of which Jesus spoke was a condition radically separate from any world of which we can speak: not in time, but beyond time.[5]

Such demythologizing was discomforting to many more orthodox Christians, who were not ready to exchange their hopes in a real and glorious future heaven for either temporary quality of present life, or a metaphysical prediction of a state beyond time.[6] In response to such movements and feelings, further Biblical scholarship began to show that, whatever the source of his ideas, Jesus' teachings

seemed to predict a very real and tangible heaven. Thus, in the famous Ingersoll lecture of 1955 at Harvard, Oscar Cullman explicitly developed the case for a Christian belief in physical, bodily resurrection, opposed to the more Platonic notion of the continuity of an immortal soul.[7] Cullman's radical thesis caused much eyebrow-raising in theological circles, and spawned a spate of debates in theological journals.[8]

b) Consistency with materialism

In addition to having a fair claim to being what Jesus himself believed and taught, the notion of bodily resurrection appeals to modern Christians for less exegetical reasons. Resurrection seems to conform with the prevailing notions of modern materialism: that both consciousness and personal identification would be impossible without a material body.[9] At first glance, it seems an easy enough theory to envision to oneself; surely we can imagine everyone returning to life again at some future date, "just as we exist now," --only perhaps happier. True, there is no known mechanism whereby dead (especially burned or decayed) bodies can return to life. But it is precisely this inability which leads many modern Christians to call for a "leap of faith," a radical reliance on the omnipotence of a God not limited by material laws, to restore our bodies as He has promised in scripture. In short, the theory of resurrection of the material body appears to be a strong traditional Christian view, especially tenable by modern materialists with a willingness to accept certain "mysteries" in their Christian faith.[10]

c) Making sense of history

Some contemporary theologians have claimed that it is only the view of resurrection which will "make sense" of history; only this consummation of history will demonstrate, for once and for all, that God is supreme and had a purpose for his creation.[11] Erlandson insists that "this world must be the scenario for the resurrection,"[12] and Hebblethwaite adds that the resurrection must be within time, for no sense can be made of the Barthian concept of actions "outside of time."[13] Theologians like Walter Kasper, Jon Sobrino, and Hans Urs von Balthasar have challenged the demythologizing tradition, pointing to Jesus' empty tomb as an indication that his resurrection was indeed physical, and predicting that ours must be the same.[14] Thus a large "fundamentalist" camp of qualified theologians and Biblical scholars, as well as a large body of modern Christian materialists and laymen, accept the traditional notion of full bodily resurrection. Problems in this view are overcome by "leaps of faith."

2) Practical Objections

The resurrection theory appears simple enough. At the last day, God simply gathers up the elements or atoms possessed by each individual at the prime of life, re-assembles these elements, and breathes life into them, thus recreating the same men. It was the hope and belief in such resurrection that led many Christians to prohibit cremation--presumably to give God an easier job in finding each person's pieces![15] But even in its early stages, there were many objections to the doctrine of bodily resurrection, as we can see from Thomas Aquinas' concern to refute at least seven of them.[16]

a) Two bodies sharing the same particles

A major objection to the theory of the resurrection concerns God's power to re-assemble everyone. The case of cannibalism has provided a problem for bodily resurrectionists from ancient times, and it has been re-argued recently by Van Inwagen.[17] If, at the prime of life, I am killed and eaten by another warrior at the prime of his life, then presumably part of my body becomes part of his body. When God resurrects me, then, God must take some matter away from the body of the cannibal to do so. But then the cannibal will not be resurrectable completely. Aquinas answers that if the cannibal ate anything besides human flesh, his body could be fully restored from those non-human nutrients. However, if he had subsisted totally upon human flesh, God will first restore the flesh to all those who have been eaten, and later supply the lacking parts to the cannibal "through his omnipotence."[18]

However, the problem is not limited to the cannibalism case. With a broader view of the cycles of nature than the early Christians possessed, we now know that with a few mummified exceptions, all humans eventually decay into gas, water, ash, soil, and the dung of worms. These materials are then breathed in and become the blood of later humans, or may be taken in through the roots of plants which again become the flesh of later humans. In short, we need not be cannibals to possess in our bodies many molecules possessed by people in previous generations. Even if we allowed that God might gather up all the molecules of all the billions of people just as they were at the primes of their lives, God still faces a dilemma when two people lay title to the same molecule. His only option,

aside from resurrecting many bodies imperfectly or not at all, is to create duplicates of all those molecules needed by more than one candidate for resurrection, and to supply the lacking body with identical duplicates of the molecules he used to have. Certainly, it may be alleged, an omnipotent God must have the power to do this --and changes in a few million out of the billions of molecules in our bodies will not noticeably alter our identities.

b) Overpopulation

Even if we grant that God may have the power of duplicating molecules, there is another problem in His resurrection of everyone --the overpopulation of the planet. For the resurrection, it is maintained, is to take place in history, on this earth.

Modern men no longer believe that the world was created a mere 6,000 years ago, as the Bishop of Usher calculated. Even if we accept a human history of only a million years, if everyone is resurrected, there will still be a total of hundreds of billions of men who were once in their prime. But how are we to say that all those man-like anthropoids who passed their prime a million and one years ago are less entitled to resurrection than those in their prime a mere million years ago? It seems that there cannot be a sharp cutoff point between man and his simian forerunners. Should God then resurrect men for twenty or forty million years previously, from Proconsul to Pithecanthropus? Then we should expect billions more ape-men swarming over the resurrection world. In addition, if the population explosion continues on its present curve into future centuries, and the last judgment were to require a few thousand more years before history is fulfilled, how many more trillions

of humans will be generated before that day? The unbelievable crowding of such a situation makes it, even if conceivable, far from the heavenly reunion which the early Christians envisioned.[19]

Granting that such reborn humans might have no need for agriculture, there would still not be enough land to hold them all. To preserve the theory, it might be argued that God could level all mountians, dry the oceans, warm the poles, cool the deserts, even create some new planets--in short, that in His omnipotence, that He could surely find a place for everyone. But this begins to contradict the common-sense materialist view of resurrection which made it widely appealing in the first place.

3) Identity of the Resurrection Body

While faithful Christians may believe that God can work all manner of marvels, and resurrect everyone if He so chooses, they still should not admit that He can contradict himself or change the laws of logic. The big problem with the resurrection is that even if God were to re-create everyone, with bodies and minds just like the ones we had in the primes of our lives, the new beings would be perfect replicas, but not really us.[20] If my body is destroyed, and I have no continuing consciousness, then even if a similar body is created tomorrow or a million years hence, it will not be me. Even if we grant that God could make perfect copies of everyone who has ever lived, surely we must distinguish between the originals and the copies. Van Inwagen illustrates the point with a metaphor.[21]

What if we were to find a manuscript of Augustine's, which we knew had been burnt centuries ago, re-created by God and placed into our hands by an angel? While no doubt impressed by the performance--and even with the divine assurance that all of the molecules in our manuscript were the same molecules in the same arrangements as Augustine had left them--we should still have reason to object. For the atoms of ink on the parchment now have their positions, not from Augustine's hand, but from God's re-assembly of them in this position. Similarly, the resurrected Carl Becker may remember typing this paper, for God could implant in him all the memories which I ever acquire. But he could not remember it truly, for only I have typed this paper.

There is a real difference between a world which required trillions of years to evolve, and a world created in 4004 BC. with all its fossils and geological strata neatly in place. One has a long and continuous history; the other does not. Certainly, an omnipotent God could create trillions of men, all with memories corresponding to the memories of men who died eons ago. Their similarity might be as exact as you please, yet nonetheless they remain at best clever replicas, and God the perfect forger. This defeats the whole Christian hope. If I die and am totally destroyed, I shall not be concerned about what punishments will someday be meted out to an exact replica of myself, nor whether my actions helped him into heaven. So the material resurrection theory not only fails to preserve the identity of individuals concerned with their futures, but it destroys any moral force that a hope of heaven might have engendered. This is the main argument of Flew and Audi against the resurrection.[22]

a) The linguistic convention solution and failure

There are several Christian attempts to counter the argument that a resurrected replica would not be identifiable with the original person. Terence Penelhum has argued that whether we call the resurrected Carl Becker the same as the original Carl Becker is purely a matter of linguistic convention.[23] If we found that one person in our midst, or everyone in the entire society, were destroyed and re-created, we could of course make a distinction between the former and the latter. On the other hand, we might also agree to continue to call the re-created people by the same names and to treat them in the same manners as we had called and treated their pre-mortem counterparts. In this sense, it might be entirely possible to "identify" the resurrected Carl with the previous Carl. Penelhum proposes that persons might be regarded as "gap-inclusive entities," so we could say that both life-segments were parts of the history of the "same" person.[24]

However, even Penelhum realizes that this argument will not suffice, for even if everyone agreed to call resurrected people by the same names, it still would make no difference to those who are dead and gone. The problem with this linguistic convention is that it leaves the identification an open option. Penelhum concludes:[25]

> It does not seem that Smith need concern himself with being his own successor unless that successor has to be identified with Smith. And without the continuity of the body, the identification does not have to be performed. The critical difference between a person's looking forward to his own resurrected future and his predicting the future of a being like himself seems to depend on a decision which can, in default of bodily continuance, be taken equally well one way or the other.

Thus, whether we look forward to a future life comes to depend on whether we decide to identify ourselves with our resurrection bodies. But this is too generous. In one sense, it may be that there are equally legitimate reasons for observers, lawyers, or debaters to argue for the identification of the pre-mortem Carl with the post-mortem resurrected Carl, despite the gap in between the two. However, although they could identify the two bodies and persons by any number of criteria, the choice would still be an identification of convention, not of truth. The resurrected body could be called the same as the one which typed this paper, but it could not truly be the same person, for that person's body will have been destroyed and his consciousness of existence ceased long before the judgment day.[26]

In short, Penelhum's identification by linguistic convention seems to say that it is a choice of the believer whether to identify with his resurrection body. This might give moral force to a belief in resurrection. If a man believes that the body which will be resurrected will be his own, then he may behave more morally to assure its happier future. However, he cannot believe this correctly, for this belief cannot preserve his own existence, but may only affect that of his double. There may be an important moral difference between expecting my future in heaven and predicting a heaven for a replica of myself. But logically speaking, if the question is, "what will really happen?"--we do not have this choice. The best that God can do is to create my double, and no amount of convention can connect him with my own finished existence.

b) The material continuity solution and failure

Quinn[27] picks up on the notion of bodily continuance, just mentioned by Penelhum. Attacking the linguistic convention approach, he recognizes that no amount of convention can legislate true identity. Quinn also observes that man's identity does not depend very much upon bodily similarity alone, for we may have hearts, arms, legs, etc., transplanted without changing human identity. In fact, recent literature on brain transplants concludes that even if only a brain were transferred, the identity of the person would stay with that of his brain, and not that of his body.[28] Extending this concept a little further, Quinn suggests that there may be a few essential molecules inside each person's brain which really are the seat of his unique identity. These few molecules, if preserved in their unique configuration, would be adequate to preserve the identity between the dead Carl and the resurrected Carl, if they were appropriately reinstated in a resurrected body.[29]

The problems with this approach are both practical and conceptual. No matter how few the molecules supposed to be necessary for identity, there must be some cases in which they simply fail to cohere, as when a person is instantly vaporized and turned into radioactive energy when standing directly under the explosion of an atomic bomb. Moreover, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that any such group of molecules, no matter how small, has special abilities to endure the processes of time without transformation or disintegration. So the prospects for this actually happenning do not seem very good.

Philosophically speaking, there is yet a deeper problem. The reason that the brain, or some part of it, is held to be the center of identity is that it is the locus of consciousness, memory, and dispositions, with which a person identifies himself. By reducing this cranial area to a center of a few indestructible molecules, Quinn expects to preserve personal identity. But in his materialistic view of the resurrection, he does not want to admit that consciousness persists after the death of the body, not even in connection with this small blob of matter he preserves. Quinn fails to see that it is not the identity of any small group of molecules, but rather the continuity of consciousness and memory which is the reason that the brain, rather than the kidney or the thumb, is thought to be the locus of personal identity.

If God preserved unaltered the thumbs of every man who lived, other people might indeed be able to identify by fingerprint analysis the resurrected bodies possessing the thumbs of the people they resemble. This would still not impart a very meaningful sense of survival: to be told that we had eternal thumbs but no consciousness! The grey matter which Quinn preserves would have no more meaning than such thumbs. I could will my fingers to science, and they might be used after my death to replace the fingers of an injured laborer, given adequate technology. But nothing could persuade me that their continuity would ensure my continuity, no matter how similar the laborer were to myself. Clearly, the essential element in survival is consciousness, with or without grey matter; only that continuing consciousness, and nothing less, will assure my connection with a future "me". By ruling out consciousness,

Quinn has ruled out the identity of original and replica, even if some small blob of grey matter were common to both. In the end, Quinn himself seems to recognize this problem, concluding that the connection must remain a mystery soluble only by faith.

c) Leibniz' Law solutions and failure

Mavrodes tries another approach to invalidate the skepticism of Flew, Audi, and Passmore, whom he calls "criterial skeptics," since they seem to demand some criteria for the sameness of the resurrected body with the previously living body.[30] Mavrodes says that such demands are based on a false application of Leibniz' Law which expects identical objects to be indiscernible. In fact, however, Leibniz' Law does not hold over time (especially when the object to which is refers is gradually changing), nor does it hold over different linguistic approaches to the same object, such as intension and connotation. Echoing the observations of John Locke three centuries earlier, Mavrodes contends that we should not say merely "X is the same as Y," but should say rather, "X is the same Z as Y is," where Z is a variable of types or kinds. In other words, we should not expect identity of <u>matter</u> between a boy and the man he becomes, nor between a corpse and a resurrected man. But we can intelligibly say that this man (in 1981) is the same <u>person</u> as that boy (in 1951), and similarly we should hope to be able to say that the resurrected man (in 2001?) is the same <u>person</u> as the man who lived in 1981. To those who would say that gaps in spatio-temporal continuity represent arguments against sameness, Mavrodes responds that we do not have a clear concept of spatio-

temporal continuity even now, nor of how the "same" body passes from moment to moment despite its constant changes. Mavrodes seems to reject a completely bodily criterion of personal identity while nonetheless making an argument for the intelligibility of the resurrection of the same person. He concludes that either our concern about "sameness" here is not a serious problem, or else such problems of sameness and the meaning of spatio-temporal continuity should infect all of our philosophizing with doubt.[31]

There is a grain of truth to this argument, but showing the difficulties in the concept of "sameness" here and now cannot alone make sense of the resurrection. Perhaps the problems of sameness and spatio-temporal continuity should infect much of our philosophizing--it is precisely at such points as this discussion of identity of bodies in the resurrection that they arise most importantly. The fact that it does not arise as forcefully in other contexts does not allow us to dismiss it as unimportant here also. We can admit that we may refer to the same person despite changes in his body and personality, if there is a steady stream of bodily continuity. Alternatively, we might admit that the person were the same person if there were an uninterrupted continuation of his consciousness (although this is denied by materialist resurrectionists). Nevertheless, even the recognition of the breadth and adaptability of Leibniz' Law to these cases cannot allow us to extend it to cases where one object is totally destroyed and another replica is created.

As Perry has aptly put it, the question is not whether we can find some kind of significance in calling the present and future people "the same."[32] No matter how benign the impostor who agrees (or is created without agreeing) to take my place, to finish this dissertation, to receive my rewards or my punishments in the future --still, if there is a temporal discontinuity, if my consciousness is snuffed out, and an exactly similar mind is later installed in an exactly similar body, it does not feel to me as if I am persisting. What is important here is the feeling of sameness for me.[32] The existence of a temporal gap, where by creed or postulation nothing physical or mental is allowed to avoid decay, seems to create an unbridgeable logical gap between a past person and a resurrected person. For all the apparent ease of imagining a resurrected world (and leaving out for a moment the horrors of cannibalism and overcrowding), we cannot truly imagine that a person survives through periods of non-existence, nor that a recreated person would really be the same person who now writes these words.

B) Hick's Resurrection World

1) Formulating a Response to Positivism

a) Meaning and verifiability

For over a quarter of a century, a debate has been waged about the potential verifiability of theological statements. Ayer and Flew initially held that statements for which no evidence could ever even in principle be brought to bear are simply content-less, or meaningless sentences.[33] Ayer and Flew went on to conclude from this formulation that much talk of God was essentially meaningless and empty. If statements about the resurrection are also in principle impossible to verify, then they too are no more than nonsense.

It was John Hick who most carefully countered this attack on religious language. Hick demonstrated that in principle, it might be possible to verify the existence of God, or of a certain view of Christ in history, depending precisely upon what happens to us after death. It is possible, of course, that man simply dies and disintegrates, with no continuation; in this case, no verification nor falsification might ever be possible. But if, after dying, men actually found themselves summoned before pearly gates, it might be possible to know at last that a certain view of the world was appropriate. If the resurrection really occurs at some future point, it will make a certain view of God in history meaningful. To deny that such happennings are possible is to prejudge the issue. But to admit that they might conceivably occur allows that there is meaningful content in statements about Christ, God, history, and the after-life. From this perspective, Hick comes to feel that

issues of life after death are of crucial importance for Christians; with the validity and intelligibility of statements about afterlife, the whole realm of meaningful religious discourse seems to be preserved or destroyed. Dozens of articles have been penned on this topic since Hick's original foray into verification in theology, but this point stands essentially unrefuted: that if there be life after death, other religious statements may be in principle verifiable and (therefore) meaningful.[34]

b) Hick's three-step scenario

To illustrate the intelligibility of a resurrection, John Hick has proposed the following famous three-part scenario.[35] In the first picture, a man disappears from a learned gathering in England, and at the same moment someone exactly like him appears in Australia with all his memories and character traits. In this situation, Hick urges, we would have no reasonable alternative but to identify the man who mysteriously disappeared with the man who appeared in Australia.

The second picture is like the first except that the disappearance is replaced by a sudden death. Here, Hick urges, the factors inclining us to identify the Australian with the dead man would outweigh counterargument. The third picture is the same as the second except that the replica-person appears not in Australia but in another space altogether--in the resurrection world! The first two pictures are designed to prepare us to admit the logical possibility of the third.[36]

Admittedly, there is a spatial gap between the man's disappearance in London and his appearance in Melbourne, and the situation would create temporary chaos among observers and relatives. The radical discontinuity in his experience would surely baffle the mysteriously transported person himself, because it is so unexpected, but there need never for a moment be a gap in his experience. By this model, both physical and mental continuity appear to have been preserved, and with no temporal gap in continuity. For we can construct the case such that there is never an instant when the subject has lost either body or consciousness. Thus the Hick model purportedly overcomes the problems caused by the discontinuity of the person between death and later resurrection in the traditional Christian materialist view.

c) Problems of knowledge within Hick's resurrection world

One of the immediate challenges to Hick's conception, oddly enough, is that if the resurrection world were so similar to the present world, the person resurrected would have no way of knowing that he were in a different world. If the picture of the next world is as "this-worldly" as existence in Australia, the dying subject might not believe that it were really the "next world." This doubt can easily be eliminated. Hick points out that if the dying subject were to find himself surrounded by departed friends or religious figures, the subject would have little reason to doubt that he were in the world of those who had died--particularly if everyone in that realm reports having arrived there mysteriously while remembering death-bed scenes in a previous world![37]

Even granting such a scenario, counters Esposito, the skeptic confronted with white-robed ancestors or miracle-working angels might still fail to admit the existence of God. He might admit that his assumptions about the nature of experience were gravely in error, and suggest that different kinds of laws or relations must hold between worlds than he had anticipated. But by his *a priori* definitions, God is invisible, inexperiencable--and no matter what white-robed miracle workers he might meet, he might still deny that any of them could be God, or even conclusively prove God's existence. For any experiences which might occur, on this view, might still be interpretable without resort to the hypothesis of a deity.[38]

Hick has several important responses to such skeptical objections. He admits that no one could completely verify that any encountered being were omnipotent, regardless of impressive miracles. Therefore, Hick proposes, it is more appropriate to ask not, "Does God exist?"--a question subject to a thousand interpretations--but rather, "Is the theistic account of the universe true?" From this viewpoint, a resurrection such as the one which Hick has depicted would tend to confirm, if not the directly experiencable activity of God, at least the validity of one theological view of the universe. Such an eschatology might reasonably confirm a Christian's expectations, even though failing to confirm all of God's attributes explicitly.

Admittedly, if God were to allow even the most hard-boiled of atheists into the resurrection world, they might continue to doubt the divine purpose and power behind the resurrection, and

continue to challenge the Christian interpretation of these events. Hick analogizes this stance to the radical solipsist's refusal to believe in the reality of other minds or an external world, regardless of the evidence presented to him. This time, however, it would be the atheists who would be departing from the path of "common sense" and from the lines of "most plausible explanation" which they had advocated all along. Their stubborn refusal might never be logically refuted, but it would not negate the reality of the resurrection, its correspondence to Christian teaching, and the reality of God (if He were indeed behind this scheme). Skeptics would simply be sadly deluded--perhaps regarded as mental cases in the resurrection world. The fact that they might continue to doubt in no way impugns the conceivability of a resurrection-picture of the sort which Hick has sketched above.[39]

It is important to remember that Hick is never claiming that the resurrection actually will occur along the lines of his model. Rather, he is using this model to refute the long-standing positivist argument that no non-contradictory model of resurrection is even conceivable--and therefore even God cannot enact it. Hick's response is that, whether true or not, his model is an easily intelligible and non-contradictory conception of the way a resurrection might work, and the notion of resurrection is thus not nonsense pure and simple, although it may in fact not be the case. While it seems that Hick is successful in vindicating the conceivability of such events, his model encounters numerous other problems, both practical and theoretical.

2) Practical Problems with Hick's Model

a) The problem of health

According to Hick's model, there is total similarity and continuity between the mind and body of the subject before death, and the mind and body of the revived subject in the next world. But as Philip Merlan has pointed out, this means that the body of the person in the next world is also decrepit and decaying, or injured and bleeding, or in whatever state the person is dying.[40] It seems that the only thing the person re-created in the next world is fit to do is to die (again!). But this defeats the purpose of the whole model. The dilemma here is simple but serious. We may postulate identity of bodies, in which case the dying man in this world must also be a dying man in the next world. Or, we may suggest that at the same instant that the dying man is transported into another universe, his body is simultaneously made young and healthy again. If we accept the latter suggestion, then the discontinuity of the person before and after death seems too great, and we may genuinely begin to doubt whether we can call the person "continuous" or "the same."

Hick has an ingenious response to this objection: he admits that the resurrected body must be on the point of dying, even in its first moments in the resurrected world. Then he suggests that, in this new world, we might imagine that people grow gradually healthier--perhaps even younger in stature and appearance--until they reach an "optimal" stage.[41] If the world worked in such a way,

we might expect that all dying people would recover naturally in the resurrection world, and would not need to die again and again. Moreover, since their resurrected bodies are the same as their former bodies at the instant of "departure" (death), there need be no radical switch in bodily states which would disrupt personal identity. Thus, it is conceptually possible to reconcile the notion of disease or injury at the moment of "passage" into the next world with the continuing life of that same body in that world, and without sacrificing identity.

b) The problem of overpopulation

Although the model just described runs counter to all of our experience in this world, there is certainly nothing to negate its intelligibility. However, Hick's friend and follower Paul Badham finds other practical problems in such a conception: one physical, the other moral. The physical problem is similar to the issue of "overpopulation of the resurrection world" raised above. In Badham's words:[42]

> As our resurrection bodies are ex hypothesi to be somatically identical to our present ones, we must live on a planet of the same approximate size as our present earth, or gravity will be too great for us to function effectively. This causes serious problems, for no planet of comparable size to our own could support more than a few generations of earth's dead....planets possessing the appropriate bio-sphere are often thought to be extremely rare.

However, this criticism is based on an unwarranted extrapolation of Hick's original model. For Hick has never suggested that this resurrection should be taking place on another planet of another galaxy in this universe, further away than, but in other respects similar

to, a resurrection in Australia. On the contrary, he suggests that we imagine the resurrection as taking place in an altogether different space.[43] Thus, there is no question of how many planets in this universe could actually support human life. Nor is it necessary to demand that the next universe have the same gravitational constants or "laws of science" as ours does. Planets could be as large or as many as they liked, without necessarily crowding the skies or creating gravitational distortions. If we allow God the power to raise and heal the dead, surely the ability to create similar universes with different populations and coefficients of gravity ought to be equally within the power of the creator.[44]

c) The moral dilemma

Badham's second criticism challenges the moral value of such a resurrection world:[45]

> With God all things are possible, so let us suppose that by divine fiat both person and planet endure. We then face the further problem of whether man could actually enjoy responsible free life in a real physical world without the possibility that at some stage he might suffer accidental or malicious damage leading to death....[Intervention to prevent death] on God's part would take from us the responsibility for our own actions and thereby diminish our status as moral beings.

In short, either we allow that even resurrected men are liable to death again, or we postulate continuous divine intervention to save man from such exigencies. Hick seizes the second horn of this apparent dilemma, suggesting that

> Anyone driving at break-neck speed along a narrow road and hitting a pedestrian would leave his victim miraculously unharmed; or if anyone slipped and fell from a fifth-floor window, gravity would be partially suspended, and he would float gently to the ground.[46]

However, this conception, while it well might preserve the lives of the members of the resurrection world, would demand tremendous alterations in our life-styles. We should have no need of stairs or stoplights, for no one would ever be hurt in traffic accidents, and I could leave my twelfth floor apartment simply by stepping from the window and floating to the ground. More importantly and to the moral point, I could not kill another person, nor take my own life, even if I desired to do so. This restriction on human action plays into the hands of Badham's objection: that the meaning has been stripped from the most crucial cases of moral responsibility, for God has made it impossible for man to commit serious evils. In turn, this seems to contradict one of the purposes of the after-life: that man may continue his moral and spiritual growth. Such a perfectly protected and God-controlled universe would deprive man of many occasions for confronting moral issues. Thus, while logically possible, this is not the kind of after-life which Christians should imagine.[47]

There are other defenses of Hick's position here, of which he does not avail himself. In the first place, the resurrection world need not be universal; it might admit only those whose make-up were such that they would never incline or attempt to kill themselves or others. While this has slightly Calvinistic overtones (a limited "elect"), there is nothing conceptually incoherent about it. People involved in accidents might be readily healed and death avoided, not by God's intervention, but by the consent and care of all the elect. Another approach might be to admit that even the resurrection world might not be eternal, but might in fact allow the possi-

bilities of death and killing once again. If the resurrection world is para-material or quasi-material (even with curious healing properties) this may still be the most reasonable expectation: that eventually all organisms will again disintegrate. Such an afterlife might not satisfy the cravings of some Christians for immortality, nor the scale and grandeur of salvation sought by some theologians. But it is eminently conceivable, and does seem to give meaning to survival. Moreover, if the resurrected lives are also subject to a second death, then the population problems foreseen by Badham need never arise, for old resurrectees may be eliminated as fast as new ones are resurrected!

3) The Relations of Two Spaces and Two Bodies

It may seem as though some of this is an exercise in speculative fantasy, and indeed we have no present way of verifying any of the above suggestions. The philosophically important question is whether or not an intelligible conception can be formulated of a resurrection world. Hick believes that he has done so through his examples, and we should agree; if we were to grant total omnipotence to God, then the objections posed to Hick's model on the bases of death, dying, the state of the resurrectee, and the morality of the future world appear to be answerable. However, there remain conceptual problems of a more theoretical nature which may be harder to resolve.

a) The inconceivability of other spaces

Hick has proposed that his resurrection world exist in another space. That sounds simple enough--but is it really a viable concept?

Penelhum has bluntly countered: "I have some difficulty, as before, in attaching any sense to the claim that there could be another space not in Space,"[48] Audi poses the problem in the form of a dilemma: either the resurrection world is somewhere within our space, in which case we may doubt that we are really in the eschaton at all, or it must be in some non-physical space, the whole idea of which is unintelligible.[49]

Audi's dilemma need not scare us. We have already seen that the skeptic's ability to doubt the nature of his experience--here or elsewhere--does not in itself deny the possibility of Hick's model. If we follow Hick, the resurrection world of which we debate is not in "our Space" but in another space. So we return to the question, "Is another space conceivable?" Audi and Penelhum have difficulty imagining it, but this seems more their personal problem than a limitation on the nature of space itself, for greater philosophers and physicists than they have less difficulty. Einstein's theories, for example, declare that space is not "an infinite pre-existent field," but rather "a web of interactions between energies."[50] From this physicists' perspective, Farrer suggests that

> Heaven can be as dimensional as it likes, without ever getting pulled into our spatial field, or having any possible contact with us of any physical kind.[51]

Quinton has adopted a more psychological approach, arguing that in dreams, we experience spaces and times which are utterly similar but unrelated to our normal waking space-time perceptions.[52] Perceptions of different space-time frameworks in drug experiences or mystic meditation might bear out this analogy. Quinton and Hick

are not suggesting that it is the space-time of dreams and meditation to which the resurrection body will be reborn (as Price and others are inclined, as we shall see below). Rather, they are arguing that since we can experience such unrelated but not mutually exclusive "space frameworks" in our present experience, there is nothing inherently self-contradictory about the existence of many spaces, physically unrealted, perhaps, but accessible through different states of consciousness. Even the conservative Peter Geach grants the possibilities of separate spaces in his own writings on Hell (!) although he prefers not to separate heaven so far from our normal experiences.[53] Whether we base our conceptions on Einsteinian physics, experience of dreams, or traditional theology, we need find nothing self-contradictory in the idea of many spaces, despite the limits of Audi and Penelhum's imaginations.

Granting that there may exist other spaces not incompatible with the space and universe we presently inhabit, we may still ask, "How is it possible for the two spaces to relate?" Olding has amplified the problem by proposing that two worlds which are not spatially related could not be temporally related either(!). But if not temporally related, then the old problem of a gap between former and latter consciousness looms on the horizon, with disastrous consequences for personal identity.

Hick's response to Olding is swift and sage:

> There is undoubtedly a problem here. But it appears to me that what Olding's argument establishes is not the logical impossibility of there being singular time and plural spaces, but the impossibility of synchronizing clocks and calendars between two such spaces.[54]

In other words, while it is possible that two such spaces might be in totally different time-frames (as our dreams are to our waking experiences), there is nothing to prevent both spaces from operating within the same sorts of time. The fact that this might be unknown to anyone but God, or that watches and calendars might not be synchronous, need not make the least difference for our conceptualization. Moreover, there need be no "gap" in time between death here and resurrection in the next universe, regardless of the times employed in each time-space realm.

As to the difficulty of interaction between the two worlds, Hick might answer that this is precisely what we should expect. For it would be even more theologically disconcerting to think that heaven is really another planet in another galaxy (in this same universe), to which we might theoretically travel or send messages, than to accept that there is a physically unbridgeable gap between the worlds of the living and of the dead.[55] To the question, "how do the two worlds relate?" we may respond, "They don't, and we don't expect them to!" To the sequel, "Then how does God get me from here to there?" the answer may be, "we don't know, but that does not mean that He cannot do so." Although this may be too great a leap of faith for many non-Christians, it is neither self-contradictory nor logically impossible that an all-powerful creator could move men to another universe at the moments of their deaths.

b) Problems of Bodily Replication

If God could replicate me in another universe at the instant of my death in this one, is it not equally within his ability to replicate me in two such places simultaneously?[56] Even now, brain specialists and philosophers are debating whether commissurotomy (the surgical separation of the lobes of the brain) creates two persons within a single cranium.[57] If God were to create two or more new, identical bodies with their appropriate memories, it is argued, then we should never be able to determined which one were appropriately called the survivor or inheritor. There would be two persons with identical charateristics; thus, it seems, two people would be the same one person. But this is absurd, and therefore we should not allow that God might so replicate people.

It seems to hold that since we cannot tolerate such a dual replication, we cannot allow replication of any kind whatsoever. Actually, both premise and conclusions are false. In the first place, as Martin pointed out many years ago, it is a contingent and not a logical truth that there cannot be two identical persons.[58] The situation is quite conceivable, and if it did occur, it would not invalidate the notion that at least one of the persons were identical to some previous person, despite the confusion it might temporarily occasion. Moreover, even if it were the case that dual replication were incoherent, this would not rule out the conceivability of single replication. As Hick cogently explains, "It is not possible to show that there cannot be a [resurrection body] by showing that there could not be two or more [resurrection bodies]." [59]

So after considering cases in which the interaction between the universes, their temporal synchronicity, and the number of individuals in each have been reviewed, it still seems that Hick's model is conceivable, although an increasingly heavy burden is being placed on the creator to arrange things in ways which are possible but not yet empirically known.

c) Identity of the resurrected body.

The most serious charge against Hick's resurrection world is the denial that the person resurrected would be the same as the one who died. Hick's three examples, beginning with the case of a man instantaneously transported from London to Australia, and culminating with the case of a man who is instantaneously replicated in another universe at the moment of death, are all designed to make the argument easily conceivable and acceptable. To stress the possibility of instantaneous travel through vast distances and to argue for the reasonability of identifying the person who used to be here and is now far away, Hick cites Wiener's theories about the encoding and teleporting of beings from place to place. Wiener has proposed the theoretical possibility of transmitting

> ...the whole pattern of the human body, and of the human brain with its memories and cross connections, so that a hypothetical receiving instrument could re-embody these messages in appropriate matter, capable of continuing the processes already in the body and the mind, and of maintaining the integrity needed for this continuation.[60]

Popular science fiction stories and movies depict people entering a box in one location, disappearing, being "teleported," and reappearing in another box in another location. There seems

no difficulty in identifying them as the same people, for they retain their unique appearances and memories. Mouton has suggested that this same sort of process might take place in God's re-creation of resurrection bodies in another space; surely the identity we observe in the science fiction teleporters could be preserved by God in His transfer of man from universe to universe.[61]

Now let us make the analogy a closer one. This time, every time our science fiction hero walks into the teleporter, he is killed. His atoms are analysed, the patterns are radioed to another black box, and a person who in every way resembles him emerges from the receiving end of the teleporter network, perhaps in a different galaxy. We may even postulate that there is no temporal gap between the moment of our hero's death and the emergence of his double in the Crab Nebula. We are still left with his corpse to dispose of! Now the question is by no means so unambiguous. This is the analogy closer to the resurrection scenario which Hick has designed, wherein a corpse in this world is left, and a replica is resurrected in another world.

On Hick's behalf, Lewis argues that identity of human beings is not absolute but is constantly changing.[62] Surely a spatial gap of the sort proposed would be a surprising phenomenon, but it is not one which we could not conceptually and linguistically accommodate. If personal identity can be determined by the similarity and causal interconnectedness of each successive time-stage of a human being, and if it were found to be a causally regular fact that whenever someone dies, his consciousness continues and his body is in-

stantly recreated at another location in another space, then there is every good reason to call him the same person. If there is no time gap in his consciousness, he seems the same person to himself. As his body is replicated identically to the dying body in the old world, friends who died shortly before him and are waiting in the resurrection world will also agree to identify him as himself.

Penelhum is not so sure. If there were even a few seconds when the dying man was totally unconscious or dead, or if there were even a few seconds when both dying man and resurrected man were simultaneously conscious, we should have cases where the identification of the two is highly problematic. Now it is said that there is strict temporal continuity but only spatial disparity. Can we really admit that the resurrected man is the same man as the dead one, and not just an excellent copy? As long as the corpse lingers, it seems that there are two persons, a dead original and a living copy.

Postulating that such a replication should only occur after the first corpse has disintegrated is no solution,

> ...for in the large number of cases where it [the corpse] lingers for a substantial time we would once again incorporate a time-gap into our story, and again identification would only be mandatory if we added something carrying the identity.[64]

But there is nothing to carry the identity over either time or space. By Hick's account, there is simply death in one sphere and creation in another. Hick argues eloquently for the reasonableness of the resurrected person thinking of himself as the person who had died, of his friends in his new environment using the same name and treat-

ing him as their old friend, and of the viability of calling him the same person. Ultimately, however, he concedes:

> These are cases for decision. Indeed, I would say that all cases other than straightforward everyday identity require a decision....My contention is not that the identification of resurrection-world Mr. X with the former this-world Mr. X is entirely unproblematic, but that the decision to identify is much more reasonable, and is liable to create far fewer problems, than would be the decision to regard them as different people.[65]

This concession is fatal to his case for resurrection. For admitting that there is an option not to call the two men the same is tantamount to relinquishing claims to their necessary identity. Then we are back to the same lines of argument seen above in the materialists' cases of non-identity over temporal gaps. In short, if I know that I will die here and now, and at this very instant that another body and mind identical to mine will arise in some other universe, I may agree that it is reasonable to give that body my name. I may acknowledge the reasonableness of an extension of our language which allows him to be called the "same" as I. I may even be pleased that he will carry on my projects or my memories. But that will not make him me. It will not ameliorate the finality of my death for me. Nor need I be concerned with how he is rewarded or punished for my deeds here and now, unless I am an exceptional altruist.

Hick's models deserve praise for the vivid images they employ and the lively debates they have provoked. They do give a kind of sense to the notion of resurrection, for at least those who were created at the moment of death of their earthly counterparts would believe in resurrection. But even Hick admits that his models

leave open the important question of personal identity, because there is no element to carry the person or consciousness from one space to another, much less across time. To solve this problem, we must seek other models of the nature of consciousness and the possibility of its continuity separated from living material bodies.

d) Conclusions to Chapter I

None of the above argumentation should be taken to deny the possibility of a general resurrection, either in this world at the day of judgment, or in another world at the moment of death, as John Hick has imagined. What we have shown, however, is that without some conscious continuity and/or substrate which would connect and preserve the identity of the person, the best that such a resurrection might accomplish would be a creation of a duplicate of the original person, and not that person himself.

Of course, the persons resurrected might feel that their preservation, rewards and punishments were very just, because they remembered deeds which they believed they had performed and which deserved such recompense. But their memories, no matter how realistic, could not be true. People presently alive on this earth can derive no great hope of rebirth from the notion that their double will someday be created, nor need they fear any retribution which might be inflicted on their double long after they are dead. We have seen that such a universe might indeed be possible—but it fails to provide the survival of the same individuals, while it casts doubt on the rationale of the deity or religion which would envision such a programme.

Nor is this to say that most Christians today believe in either such scenario. On the contrary, many modern Christians may expect something like the continuation of a disembodied soul, or even an "astral body," to preserve their continuity between embodiments. We are simply saying that based on a careful exposition of the Judaeo-Christian belief in resurrection,[66] and given a strictly materialistic mind-set, this hollow and problematic hope for the creation of an exact replica is the only option. In short, if life and consciousness are purely material, then they die with the body, and no hope of resurrection can rescue them.

CHAPTER II: DISEMBODIED MINDS

A) Dualism of Mind and Body

Metaphysical dualists (and idealists) will not be much dismayed by the preceding analysis of the impossibility of resurrection in a purely materialistic universe. For dualists hold that thought, mind, or consciousness is an unextended experiencing subject which stands behind all mental and physical experiences. While dualists may agree that there is a close and inadequately explained interaction or parallelism between mental events and physical activity, nevertheless, the difference in kind between mental and physical experience seems to warrant at least the logical possibility that mental experiences could occur independently of a physical organism. More simply, dualists may suggest that a disembodied consciousness may continue to exist after the death of the body. As Bergson has put it:

> The one and only reason we can have for believing in the extinction of consciousness after death is that we see the body become disorganized, and this reason no longer has any value, if the independence of almost the totality of consciousness in regard to the body is a fact of experience.[67]

Although there are many problems with the dualist view of the world, as will be seen below, still a vast company of modern men tacitly accept the duality of things and thought, and might readily accept Bergson's suggestion that consciousness is inherently independent of the body. Everyday language in many diverse cultures tends to reinforce this view, by giving a substantive usage

or "sense" to words like "mind" and "soul". Ryle, Ayer, and others have attacked this usage as a category mistake, but both the usage and the assumptions behind it remain deeply implanted in society.[68]

If the dualist position is a viable one--if there really can be disembodied consciousnesses after death--then the continuity of mind could serve as a link between the present embodiment and the resurrection embodiment. This would do away with the knottier problems in the purely materialist view of resurrection presented above. Indeed, mental continuity alone is what many Christians expect, despite its non-conformity to the early Christian world-view. For those with a more Platonic or Indian world-view, disembodied minds could supply the missing link between the death of one person and his rebirth in another body at another point. Even those who harbour no hopes of resurrection nor fear of rebirth may imagine that the notion of a disembodied mind provides a model for a kind of survival of death through the continuity of mental activity.

In the following pages, we shall consider the possibility of disembodied mental existence, and the challenges or objections which such a theory must meet. These objections may be classified as linguistic or "scientific" (the mind-brain identity theory); let us examine each in turn.

1) Rejection of Dualism on Linguistic Grounds

Following the leads of Wittgenstein and Ryle, contemporary positivists have tended to reject the possibility of disembodied existence based on the havoc it would play with our ordinary ideas

and the language in which they are embedded. The validity of this whole positivistic enterprise needs to be carefully questioned, both because there is no a priori unequivocal correspondence between common language and the nature of reality, and because linguistic analysts like Ryle attack common language for its inappropriateness in some contexts, while using its structures and presuppositions to defend their views in others.

a) Category mistakes

Ryle has claimed that talk about minds and mental actions can all be adequately translated or reduced without remainder into the more "public" terms of actions, dispositions, and character traits. After being shown quadrangles of dorms and libraries, and students listening to professors in their classrooms, it is a mistake to ask "But where is the university?"--it shows a misunderstanding of the way the term is used. Similarly, Ryle argues, it is a mistake to expect the term mind to refer to anything more than the acts, tendencies, and character which the person exhibits.[69] Hunting for some other "ghost in the machine" not describable in such psychological terms shows a misunderstanding of the way the word mind is (or should be!) used, contends Ryle.

Ryle's logic, however, seems to lead inescapably to a behaviorist physicalism, despite his chapter designed to avoid such consequences.[70] Behaviorism, for all its utility in certain experiments, is far from having been proven true or even adequate as an account of man's total mental experiences. So the burden of proof

falls back on the behaviorists; unless their theory can be shown to be the only acceptable one, its utility in some instances does not invalidate a conflicting, dualist approach to other issues.

b) Private language games

On a slightly more novel track, Flew and Geach have contended that language would break down in a disembodied world. Flew says

> Person-words [could only be taught by]...some sort of direct or indirect pointing at members of that very special class of living physical objects to which we one and all belong.[71]

Geach develops the notion that disembodied souls could not help but have "private language games," with no criteria for intersubjective verifiability.[72] Since it is widely recognized that languages are public, it is usually agreed that meaningful private language games are well-nigh impossible.

These observations about the nature of language, however, need not invalidate the possibility of a disembodied soul continuing after death. For person-words might take on different meanings, or be learned in different ways, in the absence of physical bodies as referents (e.g. telepathically). Even if Flew were correct that physical reference is the only way of learning language, it still is conceivable that the soul might remember words in its disembodied state, which it had learned while still embodied. As for Geach's point, it should first be noted that even in this world, language about mental states has a curiously "private" aspect; we can never be certain that the ache I imagine as I hear you describe it is exactly similar to the ache you describe. While this problem might be compounded if souls lacked bodily referents, it would be a differ-

ence only in degree and not in kind. Again, telepathy might be invoked here to enable some measure of inter-mental intersubjectivity. Even without it, however, the language learned in the embodied state could be expected to persist with reasonable consistency for some time after the soul were no longer embodied.

Moreover, even if it were the case that the soul might gradually develop its own "private language games," using words in ways uncheckable to anyone but itself, such a phenomenon would be neither self-contradictory nor impossible. It would run counter to our common daily experience that language is a shared phenomenon, generally for the purpose of communication. But Robinson Crusoe could invent his own words for new plants--and new ideas--which he encountered while marooned, and such terms might serve his memory in good stead even if he were never encountered by another speaking being. In short, private language games are <u>not</u> impossible, nor does their inutility and consequent unlikelihood in our daily social lives render the concept of disembodied post-mortem survival any less plausible.

c) Defining properties of bodies

Ayer has tried yet another linguistic ploy, by arguing that "It is a defining property of my body to be the locus of my sensations." Without a body, then, there could be no sensations--and no locus of consciousness whatsoever, or so Ayer's logic goes. Serious as this charge may sound at first hearing, it has been thoroughly debunked by Madell.[73] Madell suggests that if being a locus of sensation were the defining property of human bodies,

then we should have to either redefine the term "body" or admit that "non-standard" loci of sensations were possible, in the event that some sense-related experiences continued after death. But the definition itself cannot rule out such a possibility a priori.

Moreover, there seems some confusion here: do we identify our bodies first, and then realize that they are the loci of experiences? Is it not rather that we have experiences, and later realize that most of them are related to (or localized in terms of) our bodies? If the latter, then it is circular to assert that experience presupposes bodies, and therefore having sensations requires having a body, because knowing that we have bodies presupposes experience!

It is quite obvious that the identification of me by others may require my being embodied, just as their ascriptions of joy or pain to me may depend on their observations of my body. But it is not clear that a body is (logically, not physiologically) necessary to me as an experiencing subject, any more than I need to smile or wince in order to experience joy or pain.

Madell admits that ownerless experiences would be absurd, as Ayer has claimed. Madell then goes on to show that the bodily criterion of identity is an inadequate theory to explain the unity of experience. Consciousness is no less worthy a candidate for the unifying locus of experience than is body.[74]

We may propose some even more direct attacks upon Ayer's "absurdity of ownerless experiences." First, it is illegitimate to jump from the statement that experiences are had by a non-

physical subject to the conclusion that they are ownerless, for that would prejudge precisely the issue in question. Secondly, even if it were admitted that physical sensation-type experiences were unlikely in the absense of a physical body, this would not render absurd the idea that a previously embodied soul could continue to remember its embodied experiences even after disembodiment. In overview then, attacks on disembodiment based on purely linguistic considerations tend to presuppose what they desire to prove. On careful analysis, no logical contradictions have been demonstrated, and we are not justified in ruling out the possibility of disembodied survival on linguistic grounds alone.

2) The Mind-Brain Identity Theory

One of the most widely-heard and fundamental objections to consciousness' survival of death is the notion that we cannot conceive of a mind continuing after the death of the brain. Implicit in the above statement may be one or both of the following meanings: (a) the philosophical idea that we cannot clearly formulate what such a continuing mental existence might be like; (b) the purportedly empirical, physiological "fact" that mental activity is equivalent or reducible to electro-neural activity in the brain. The next section will deal with statement (a) in greater detail. What concerns us here is the reputed equivalence of mental and cranial activity.

The mind-brain identity theory, defended by philosophers like U.T. Place and J.J.C. Smart, holds that whenever I say "I'm bored," or "that hurts!" I am doing nothing more than describing a certain

state or movement of electrons through my neural ganglia in certain ways. It does not require that I know that this is all I am saying. But it holds that "I'm bored" or "that hurts!" are very unscientific laymen's ways of talking about something which could in principle be described very precisely in neurophysiological terms (if we only knew enough). It is analogous to claiming that all statements about salt water could be made more precisely in terms of H_2O, NaCl, KCl, specific density, etc. Both descriptions refer to the same entity, with different degrees of precision appropriate to different contexts. Identity theories do not claim, therefore, that I mean "neural synapses at points A and B in my brain just discharged," when I say "that hurts!"--but that the two statements are merely alternate descriptions or ways of referring to one and the same fact.

If this mind-brain identity theory were demonstrably true, then mind or consciousness must cease with the decay of that small part of the brain responsible for (equivalent to!) self-awareness. By definition, when the brain dies, the mind dies (for they are the same), and there is no point in further discussing "survival" for nothing is left to survive. If we would leave open the door for further discussion of the survival of disembodied consciousness, we must first show that the mind-brain identity theory does not hold.

a) Sensation-words do not refer to brain processes

There is good reason to suggest that the mind-brain identity theory is in principle incapable of being proven. Philosophers have suggested that this is clear from the difference in meaning

and reference of the terms involved.[75] For when we speak of our thoughts, experiences, emotions, or "orange after-images," it is clear that we are not referring merely to the passage of certain electrical impulses from one region of the brain to another, but to an experience of a qualitatively different sort. Similarly, it would be nonsense for a neurophysiologist, watching meter needles connected to electrodes in his patient's brain, to say, "Aha! You have a red patch in region A now, and some anger in region B." For even if it were shown that the person saw red whenever there were specific electrical configurations in region A, or became angry whenever region B carried a certain potential voltage, it would not demonstrate that red-patches or anger were equal to such brain states. The most we could ever demonstrate is correlation. Nor does it make any sense to speak of anger or mental images as localizable within the brain, although their physical correlates may be. But perhaps this is due to the naivete of daily language?

As another example, we may admit that clouds are equal to masses of water droplets, and lightning to electrical charges, even though some of our primitive common language use and perspectives ignore these equivalences, which only become evident after substantial empirical investigation. Thus, the fact that we "mean" something besides brain pulses when we refer to color or anger cannot in itself be taken to show that the two are not ultimately merely different perspectives on the same phenomenon. So although the mind-brain identity theory cannot be demonstrated on the basis of ordinary language, it can avoid rejection by rejecting that language.[76]

b) Correlation and equivalence

A further argument against the provability of the mind-brain identity theory, alluded to in the above section, is clarified by Paul Badham:

> The interpretation of neurophysiological data will remain permanently ambiguous, because almost any conceivable findings would be interpreted as illustrating mind-brain interaction just as well as being interpreted as showing mind-brain identity.[77]

In short, any evidence of correlations in time, location, or causal sequence of mental and cranial events, as well as any further research which associates mental activities with specific cranial activities, can at best be claimed to show correlation and not identity between mental and neurophysiological events.

Now at this juncture, the anti-survivalist might interpose that mind-brain identity need not be the central issue here. Even if identity were unprovable and interactionism accepted, we might still conclude that the brain were a necessary precondition of mental activity. But this argument that mind is brain-dependent does not follow necessarily from interactionism. For no matter how much evidence tended to demonstrate interactionism between brain and mind, it could always be argued that there are other conditions or occasions in which mind may not be brain-dependent. In fact, empirical experiments attempting to falsify mind-brain identity rely on precisely this logic, seeking cases in which experiences cannot even be explained in terms of, much less equated to, physiological processes. (We shall study such evidence more carefully in part II of this work.) This leads to yet another argument.

c) Mind inconceivable without brain

Flew has frequently argued that mind is actually inconceivable apart from its biological organ, the brain. This objection should not be confused with the similar argument that all mental acts are brain processes discussed above. Flew's claim is not simply that mind empirically happens to depend on the brain, but rather that it is unimaginable that it could be otherwise. Such statements can emerge only from the most hard-boiled materialist or behaviorist world-views. The very possibility of dualist or idealist philosophies serves to demonstrate that some thinkers can conceive of mind apart from the brain.

It was Thomas Aquinas (using a neo-Plotinian version of Aristotle) who developed the argument that our powers of intellection and abstraction (which have non-physical "objects" in thought) demonstrate that man's soul is more than merely physical; this argument is still maintained by Catholic philosophers such as Robb and Freeman.[78] In a more Cartesian vein, Anthony Quinton has proposed that there must be a subject of all conscious experience and feeling, but nothing requires that this subject be either observable or material.[79] It was the awareness of such a subject of experience which led philosophers like Kant, Husserl, and Sartre to discuss a "transcendental" or "Pure" Ego behind the physical, whether they had intended to "reify" its existence or not.[80] Even if these theories are mistaken, they are not unintelligible, and thus the objection against the conceivability of separating mind and brain processes falls flat.

d) Opinion in the scientific community

The argument that mind and brain are inseparable is sometimes premissed on the assumption that the identity theory were already accepted by the scientific community--that it had proven itself as the best available hypothesis, and thus deserved our credence in the same way that we believe other "laws of science."

The facts are to the contrary. Scientists are far from agreed on the identity theory, even as a working hypothesis, much less as a correct interpretation of neurophysiological data. Sherrington was among the more prominent of early twentieth century neurophysiologists to explicitly advance the theory that the mind or psyche exists over and above the organism, and the brain is simply the "organ of liaison" between the mind and body.[81] Adrian and Penfield have similarly argued strongly against the irreducibility of mental to physical events: "Something else finds itse dwelling place between the sensory complex and motor mechanisms; there is a switchboard operator as well as a switchboard."[82] Sperry, one of the leaders of commissurotomy research, has developed an entire theory of evolution which calls consciousness a "dynamic emergent" of brain activity, the crowning achievement of evolution, a will "exerting causal effects on cerebral relations" and not itself reducible to neural events.[83] Relying heavily on the work of Sperry and Libet, as well as on his own research, Eccles has called the brain "precisely the sort of machine a ghost could operate."[84] With Popper, Eccles has conceptualized an entire ontology based upon the fundamental differences in kind between physiology and mind.[85]

Of course, there are also neurophysiologists who oppose these theories and favor mind-brain identity, most famous of whom may be Crick, who inveighs against the "postulation of a homunculus inside the brain, distinct from its matter and processes."[86] However, the fact that the debate is far from settled, and that many respectable scientists support a dualist or interactionist interpretation, shows that any argument from the so-called consensus of scientific opinion is fallacious.

Further details of neurophysiological and medical research will be examined in part II of this study. The important point to note at this time is that neither linguistic, conceptual, nor scientific arguments document the identity of mind and brain--and there is serious question whether they ever could even in principle. So the claims of mind-brain identity cannot be held to invalidate further discussion of survival nor preclude its possibility.

B) Price's "Imagey Next World"

As in the case of resurrection theory, the case of disembodied mental survival is often attacked on the grounds of unintelligibility. More precisely, this objection holds that since disembodied souls are by definition unextended and immaterial, they cannot be located, perceived, nor described. It seems, therefore, that they "inhabit" neither this world nor any other, and are unintelligible. The demand is for a description of what the "world of souls" might "look like" to an "outside observer;" if such a description cannot be provided, then the discarnate soul is held to be an impossibility.

However, this argument begs the question, assuming that what is invisible and unlocatable in space is impossible and unreal--which is precisely what it is trying to prove. Moreover, it is not clear that the "objective" or "outside" account desired here can be given even of our present world. All accounts of experience and interactions in this world are in terms of languages, concepts, and sensations perceived by individual subjects, with limited ranges of visual and auditory wavelengths. We cannot even begin to describe what our universe is like "objectively;" that is flirting with the problem of the noumenon underlying perceptual phenomena, which neither physicist nor philosopher has the tools to solve. Surely it is equally unreasonable to expect such an account of a "next world." On the other hand, if the objection is simply a request for an account of what a "next world" of disembodied minds might "feel like," then several creative responses are forthcoming.

1) Subjective Next Worlds

As long as thirty years ago, the objection that it were impossible to depict or imagine the experiences of a disembodied soul was widely discussed in philosophical circles. Professors C.D. Broad,[87] C.J. Ducasse,[88] and Whately Carington[89] all devoted space to arguing for the conceivability of such experiences. In 1952, H.H. Price first formulated the clear picture of a world of disembodied minds which has become a paradigm for "next world" theories, and the center of discussion in countless subsequent anthologies.[90]

a) Formulation

Briefly, in his own words, Price's "Next World"

> ...might be conceived as a kind of dream world [in which]... sense perception no longer occurs, but something sufficiently like it does...to those who experienced it, an image world would be just as 'real' as this present world....the 'stuff' or 'material' of such a world would come in the end from one's memories, and the 'form' of it from one's desires.[91]

Price suggests that there may be experiences of body-images and impressions at the center of this image-world field, just as there are in our present experiences, so we may even continue to feel that we are embodied. Price predicts that the laws of this post-mortem world will be those of psychology and not of physics. As happens in some of our dreams, we may find that the mere desire to go somewhere or experience something is followed by impressions of that place or experience. Such alterations in experience need not dilute the feeling of the reality of the image-world, although they might help demonstrate to skeptics that they had indeed come to experience life after death in the "next world."

From the outset, in formulating his theory, Price is careful to anticipate and refute several objections of the positivists (he mentions Flew in particular).

(i) Against the argument that it could not be spatial nor located in space, and thus would not be a real world, Price explains that the space of mental images need not be related to the space of physics:

> Mental images...are in a space of their own....In the space of the physical world, these images are nowhere at all, but in relation to other images of mine, each of them is somewhere....There is no a priori reason why all [apparently] extended entities must be in physical space.[92]

Price points out that even in this world, all we really experience are impressions of experiences, and a world of sense-impressions would feel no less real than a world in which "external objects" caused the impressions. So these objections are overruled.

(ii) Against the argument that the surviving minds would not be biologically alive, nor would they be persons, Price responds that the objection is unimportant. If life is defined arbitrarily in terms of biochemical processes, then the objection might be trivially true. But what is important here is rather that the conscious experiences of each individual continue, and surely Price's model preserves this centrally important feature. Shaffer supports Price's view with the contention that

> What is important here is felt continuity [emphasis ours], causal and psychological connections, and not biological continuity, which it is pointless to expect to continue.[93]

Thus, even if we do not label the residents of Price's next world persons, the continuity and personality desired in an afterlife would obtain.

(iii) Since Price has postulated that his world would be mind- or will-dependent in its operations, there is also the theological objection that such a world might be "too good to be true." But the fulfilment of one's inner desires and dispositions need not be heavenly:

> These dreams would reveal with unerring accuracy the real character of our desires, including those that are repressed. ...They might well be purgatorial or even hellish dreams, rather than heavenly ones. We might discover that some of our desiring was repugnant to our better nature, and that much of it was trivial and only capable of producing a world that soon became unutterably boring.[94]

So there is a sense in which Price's "imagey world" preserves the justice of the cosmos, although dispensing with a judgment day. In any case, even if the outcomes of Price's scenario were less than just or Christian, its conceivability remains in no way diminished. And Price himself has emphasized that he is not arguing in favor of survival, but rather trying to show that the notion can be made intelligible.[95]

b) Subjectivity leads to solipsism

The more serious ramification of basing the next world on personal desires is that it must become solipsistic: every person creating for himself his own dream-like image world, with no common intersection between dream worlds. Price vacillates here, sometimes speaking as if each "survivor" creates his own dream-like universe, peopled only with images of his own consciousness. At other times, he seems to suggest that there might be many next worlds, each of whose common features are determined by the mental agreement of the participants within it.

Price cannot have his ideational cake and eat it too, however; either public intersubjectivity or creative desire must go. Hick illustrates how chaotic the resulting worls of desires might become:

> Imagine a situation involving, one would think, a minimum of conflict of desires; suppose a devoted husband and wife on holiday sitting comfortably side by side on the seashore. Still, one of them might wish for a calm sea for bathing, the other for tremendous waves for surfing; she might in the course of the afternoon wish she were in a dress shop in Paris, whereas he would be disconcerted by her sudden disappearance to fulfill that wish; he might desire that they should be entertained by a troupe of dancing girls, she be quite content that they are not, and so on.[96]

Hick has drastically understated the case. There is nothing to logically prohibit <u>millions</u> of people from simultaneously willing (desiring or imagining) themselves to be alone at the same seaside at the same instant! The only way to preserve their desire -created images would be to postulate millions of similar imagey worlds, each having its own inhabitant monopolizing his own Waikiki. But surely this is nothing but solipsism.

Following Price, Badham suggests that desire-produced images are theoretically useful, for

> we could each image the people known to us as we had known them, and thus I could communicate with my grandfather and image him as a man of eighty, while my great-great-grandfather could image him as a child of ten...[97]

But this is to conveniently ignore the problem, not to solve it. For if Badham images addressing his 80-year old grandfather at the same moment that his grandfather's grandfather addresses his ten-year old image, surely we must postulate not one, but two grandfathers, with different ages, memories, temperaments, and characters, to fulfill both sets of desired image-projections.

To consider a still more extreme case, what if millions of deceased and disembodied minds simultaneously image themselves as conversing on a date with John Lennon or Marilyn Monroe. Each of these images has a slightly different content, age, and character, depending on the image desired by the "projector." Surely the single minds of the deceased Lennon or Monroe are incapable of dealing with millions of enraptured dates at the same time, and of presenting appropriately numerous faces to each different observer at the same time. Moreover, at the same time that millions of people are imagining dating Lennon or Monroe, Lennon and Monroe must also have the right to <u>their</u> own separate image-created worlds, and they may very well be imaging quiet lonely days in their childhoods. The inconsistencies in such a construct soon become unbearable. The only way to preserve desire-dependent next worlds is to create an infinite number of solipsistic ones.

c) Public worlds of like-minded men

Price suggests that there might be a number of such desire-dependent worlds, but that they could be partially public, shared by many like-minded men:

> It might be that Nero and Marcus Aurelius do not have a world in common, but Socrates and Marcus Aurelius do....After death, everyone does have his own dream, but there is still some overlap between one person's dreams and another's...[98]

Such a characterization might even allow a "class structure",

> ...with high-brow and low-brow worlds; military worlds always in a state of war; heavenly harems always in a state of uxorious activity; unending holiday camps; perpetual conspiracies and revolutions; endless classical concerts or philosophical seminars--in short, a paradise for every taste.[99]

Whether or not the common desires of like-minded men would indeed produce such next worlds as Hick and Swedenborg predicted, it still seems that the notion of plural worlds must lead to an infinite number of solipsistic ones. For we must allow M. Aurelius and Socrates to appear in one world with their old military buddies who strongly remember them and expect them in their common world, at the same time as they must appear in another world with their philosophical colleagues who expect them at the Stoa or the Forum. The worlds of my grandparents' farm, of my revolutionary Quebecois college friends, and of my Buddhist studies in Japan, contain entirely different and incompatible world-views, languages, desires, and expectations, of which the only common element is me! Either each world is capable of generating my image, simultaneously, which plays havoc with identity and splits my character inconceivably, or the images desired by some of my friends are frustrated, and I do not appear in their worlds. They may be allowed to remember me, but never to vividly project or "image" me.

These examples should make it obvious that if desires are allowed to create their own "next worlds" based on previous memories and dispositions, they will create as many worlds as there are people, each one purely solipsistic. Indeed, there is no totally convincing argument against that logical possibility, nor need a solipsistic world seem any less real than this one. In a very real sense, we are already unutterably separated from every other person on this earth here and now. No one can know or share our inner experiences; there is a gulf between the closest of friends. On this analysis,

it might be argued, death is nothing but an extension of this separation from all but our own dispositions and consciousness. We might populate our image-worlds with people from different cultures, climates, ages, and walks of life, as we pleased. Simultaneously, thousands of our deceased and disembodied acquaintances might be imaging their own worlds, including images of us in many ways. Such dream worlds might even coincide in the sense of picturing certain human or geographic elements in the same way at the same time. But they could not overlap. They could seem very objective, but they could not be very objective. They could seem completely interpersonal. But they could not <u>be</u> interpersonal.

There is no logical contradiction, no conceptual absurdity in the prospect of each of us continuing such a solipsistic dream life after our physical bodies decay. However, such worlds might lack some of the fulness of intellectual challenge which we find in this world where many minds really do interact. To make any moral sense, also, such interpersonal interaction is required. The religious conceptions of the after-life, as Lewis has emphasized, thus also require "a genuine world, and not just billions of solipsistic ones."[100] Moreover, the empirical fact that dying people see relatives or friends who have already died as they reach the point of death (of which more in the next Part Two) would also seem to indicate that the post-mortem world may be intersubjective and not desire-dependent. To retain this intersubjectivity in Price's "imagey next world," we must give up the idea that individual desires directly determine the nature of the after-life.

2) A Collective Next World

The alternative next world, which preserves intersubjectivity at the expense of the projective power of desires, might be based on the collective memories and expectations of the minds which perceive it. Hick outlines this Pricean prospect as follows:

> Each would contribute to the world in which they all live.... The desires which determine its character would represent a composite result produced by the cancellings out and mutual reinforcements of the multitude of individual desires, so that in perceptible content such a world might be analogous to a 'generic picture' formed by the superimposition of a great number of individual photographs. Along these lines, one could suppose a single post-mortem world, formed by the memories and desires of all the human beings who have died since man began, this world developing gradually as new sets of memories are contributed to the common stock and changing if and as the prevailing pattern of human desires changes.[101]

Prima facie, this all sounds simple enough. Yet how is it that minds collectively set up a "common projection." We know what it is like to image a scene in one of our own dreams, with the locus of perspective still seeming to stem from our bodies in the dream. Yet we have great trouble in conveying our dreams or visions to others, even with the aids of language and sketches. Lacking vocal organs, hands, and pencils, the only way two or more disembodied minds might conceivably communicate or share anything at all would be through telepathy. If a next world were common at all, it could only be common in the sense of being telepathically understood and "imaged" by all minds simultaneously. There would be no space, but only the projected image of space in the perceiving minds. As we try to flush out just how this common telepathic world might function, the picture becomes increasingly complex and philosophically problematic.

a) A Leibnizian model

Let us recall for a moment that we are speaking of disembodied minds. They have no bodies, although each may seem to himself to have a bodily perspective, limbs, sensations, etc. But they are not "in" this world, nor do they have any perspective of it. For all practical purposes, we might depict each disembodied mind as a little monad, with no interaction, each watching (sensing) his experiences on his own mental screen, his disembodied consciousness.

In this case, if we say that two disembodied minds share a common world, this is not to say that two objects floated into a common chunk of space, but rather that two monads happen to be imaging the same things, having similar experiences. To predict that there might be a common world, or "generic picture" as Hick calls it, is actually to say that certain over-arching laws govern the ways that monads experience anything. Such laws would dictate, for example, that any monad having images of walking down Unter den Linden will follow by having images of the Brandenburg gate. But such coordination of background experiences need not require that any monad be aware that any other monad is having a similar set of experiences. There must also be over-arching rules which prevent monads from imaging other people on Unter den Linden who are not themselves also imaging the same place (for if free projection of people is allowed, then the whole system collapses into solipsism, as observed above). But if monads are not allowed to image other people freely, how indeed is communication between monads possible?

The only possibility for communication seems to be through direct, mind-to-mind telepathy, as H.D. Lewis has argued.[102] Telepathy, however, is a rare phenomenon in modern societies (at least if we deny that all verbal communication is fundamentally telepathic). There seems no good a priori reason to expect that telepathy should increase at the moment of death, and if it does not (and we cannot image people "at will" to converse with them), then it seems that the next world may be a solitary place indeed, lacking perceptions of people at all, as Penelhum has feared.[103]

Price is more optimistic. He suggests that our telepathic powers are presently obscured and inhibited by our physical environments, and once these environments (including our bodies) is shed,

> ...once the pressure of biological needs is removed, we might expect that telepathy would occur continuously, and manifest itself in consciousness by modifying and adding to the images which one experiences.[104]

But Flew still objects: if all we have is a stream of experiences, how oculd we possibly know which ones were self-projected, which ones "common," and which "telepathic?"[105] This need not seem so problematic. To the extent that we can change our thoughts or images at will, we may believe that they are self-projected. If certain images seem stable and impervious to our personal attempts to alter them, we might conclude that these are "common," perhaps fixed by some law of psychology, disembodied Nature, or even God. If friendly or hostile thoughts, voices, or images intrude suddenly and unexpectedly upon our experience, we may quickly conclude that they are telepathic. Specific examples will illustrate this claim.

I may image myself walking along Waikiki beach. I "feel" my feet in the sand, "smell" the ocean, "hear" the waves. I may find that by simply willing it, I can become more or less aware of certain sensations, and that I may change the speed or direction of the sensations, just as I could when I was still embodied. I may or may not realize that I am a disembodied soul having perceptual experiences. I may find, however, that I cannot alter the outline of Diamond Head or the sandy feelings under my perceived feet, simply by willing them to be different, and hence I conclude that they are "fixed" by nature--or even that they have some substrate that underlies their phenomenal appearances, "I know not what." Then, I may suddenly get the feeling, or hear a voice, or see the figure of Dr. Suzuki, who says that he wants to talk to me. I have good reason to believe that these experiences, if apparently coming from him and open to my acceptance but not my control, are telepathic. Depending on the nature of this next world, I may image myself flying to Kamakura to visit him; or we may carry on a conversation apparently "long distance" without imaging each other's bodies at all; or we may find that simply wishing to be together places us both together in Kamakura or Waikiki or another appropriately imaged "common ground." Such "feelings," "voices," or sudden appearances might be considered telepathic, and careful parapsychologists in the next world might determine that non-conflicting images were prerequisited for telepathic interaction. Of course, in none of the above discussion is there any question that Dr. Suzuki or I are <u>really</u> in Waikiki or Kamakura. There are only two disembodied

consciousnesses, having experiences which to a certain extent are intersubjective (or at least coincide), governed again by the overarching laws of God or of the next world. The point is that even monads might have their own real-seeming experiences. Hopefully the conception detailed above is intelligible enough. The scenes seem roughly similar to ones we already know, and the monadology, although unpalatable to some, is not a contradiction in terms.

A further problem is still waiting in the wings. We have imagined that each little disembodied mind may image itself haunting the Unter den Linden, or Waikiki, or wherever it pleases. We have suggested that the "laws" of nature in the next world must preclude our imaging others to be in Berlin or Honolulu when they do not image themselves to be there (to avoid blatant solipsisms). Now the question comes: "If a dozen monads are all imaging themselves to be strolling down Waikiki, must they all be aware that others are having similar images?" Our intuitive reaction is to say, "No, on the contrary, unless two or more disembodied monads were psychically 'close' and desired such interaction, there need be no knowledge of the others' experiences whatsoever." For the experiences of walking through Waikiki are now private monadic projections, like dreams or pains in the present world, and lacking behavioral winces or REM's to indicate to one disembodied monad what another is imaging. So initially we might incline to predict that many monads could have images of their bodies in the same "place" at the same time, without being aware that others were also having experiences of being in that same place.

However, this line of reasoning brings us right back to solipsism, which we have tried to avoid. In short, as long as the experiencers are "monadic" disembodied minds, and as long as their interactions (and similarities of images) are optional and telepathic in nature, then again, each one is an experience-projecting self, largely unconscious that his experiences are not essentially public. No matter how similar the images of two friendly minds, they never really share the same places, but their images on their separate perceptual "screens" simply happen to coincide to a greater or lesser degree. Again, such a monadic solipsism is neither unintelligible nor self-contradictory, but it violates many theological and philosophical preferences.

b) A Berkeleyan model

Another alternative, however, might be to suggest that this Leibnizian model is mistaken, and that in the next world, consciousnesses actually "project" their para-physical bodies into a three-dimensional-seeming world which is truly intersubjective, and into which all other surviving disembodied consciousnesses project themselves. Of course, most embodied minds lack the power to perceptually experience the projections of their own and other minds' images, although examples of this may be found in the literature of yoga. It is odd that this skill should suddenly proliferate after death. (It might also be argued that such a projection world were no longer a world of <u>disembodied</u> minds, in the strict sense.)

If we insist on a totally unified and intersubjective next world, then this is the Berkeleyan world-picture to which we are

inexorably led. To achieve such intersubjectivity, we must relinquish the last fanciful claims to dreamlike imagery and automatic wish-fulfilment, accepting only those laws of natural behavior which might be acceptable to all in producing a coherent single world. However, such an objective-idealist (image-projected) common universe then begins to suffer from other problems found in the material resurrection world: overpopulation and historic chaos. For if all people project their intersubjectively identifiable image bodies onto the same common image-world, there will soon be no room for the multitude of images. And we must demand that the minds in the next world advance in precisely the ways that the material world is advancing, or else there would be tremendous confusion between those dead a day and those dead a millenium, each trying to relate to the same geographical location which is intersubjectively perceivable, but unlike the same place that they knew "back on earth."

So it seems that we are caught on the horns of a dilemma: We may predict a Leibnizian next world, in which each disembodied mind has its own time-space of experiences, and communication is possible through telepathy--with the consequent dangers of solipsism. Or we may opt for a Berkeleyan next world, in which the nature of the next world demands that all projected images be intersubjective --and face the consequent theoretical problems of overcrowding and historical confusion. Neither approach is logically impossible--nor is either completely philosophically appealing. The Berkeleyan approach has the advantage of objectively embodying its minds per-

ceptually, but then by the same token subjecting that world to some of the same problems encountered by the materialist resurrection theories studied earlier.

Yet another issue looms on the horizon here. Price, favoring the Berkeleyan approach, asks

> Could it be that the idealist metaphysicians have given us a substantially correct picture of the next world, though a mistaken picture of this one?[106]

But why should we make this distinction? In Hick's words:

> But given a berkeleian [sic; or Leibnizian] account of a post-mortem world (or worlds) we must go on to ask why this should not also apply to our present world; or alternatively, why a non-berkeleian account should not apply to the next world as well as to this....Why should this world differ from any other worlds in fundamental character?[107]

Although initially counter-intuitive, both Berkeleyan and Leibnizian accounts of reality can be very well squared with present existence as we experience it. If either of Price's pictures were held to be true about the next world, we should also reconsider whether it should not hold for this world as well. Surely Ockham's razor, (often used in favor of naive realism against Berkeley) as well as the philosophical desire for uniformity and consistency in explanation, should now militate for interpreting this-worldly experience along the same model as we adopt for the next world, if possible. Christian theology would also demand that subsequent worlds be essentially similar to this one in their ontology and purpose.[108] In fact, millions of Vedantins and Christian Scientists do believe that both this world and the next are merely the objectifications of human thought, lacking underlying material reality.

We are left with a choice again, neither of whose options are logically impossible, both of which are philosophically distasteful, if we adopt an idealistic account of the next world to make sense of it. We may postulate that the two worlds--this world and the next--although similar in experienced "feel," are drastically disparate in ontological composition, for no clear reason. Or we may attempt to draw a more consistent picture of this world and the next, by defending the applicability of idealist theories to <u>both</u> worlds.

C) "Mental Remnants" Theories

If we wish to make sense of the concept of a disembodied mind, and at the same time avoid the philosophical dilemmas inherent in a Pricean idealistic next world, only a much more modest theory will suffice. That is, the majority of the problems encountered above concern the nature of the perceptions or images which a disembodied mind might experience, and the possibilities of communication with other minds. However, it is possible to develop a theory of disembodied survival which retains some conscious or dispositional continuities, without requiring that the surviving mind have genuinely "new" or "objective-seeming" experiences.

1) Formulations

Although less romantically attractive than Price's imagey world, a whole range of disembodied mental operations can be imagined. Ducasse catalogues them as follows: (a) a comatose unconscious mind, only accessible upon unusual (divine or mediumistic) stimuli; (b) a mind capable only of idle reverie without critical control; (c) pure memory and conscious mental review of one's previous life; (d) creative thought independent of stimuli, as in mathematics and philosophy.[109] Any of these "types" of disembodied mental activities would presumably carry with them dispositional characteristics of the pre-mortem person. Different minds might have different levels of post-mortem consciousness, and some disembodied minds might realize several of these functions together, Ducasse proposes.

Peter Geach is aware of the alternatives of less than full-fledged projected survival. Although he later comes to reject this idea, his reasoning and precedents are clear enough:

> If we can conclude that the ascription of sensations and feelings to a disembodied spirit does not make sense, it does not obviously follow, as you might think, that we must deny the possibility of disembodied spirits altogether. Aquinas, for example, was convinced that there are disembodied spirits but ones that cannot see or hear or feel pain or fear or anger; he allowed them no mental operations except those of thought and will....a surviving mental remnant of a person....[110]

Paul Helm also believes that such a theory will provide the link required to make sense of the theory of resurrection, viz., an entity which could "carry" the identity and continuity of a person from one embodiment to another. Helm calls the surviving entity, with memory and disposition but no movement, sensation, nor agency, a "minimal person."[111]

C.D. Broad proposed that a "psi-component" (from Greek psyche) might persist after death like a "vortex in the ether...a field, generated by a previously living brain." This psi-component may have several degrees of experiences, as in Ducasse's classification, but "probably lacks full-blown personal experiences," and may at some point disintegrate and cease to exist. The postulation of psi-components makes somewhat more sense of certain parapsychological phenomena, while avoiding some of the philosophical difficulties of more permanent and full-fledged models of survival.[112] The nature and possibility of such "minimal personhood," or "psi-component" survival, however, has not escaped serious philosophical criticism.

2) Problems of Personal Identity

a) Disembodied souls not persons

Positivist critics of disembodied minds have challenged that we could ever identify disembodied souls with previous living persons. Behind this challenge may rest either of two rather different assumptions. In the simpler case, the objection may mean that disembodied souls are not the same as previously living persons, or that we should not apply person-words to mere "minimal persons" or "psi-components." Flew contends, for example, that "people are what you meet," and bodiless parcels of memory, even if conceivable, could not be a person.[113] Geach echoes the sentiment and adds that such an entity could have no new, "physical-seeming" experiences.[114]

But even the proponents of the "minimal person" theory have no such grand illusions. If the surviving entity is less than a "full-blown" person, we may simply have to rest content with what exists.[115] Broad, for example, admits that we might not call his disembodied psi-components "persons", but correctly points out that this "counter-argument" in no way diminishes the possibility that psi-components might survive the death of persons.[116] Shaffer has argued that what is important here is "felt continuity," or a psychological continuance of mental experiences, however shallow.[117] Some minds might be surprised, disappointed, or annoyed to find themselves persisting with limited powers and memories alone after death, but such mental continuity is made no less probable by such annoyance. Whether we can label the surviving mental entities "persons" or not is irrelevant to whether mind survives bodily death.

On the other hand, the objection of personal identification might also be interpreted to mean that if souls or minds were disembodied, sharing neither physical nor psychic elements with any other such entity, then there could be no publicly objective standards by which they might be identified.[118] Here too, it might seem that even if there were no public devices for determining the existence or identity of disembodied minds, and even if the disembodied mind could not prove its existence to others, at least it could know that it was thinking or remembering. But on what would such coherence depend? How might one set of memories from one person be distinguishable from another's? Flew cogently crystallizes the issue:

> The crux is to discover, or to develop, a viable concept of an incorporeal person; and that requires that we provide an account of the principles of identity and individuation which would apply to such incorporeal persons.[119]

Moreover, our normal spatio-temporal and bodily criteria of identity are clearly inapplicable to a disembodied entity not localized in space. We are not even allowed to suppose that the disembodied soul might have experiences in which a body-image or sensations formed the apparent center of its world. What is the source and criterion then, of the mental remnants' identity?

The response of the proponents of the "minimal persons" theory is that such individual identity may rest on memory and dispositional characteristics persisting intact. Quinton emphasizes that this surviving subject of conscious experience need not require either spiritual or material substance to still be real, for its essential characteristic is consciousness itself.[120] Rey divides the psychic

component of identity into the three aspects of personality and character, beliefs, and memory.[121] If we return to Ducasse's classification, it seems that at least memory and creative mental capacities might retain their individuality and distinctness, if retained after death.[122] Purtill points out that even in courts of law, possession of requisite memories and skills may be considered important evidence for identifying a claimant with an heir, or a suspect with a criminal.[123] So it appears that dispositions and memory might provide Flew with his desired "principles of identity and individuation."

b) The criterion of memory

The attempt to base human identity upon memory dates back to the writings of John Locke, and objections to the memory criterion were not long in forthcoming. Reid was quick to attack Locke's assertion that we have a self-certifying reflective awareness of our own thinking.[124] Butler felt that memory presupposed the identity of a subject or substance logically prior to it, and therefore should not be made a criterion of identity by itself.[125] In short, traditional arguments have challenged that memory is unusable as a criterion because it presupposes the identity it seeks to maintain; it is a circular rather than self-certifying standard.

(i) In defence of the memory criterion, it may be argued that purely physical or bodily criteria of identity are equally unreliable. It is easy to conceive of my body changing totally in a decade, so as to be unrecognizable, and of another's body resembling my former appearance so much that he should be mistaken for me.[126]

But surely that would not make him me; on the contrary, it simply points out the inadequacy of bodily criteria. If it is argued that memory is unusable as a criterion of identity because it presupposes that identity, then the same observation seems possible with regard to the bodily criterion of identity: using the body or bodily similarity to prove identity presupposes that very underlying identity which the criteria hope to establish. Thus, if the arguments of circularity used against memory were really valid, they must stand equally against their most favored alternative, the physical standard.[127]

Now it has been proposed that memory claims are uncheckable, except with reference to other memory claims, which seems to make any verification of memory at all circular in a way which physical evidence is not.[128] Closer thought reveals that all tests and criteria whatsoever must rely at some point upon memory. Even a test which purports to compare one person's memory with recorded evidence such as a newspaper or videotape still rests on other memories: the reporters' memories of the story as they wrote it, or the cameramen's memories of how the videotape was made and the archivists' memories that it had not been "doctored". In sum, reliance upon memory at some point is inescapable, and yet we do not assume that other methods which rely upon it (such as newspaper reports or courtroom testimony) are thereby invalidated. While we may admit that some memories are less clear and precise than others, the accuracy of those memories which are clear and precise is given by introspection in a way which does not require

and is not materially improved upon by other public criteria.[129] So the use of memory seems acceptable partly because of its self-certifying aspect, and partly because we have no choice but to rely on it in any case. This "vindication of memory," however, is too hasty, for simply showing that other criteria are equally inferior, and that we often have no choice but to use a given method, does not demonstrate that that method is in fact reliable, but rather that all of our "tests" for identity are open to challenge.

(ii) The inadequacies of memories in conditions of amnesia are notorious. Even in the course of normal human experience, some persons truly forget who they are or what they are doing. Assuming that disembodied minds were no less liable to such mental slips, what becomes of the identity of a disembodied mind which forgets its true memories and identity? There are no public standards for identifying X' as the same mind as last year's X. And if X' cannot remember being last year's X either, it seems that the very identity of X and X' is called into question.

Thomas Reid has illustrated the difficulties inherent here in his famous "Brave Office Paradox."[130] We are told to imagine that a boy is flogged at school for stealing from an orchard; that later as an officer he takes a flag from the enemy in his first campaign, and that ultimately he is promoted to the rank of general in his old age. Then we are told to imagine that the officer remembered being flogged as a boy, and the general remembered taking the flag but not the flogging. Now by the memory criterion of identity, we are left with the paradoxical conclusion that the general is both

the same and not the same as the boy. The general is not the same insofar as he cannot remember being such a boy, and yet he is the same by the law of transitivity, since he can remember being the officer, who in turn could remember being the boy. The case might be further complicated if we note that old people sometimes have very clear memories of their early lives but forget their intervening years.[131] Problems of the sorts proposed here are troublesome enough in the contexts of human society, where they can generally be remedied by reference to the memories of others, to physical bodies, to documents, or to other public criteria. In the case of purely disembodied mental existence, however, it would seem that not only is the mind's identity not establishable by public criteria, but its identity with an earlier stage is actually lost when that memory is lost, and its identity is (falsely) reconstructed if a false memory is vividly recollected as true.

Quinton and Grice have constructed improved versions of Locke's memory theory of identity which enable a resolution of the "brave officer paradox" based on extensive use of transitivity and reflexivity among "soul-phases," or time-slices in which a given mind can remember a given activity. Thus, any mind which can remember another mind which formerly remembered an activity A, or any minds which both remember the same experience A although not remembering each other, may still be identified with each other, by more complicated logical connectives.[132] Thus, the memory criterion is superficially preserved, although it has grown less straightforward and convenient.

(iii) False memory, or paramnesia, forms yet a greater challenge to the validity of the memory criterion of identity. Even in the course of normal human experience, some people have vivid memories of having done something which they never really did.[133] If a disembodied mind falsely remembered crossing the Rubicon, what possible way could there be of distinguishing it from Caesar's mind, either for itself, or from the outside? Some people remember parts of some of their dreams better than they remember minor events in their waking lives. If their entire existence is composed only of mental activity, there is no way of distinguishing fact from imagination--and worse yet, the mind must be identified in terms of what it imagines and remembers having imagined, no matter how remote from his pre-mortem bodily existence.

In the face of such difficulties, the advocate of disembodied minds has no choice but to relinquish all claims to strict identity. Instead, he must hold that what is important to mind's identity is its psychic continuity. For even in the case of human bodies, the identity of which we speak is not a strict identity defying time, but rather an observable continuity of body-phases through time. So too, in the case of minds, as long as there is a continuous thinking or remembering, then the mind is surviving, and problems of identity are comparatively insignificant. Inability to recollect prior events clearly, or mistaken memory of things never experienced might be frustrating and confusing to a third party trying to identify a disembodied mind--just as a badly-scarred accident victim or a man returning to a twentieth anniversary class reunion might not

be recognized by old friends. But neither case would create the slightest doubt in the mind of the subject himself as to his own conscious mental continuity--and it is that continuity with which we are most concerned in the issue of disembodied survival.

c) Commissurotomy problems

Experiments on the mental processes of commissurotomy patients have had startling philosophical repurcussions for personal identity. Commissurotomy is the surgical severance of the right and left frontal lobes of the brain, used in cases of severe brain illnesses.[134] Careful experimentation has found that after commissurotomy, patients can see, feel, and remember different scenes or objects at the same time with each half of their bodies and brains.[135] The unity of external experience is normally sufficient to enable the subject to retain a unified consciousness. But when stimuli are restricted so that completely different stimuli affect each hemisphere, and the person is asked which stimuli he just perceived, his hands may vie with each other to write different answers, or his verbal response may depend on which ear hears the question. Such evidence seems to indicate that there might quite literally be two minds in a commissurotomy patient. Moreover, it raises the question as to whether there are already two minds in every brain, or whether two minds are created out of one at the moment that certain neural connections in the brain are severed![136] In either case, there emerges the possibility that, upon the death of the brain and its neural interconnections, not one but two disembodied minds might emerge! Presumably the prior unity of pre-mortem

experience would limit the range of their memories and dispositions, but nothing need guarantee that the disembodied consciousnesses remember the same events at the same moments, much less that there be any continuing interrelationship between them. But then how are we to know which of the two minds is the "true" survivor? Or may we imagine that consciousness may subdivide like amoebas at death?[137]

The proper interpretation of such commissurotomy research is widely debated in recent philosophical as well as medical circles. Commissurotomy research has seriously challenged Eccles' belief that the minor (usually right) hemisphere is totally devoid of self-consciousness.[138] There is still a serious question as to whether the right hemisphere has but "an inferior sort of consciousness" in man, or is actually equally self-conscious and an appropriate basis for an entire second person.[139] Those who hold that there are essentially two minds already in each body are often labeled Wiganites, after the philosopher A.L. Wigan who first proposed the possibility.[140] They are opposed by neurophysiologists such as Sperry and Eccles. Sperry does not deny that there seems to be a conflict between the experience, memory, and volition of separate hemispheres stimulated by disparate sources. His argument is rather that the term <u>mind</u> refers to an entity above and beyond (or "behind") specific sensations and responses. When the patient is asked a question, and each of the patient's hands tries to write different answers based on the different memories in each brain lobe, there is still a mind, "watching" this process in its own body--baffled or bewildered, perhaps, but still one, Sperry contends.[141]

This not only seems a more intuitively palatable response, but it is the only tack left open to a survivalist who expects or desires a single mind to continue after the death of a person. Even in the case of commissurotomy patients, then, we may hope that the unity of previous experience will enable a unified memory-set to be the property of a single mind after death, and argue that this single mind is continuous with that mind which is already the subject of all personal experience. Still, this is at best a hope, and not a universally accepted conclusion.

Problems of the unreliability of memory, of forgetting and false memory, or of the twinning found in commissurotomy, are not inescapable. They certainly cannot be used to deny the possibility of disembodied consciousness altogether. But they seem to place severe strains on the theory; for the disembodied-mind adherent must postulate many things about this mind simply to keep it within the realm of theoretical consistency, even though far less than this is actually known through the present state of medical research.

3) Problems of Dormancy

a) Formulation of the problem

It has been our experience throughout our lives that our minds need rest, both for lengthy periods almost every night, and for brief intervals of a few seconds every hour when we are literally unconscious of any thoughts or stimuli, and our minds are simply resting. The longer one goes without rest, or performs monotonous operations, the longer and more frequently such waking "black-outs"

interfere with continuous consciousness, as many a long-distance motorist will confirm. In embodied life, however, the body provides a constant substrate--a basis from which we can resume our interactions with the rest of the world after periods of mental dormancy, without question of identification. The very being of the disembodied mind, however, lacking any kind of body whatever, consists in its thinking and memory activities. It follows that if the disembodied mind temporarily stops its mental activity, it must simply cease to exist, and it has no wherewithal either to retain its identity or resume its activity again ex nihilo.

There are gaps in our conscious mental processes occurring all the time, for greater or lesser durations, "bridged" by our subconscious and brain-stem activities on a physiological level. If post-mortem consciousness is anything like pre-mortem consciousness, we must expect to get similarly tired, even from thinking about things, and then predict gaps or dormant periods in our consciousnesses. But gaps between conscious processes would negate the continuity and identity of the consciousness as surely as the gap between bodies destroys the personal identity of the resurrected replica-bodies in the previous section. It is for this reason that philosophers like Quinn reject the notion of disembodied mental survival.[142] Flew's conclusions are worth quoting:

> The moral for us is that, if people are incorporeal, and unless they are incorporeal substances endowed with some defining characteristics other than consciousness, then they must, if ever they are neither awake nor dreaming, simply go out of existence.[143]

Gotesky has also elaborated on this point, demonstrating that it is equally fatal to any "substance" if its sole defining characteristic is thought--even if that thought were as elaborate as the semi-objective next world conceived by Price.[144] If the foregoing logic is valid, then, the objection that even temporary dormancy spells extinction to the disembodied soul is threatening to a mind in a Pricean imagey world, and totally destructive of more modest theories of mental remnants or psi-components possessing only dispositions and memories.

b) The alternatives

To this objection, there appear only three possible responses: (i) to accept extinction after a time; (ii) to postulate continuing thinking without rest; (iii) to propose some sort of "substrate" to preserve identity through dormant periods. Let us consider each alternative in turn.

(i) It might be argued that even temporary survival of death is not meaningless. As Dommeyer has put it, "finite discarnate survival is no more intrinsically worthless than this present life."[145] To be sure, it is a premise of this study that we cannot with surety discuss immortality, and so our scope has deliberately been restricted to discussion of survival, no matter how finite. So it might seem that we should rest content with whatever short term of temporary survival might be available to a disembodied mind. Yet we must ask, "just how temporary is this finite discarnate survival to be?" If it is true that every hour, our minds take brief rests, in which they ignore all thoughts and stimuli for a few seconds at a time,

then post-mortem survival might consist of only another half an hour! Even the greatest of thinkers could not be expected to continue a train of thought without rest for more than a few days. Surely so short a mental continuity would be of trivial significance compared to a bodily life thousands or millions of times that length. If it were found that disembodied minds continued to remember or think briefly after the death of body and brain, it would indeed be an interesting phenomenon, refuting the mind-body identity theory, and with possible implications for the treatment of the dying. But such a survival would have precious little importance to anyone hoping for a meaningful continuing existence, even on a minimal mental level. Furthermore, what shall we say of those who pass from comatose states directly to death? Surely we should not expect their long-dormant minds to be suddenly but temporarily revived as their last vestiges of cerebral activity cease. Rather, if duration of consciousness is the measure of life, then we must adjudge many coma patients to have died long before their bodies cease to function. To accept the consequences of extinction after a short time is thus to admit the force of the objection. Mental survival for an hour after death would be a curiosity, but of little existential import or philosophical importance for survival.

(ii) Alternatively, it might be suggested that consciousness continues its activities unceasingly after the death of the body, and that mental processes can continue in restful as well as in active states. The former clause seems unlikely on the basis of pre-mortem

activity, as mentioned above. Even if it were found to be possible to prolong one's mental activity indefinitely, still a great majority of thinking consciousnesses might at some point desire rest, and not realizing the fatal consequences, cease activity and existence simultaneously. But perhaps, as the second clause implies, there might be some sort of sleeping state, even without a body. Maybe the consciousness might idle along in "low gear," with the possibility of being recalled to activity by outside stimuli or by its own volition, preserving only a subconscious level of activity in a resting state. Broad, proponent of the psi-component theory, expects that such a semi-dormant state may occupy much of post-mortem existence.[146]

Careful analysis, however, sheds doubt on this possibility. Either a consciousness is conscious, or it is not. We may include in consciousness various half-alert or daydreamy states, but not temporary oblivion. If all that survives is conscious activity, and that activity must ever rest, and the activity ceases, then consciousness is no more.

(iii) If it is held that a mind can exist apart from its activities, as well as apart from a physical body, we must infer that there is still present the notion of some kind of substance or substrate, a mind underlying the activities but not exhaustively defined by them (recall Eccles' and Sperry's views on commissurotomy research). However, this is conceding that such a mind is not totally disembodied. It is saying that there is something which continues and guarantees the mind's continuity (=the mind!) above and beyond the

conscious processes alone. Of course, such an "embodiment" would not be material in any way that we now believe matter to exist. It certainly need not resemble any visible human body. If we propose a "soul stuff" to act as a substrate for disembodied minds, to preserve their continuities when they are temporarily inactive, then we must also admit that there is a sense in which the mind still has a substrate or body, albeit a different one than that which we presently observe.

c) Conclusion

This, then, is the conclusion to which the logic of the above chapter must lead: any view of pure consciousness surviving apart from the body must either anticipate its speedy annihilation and trivialization at the first moment's rest, or else we must predicate its continuity on some other substrate or entity not defined in terms of the thinking process of the individual. In short, if the mind is to significantly survive, it must be some thing, some subject, not limited to pure activity alone. It may be something of purely idealistic nature, as in the Leibnizian and Berkeleyan conceptions of the afterlife we considered above, but if so, then we must grant a certain existence to ideas and minds apart from the conscious processes alone, or the idealistic conception also falls prey to the "dormancy" argument. Alternatively, mind may have have invisible, quasi-material substrates, inadequately studied by science as yet, which guarantee continuity and identity. These are the only options which make good sense of survival.

CHAPTER III: SURVIVAL OF DISCARNATE BODIES

A) Definitions and Context

We have observed that materialist reincarnation theories fail because they lack a "carrier" of identity between the original body and the resurrected one. And disembodied mind as pure process--even if imaginable--is faced with extinction if that process ever rests for a moment. If identity and mind are to be preserved, it seems that we must postulate some real but invisible "carrier" or substrate for them, which is capable of existing apart from the material body with which it is normally associated. Such entities have long been mentioned in the literature of religions, mystics, and the occult, but have only recently found their way into philosophical discussions. Since any bearer of consciousness which continues after the death of the organism is invisible, the bodies postulated to do so have been called "diaphanous," "ethereal," "subtle," or "immaterial," but each of these adjectives seems to presuppose something about the nature of the body involved. In ancient times, such bodies were held to be associated with the stars, whence the name "astral" body also found its way into the mystic literature. Hereafter in our discussion, we shall use the term "discarnate body" to refer to such entities, as it seems to have the fewest connotations about the nature of the body, except that it is not composed of normal human flesh. However, occasional references to

"astral" or "subtle" bodies should be understood as referring to the same things. This chapter is not defending the notion that discarnate bodies definitely exist. Rather, like the previous chapters, it is designed to examine the philosophical difficulties and implications of such a concept, if it were taken to be a desirable one.

Even the most vehement critics of psychic survival are strangely silent about the possibility of discarnate bodies. Peter Strawson has admitted that discarnate mental existence is easy to imagine.[147] Terence Penelhum concedes that discarnate bodies would avoid the numerous difficulties which he had previously raised about discarnate existence.[148] J.M.O. Wheatley,[149] agreeing with Penelhum that bodies _of some sort_ are necessary for survival, suggests that Penelhum's own arguments should lead us to ask rather "With what kind of discarnate body might we survive?" But ultimately, Penelhum brushes discarnate bodies off as "tasteless fantasies," and J.J.C. Smart has only a few sarcastic remarks about the existence of "ghost stuff."[150]

Antony Flew, who had earlier expressed so many criticisms of disembodied survival, has written recently that discarnate bodies should be "viewed with new respect," contending that the only remaining difficulty is to adequately characterize such bodies without collapsing them into utter incorporeality.[151] Peter Geach concludes that "subtle bodies could not be challenged by philosophical reasons, only by empirical ones," but then he rejects the concept because we do not detect subtle bodies in

laboratory experiments.[152] Douglas Long, however, attacks this peremptory rejection of discarnate bodies, observing that we should not deny the possibilities of yet-undetected states of being.[153] These seem to be the major critical references in the contemporary philosophical debates on survival. In short, the arguments reduce to (1) the feeling that discarnate bodies are fantasies unworthy of scholarly attention; (2) the difficulty of characterizing such bodies; and (3) the lack of empirical evidence for discarnate bodies. Let us carefully consider each of these issues in turn.

B) Objections and Discussion

1) Discarnate Bodies Do Not Merit Philosophical Discussion

This argument, like those which follow it, embodies a peculiarly positivist assumption that it is the duty of philosophers to confine themselves to the discussion of concepts which have explicit empirical references and clear definitions. Such views not only deny that invisible entities such as Platonic forms might be real or conceivable, but even denies that Plato was doing philosophy when he was propounding his doctrine of the Forms. Surely this is carrying one's parochial preferences too far. Whether or not we agree with the conclusions of Plato or Aquinas, we must certainly concede them to be among the finest philosophers of their days, if not of all time. In fact, if the objection were pressed to its logical outcome, we should be forced to conclude that the entire topic of survival itself does not merit philosophical discussion, because it is considering a subject which is

largely unknown and not clearly defined. Yet the volume of recent literature on the subject attests to the fact that it is an issue both of philosophical importance and contemporary concern. To document the philosophical heritage of the discarnate body, it may be in order to briefly review both the Platonic and Christian approaches to survival.

a) Plato's response

Plato is commonly characterized as a dualist, envisioning reality as consisting of distinct realms of matter and ideas. We should remember, however, that for Plato, forms, ideas, and matter are all part of one ontological continuum, and forms are no less real for their being supersensible to material bodies. Plato's "soul," the invisible charioteer governing the passions of the body, is emprisoned in the body during material life, and freed at death. Although invisible, the soul is seen as a real substance, the locus of thought, decisions, and self-consciousness (cf. Phaedo, third proof of the soul). In all of Plato's accounts, there is the idea that the soul will be judged after death (Phaedo, 107; Phaedrus, 249; Republic, 614f.). The wickedest of souls will be hurled from Tartarus (Phaedo 113) or subject to horrible quasi-physical tortures (Republic 614). Souls which are very attached to material pleasures will haunt graveyards (Phaedo 80-81), fail to keep the company of the Gods (Phaedrus 247), or be sent to purgatorial nether realms (Republic, ibid.,) until they are re-incarnated in human or animal forms of their own choosing, appropriate to their characters and desires (Phaedrus, 248; Republic, 620). It is the

philosopher's soul, above all, that is at last rewarded with a vision of the spheres (Republic, 617) of beautiful beings (Phaedrus, 249), and of heavens (Phaedo, 110).

Plato's view is thus that the soul is temporarily incarcerated in a body from which it is ultimately independent; it can free itself by philosophical discipline or become further fettered by indulgence of materialistic lusts. But even in its "disembodied" state, the soul is not merely a process of consciousness or memory, but is rather a permanent substance with a spatio-temporal location, from which it continues to perceive, will, act, and relate to other (more or less physical, but very real) beings, forms, and ideas. It is this important fact which leads Stevenson to attack Flew's grouping of Plato together with Descartes. While Descartes held that the soul was unextended and non-spatial, Plato clearly treated the soul as a discarnate body in a spatial universe--sometimes associated with a physical body, sometimes undergoing experiences on subtler or less material planes, but always spatial.[154]

If it is not already obvious from the above discussion, Stevenson emphasizes that Plato's concept of the soul is actually that of a discarnate or astral body, rather than of total disembodiment. This theory, which probably originated in pre-Socratic thought, was elaborated and perpetuated through Plotinian and Arabic sources throughout the Middle Ages, and finds expression in modern philosophical survivalists such as Scheler and McTaggart.[155]

Although their philosophies have been out of fashion for the past half century, they certainly need not be labeled "unphilosophical" nor dismissed a priori as "tasteless fantasies," as Penelhum would have it.

b) The Judaeo-Christian response

The Platonic philosophical tradition has not been alone in espousing the reality of a discarnate body which survives physical death. The Judaeo-Christian tradition also presents strong arguments for the case of discarnate survival, even before its over-played contacts with neo-Platonic sources. R.H. Charles has developed arguments that the notion of a discarnate soul was intrinsic to pre-Christian Judaism,[156] and D.S. Russell propounds:

> Previously, in Old Testament thought, personality was wholly dependent on body for its expression; now it could be expressed...in terms of discarnate soul, which, though possessing form and recognizable appearance, could live in separation from the body which had been left behind at death. [156]

In the New Testament, both Jesus and Paul imply that the resurrected body has physical form, spatial location, and perhaps even clothing--but also that it is different from "flesh and blood," as the corruptible body must "put on incorruption." (I Cor. 15, 35ff.) This view was retained by both Gnostics and church fathers,[158] and finds explicit, official expression in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas holds that the post-mortem resurrection body will be physical in shape and appearance, providing the needed link between soul and personhood, but that it will be immaterial and incorruptible. It will be impassible

(lacking animal desires), subtle (interpenetrable), agile (with no delay between thought and action), and possess "clarity" (i.e. the whole body will radiate with a spiritual light and splendor).[159]

c) Contemporary theological responses

In the twentieth centiry, a number of theologians have argued that Jesus' resurrection body observed by his disciples must also have been such a discarnate body.[160] The reports that Jesus appeared and disappeared at will, that he penetrated closed chambers, that he was not recognized by everyone, and that he appeared to rise into heaven, all tend to indicate that Jesus' post-mortem body was not composed of the same sort of matter as our present bodies. If such discarnate bodies are attributable to all men--or to all Christians who are resurrected--then the continuity of personal identity and the conceivability of universal resurrection in bodily terms are rescued from the dilemmas faced by the more strictly materialist theories examined above. Opponents of this theory may point to Jesus' empty tomb as evidence of his material rebirth, but even if veridical this evidence is subject to many interpretations, and is secondary in importance to the "pneumatic" or "discarnate' nature of Jesus' resurrection body for many theologians.[161] The important point is not that discarnate bodily continuity has been proven, but that it is a viable theological perspective held by many Christians in modern as well as ancient times, and not merely a "fantasy" to be brushed aside without further consideration.

2) Discarnate Bodies are Difficult to Characterize Intelligibly.

In the previous section, we have just observed some qualities of "discarnate bodies" as characterized by Plato, the Bible, and Thomas Aquinas. Although such characterizations may prove to be factually inadequate at some later date, they should at least suffice to show that there are no inherent conceptual difficulties in imagining such bodies. Basic to all of the conceptions just mentioned is the common notion that discarnate bodies provide a spatio-temporal locus of self-consciousness and perceptions.[162] This body need not always be visible to normal human senses, nor need it be limited to the three-dimensional space-time continuum or the objects therein which common-sense realism presupposes. To the extent that a discarnate body does inhabit or perceive this world, it is from a consciously spatio-temporal perspective. Some philosophers have even argued that precisely because we cannot imagine scenes and perceptions without a perspectival component, a discarnate body is the most logical candidate for conscious survival.[166]

We are all familiar with the sensation of looking at and hearing our worlds through unique visual and auditory perspectives. These perspectives are normally associated with our physical bodies. In the cinema, however, we may become so engrossed in the images on the screen that we temporarily forget our physical bodies altogether. Similarly, in daydreaming (or sleep-dreaming), we may or may not be conscious of viewing the scenes we imagine from a physical body,

and yet they are nonetheless perspectivally viewed. The discarnate body theory might suggest that upon death, an invisible sheath of energy (or of some yet-unstudied form of matter) dissociates itself from the decaying material body and drifts away from it. The size, shape, and behavior of this discarnate body will be the topic of a more detailed study in a later chapter, but it could easily be imagined to linger near the corpse for a short period, continuing to see and hear the activities around the death bed. Even Martin, who tends to oppose theories of survival, admits that a discarnate body drifting above the corpse at death is "causally improbable but logically conceivable."[164]

Flew has challenged the notion that a man could witness his own funeral, first on the "antecedent improbability" of such a phenomenon, but more rigorously on the grounds that it would not be a person who watches the funeral, even if some discarnate body were able to observe it, because the person had died.[165] We must avoid arguments based on "antecedent improbabilities," however, until deathbed phenomena have been more thoroughly studied. In the absence of such data, assertions of "probabilities" reflect little more than our own assumptions and preferences in viewing the world.

The argument that a discarnate body might exist but would not be a person rests on the typically Flewian insistence that persons are equal to material bodies, and that anything other than a material body could not be identified with a person. Others, however, have vehemently challenged this view, pointing out that it is just as unjustified and premature to assume that man is a physical body

as it is to assume that he is a mind which has a physical body (which Flew explicitly rejects).[166] Neither view can be justified on linguistic or a priori grounds alone. On the contrary, there is much in traditional language use and popular culture to suggest that people might be quite content to identify themselves with their discarnate bodies, particularly if those bodies preserved and continued both their consciousnesses and perspectival perceptions of this world or another.

The notion of discarnate bodies has obvious analogies with the popular concepts of souls or spirits, which reputedly drift out of the corpse at death, but may linger to interact with this world as ghosts, or pass on to less material realms. Scholars and psychologists who have propounded theories of discarnate bodies have often sought original names for the superphysical entity which is now superimposed on our physical body, but may dissociate from it at death. H.H. Hart developed what he called the "Persona" theory, that there is an "I-thinker" or consciousness irreducible to and capable of surviving the physical body; this Persona includes the bodily form and characteristics as well as mental attitudes and ideas of the person.[167] Thouless and Weiner have proposed using the Hebrew letter shin (ש) to refer to the surviving non-physical person, while Whately Carington suggests the term "psychon."[168] The precise nature of the discarnate body cannot be adequately described without further empirical study, to which we shall refer in later chapters.

There is a sense in which any discarnate body theory is dualistic, in that it proposes the reality of both visible and invisible sorts of substances. On the other hand, since it holds that the invisible substances interact with matter or may someday be empirically studied, this is not a radical Cartesian-type dualism. Matter and mind are not seen as utterly opposite, contrary sorts of entities, but rather as different sorts of substances which may be found to exist on a single continuum.[169] Such a view finds it easier to explain psychosomatic interaction than a more Cartesian view, as psychologist Gardner Murphy relates:

> interaction generates, or gives rise to, a world of psychic after-effects, a psychic stuff, the components of which continue to be observed in individual life, and may perfectly well continue both to exist and to increase in complexity, post mortem.[170]

This psychic stuff is intimately associated with the body during life, but may occasionally be projected in out-of-body experiences. Survival of death might then consist simply in a permanent projection of this psychic "stuff" outside of the (deceased) body.

If Paul Badham is correct that the appearances of Jesus to his disciples after the crucifiction represent a visible manifestation of such a discarnate body, and that Jesus did not appear naked, then we shall also have to account for the appearance and disappearance of the robes with which his discarnate body was clad.[171] This seems easiest to explain by the hypothesis that both body and robes were projections or externalizations of a mental concept or image in Jesus' mind, which were spatially and perspectivally lo-

cated, but which did not necessarily possess bodily shape or clothing at all. But the questions of the proper interpretations of the clothing of apparitions should best be left to later chapters. The immediately important conclusion to this section is that discarnate bodies can be intelligibly characterized in a variety of ways: as spatio-temporal loci, as persistent energy-fields, as ghosts or spirit bodies, leading philosophers such as C.D. Broad to call them "the most plausible form of survival after death."[172]

3) Lack of Empirical Evidence for Discarnate Bodies

There is a wide consensus that discarnate bodies, if they exist in any of the ways we have just suggested, ought to be the sorts of entities which should be studied empirically, rather than merely speculatively. Lack of such evidence has sometimes been used as an argument or a basis for discrediting the possibility of such bodies. Such judgments are mere short-sightedness. A lack of evidence does not constitute negative evidence. The reasons some phenomena are more studied that others often have socio-economic, rather than logical and scientific, bases. Study of death and dying was socially almost tabu until the past decade; only recently have empirical attempts to investigate post-mortem phenomena been granted credence or legitimacy in the scientific community. Many special sciences, including astronomy, biology, and psychiatry, emerged out of an originally inchoate melange of philosophical speculations and scientifically unrespectable dabblings before becoming accepted. Whether thanatology will someday

leave philosophy for the sciences, or remain forever a part of psychology and philosophy of mind is yet a moot question. But it would be premature to rule out the possibility of the objective existence of discarnate bodies or fields before careful attempts have been made to study them.

In overview, then, we have observed that there are insurmountable obstacles to acceptance of the purely materialist Judaeo-Christian resurrection theory, unless it is reformulated (a la Price and Hick) into a Leibnizian or Berkeleyan type of idealistic next world. Disembodied minds, if conceived as pure process, face fatal consequences in terms of dormancy and personal identity. Discarnate bodies, although distasteful to some philosophers, seem one of the more plausible approaches to survival, if there be any at all, and they can be made compatible with some interpretations of both Platonic and Christian philosophy.

But we may well ask whether the options considered here really exhaust our philosophical alternatives: might there not be other possible sorts of survival outside of (and not considered by) the western philosophical traditions? To examine such alternatives will be the objective of the next section on Buddhist views of survival. We shall begin with the views of death and survival of the Theravada, or southern Buddhists, and then turn also to the approaches of the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions most concerned with death and the hereafter: Chinese Pure Land Buddhism, and the Tibetan Buddhism of the Book of the Dead.

PART II: BUDDHIST VIEWS OF SURVIVAL

CHAPTER I: EARLY BUDDHIST VIEWS OF AFTER-LIFE

A) Rebirth in Early Buddhism

1) Introduction

From its earliest beginnings, the philosophy of Buddhism has paid considerable attention to the issues of death and afterlife. A profound recognition of impermanence, suffering, and death is central to the philosophy of Buddhism. According to the traditional biography of Gautama Siddhartha, it was the sight of an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a holy man which led him to renounce his palace and worldly possessions and to seek for the solution solution of the problem of suffering. The impermanence of life became a model for his understanding of the impermanence of all things; the suffering of disease and death became expanded into the Buddha's teaching that all is ultimately suffering (dukkha).

a) The Importance of rebirth

The idea that life continues after death is also fundamental to Buddhist thought, most commonly expressed in the idea of rebirth in other human or animal bodies. For if there were no rebirth--if death were the ultimate end of all experiences--then suicide could be seen as an easy solution to an existence conceived as inherently more painful than pleasurable. Moreover, if this existence were thought to be the only one that a given man might experience, one might be more easily encouraged to make the most hedonistic

use of his few short years, rather than seeking to overcome his desires and transcend materialism. It is precisely this Buddhist view--that this life is but one of millions of continuous lives of suffering, destined to continue indefinitely unless the cycle were stopped--which necessitates a path of selflessness and discipline leading to enlightenment and freedom. Thus, not only death but the conviction of survival is essential to the Buddhist philosophy. Moreover, for various cultural as well as philosophical reasons, many of the countries which have adopted Buddhism have paid much attention to its death-related ceremonies and rituals. In China and Japan, the elaborate ritual of Buddhist funerals, and the practice of warriors meditating on corpses and graveyards, has given Buddhism the epithet of a "religion for the dead."[1] We need not be so concerned with its socio-cultural adaptations and formulatons, but we shall at least admit that the issues of death and survival are more important to Buddhism than to, say, the Jewish or Arabic philosophical traditions.

Broadly speaking, Buddhists believe that there are two significantly different possibilities after each person's death: either some aspect of his psychophysical influence will be reborn in a new body, or he will achieve a state called nirvana, which is above and beyond the realms of death and rebirth. In each of these cases, there has been substantial debate: about what it is that is reborn, and about how the state called nirvana should be interpreted. We shall consider each of these issues and debates in the following chapters.

Culturally speaking, Buddhism has been modified by each of the countries it has entered or influenced, but the most important divisions are probably the southern Theravada school, represented by the Pali Nikayas, the Sino-Japanese Mahayana, and the Tibetan Tantric. Of course there were many important sects within the Theravada, whose intricate philosophies we have too little time to consider here. In general, we might classify these three divisions as follows: the Theravadins believed that "salvation" is to be achieved through self-culture and meditative disciplines; the Mahayanists believed in salvation through the grace and power of god-like Bodhisattvas; and the Tantric practitioners sought salvation through magical practices or rituals. We shall first devote chapters to the fundamental ideas of rebirth and nirvana, as expressed in the Theravada tradition and interpreted by modern western scholars. Thereafter, we shall see how the Chinese and Tibetan traditions developed these ideas and expanded upon them.

b) The Context of early Buddhism

Even prior to the Buddha, there were numerous schools of Indian philosophy which already held dogmatic views about the nature of man, the self, and survival of death. The earliest Vedas, or sacred writings of the Brahmins, use the word atman, which refers to the animating force, life, breath, or soul, analogous to the Greek term psyche. Eventually, many schools came to think of atman as an unchanging and eternal core of man's being, the seat of consciousness which survives bodily death. This atman is said

to be reborn through numerous existences (human, subhuman, or divine). It was to be ultimately liberated from this cycle of rebirths by intellectually and meditatively realizing its one-ness with Brahman, Absolute Reality, of which the atman was essentially a tiny part.[2]

By the time of the Buddha (560-480? B.C.) many theories had arisen as to the nature, origin, and fate of the atman (these are discussed and refuted in the Brahmajala Sutra). The major contenders in the debate seem to be the eternalists and the nihilists. The eternalists held that the soul was separable from the body at death like a sword from its scabbard or the pith from a blade of grass. Radhakrishnan summarizes:

> If there is one doctrine more than any other which is characteristic of Hindu thought, it is the belief that there is an interior depth to the human soul which, in its essence, is uncreated and deathless and absolutely real.[3]

At the same time, however, there were schools of nihilists and materialists who held either that there was no soul at all, or that it was dissolved into various component elements at death. These views were not merely differences in metaphysical speculation, but they resulted in drastically different ethics and life-styles. The materialists, fearing no post-mortem reward nor punishment for present deeds, tended to advocate either hedonism or passive inaction. Eternalists, on the other hand, often stressed respect for living beings and ethical self-discipline to the extent of self-mortification (atta-kilamathanu-yoga). Thus, the Buddha arrived on a scene already dominated by highly sophisticated philosophies of the soul and life after death.

c) The Theory of no-soul

After a long course of ascetic austerities and meditations, Gautama the Buddha came to see that all phenomenal elements are constantly changing and impermanent (anicca). Not only are men not inhabited by any unchanging essence or soul, but furthermore there is nothing in man which can properly be identified with a soul at all; this is the theory of anatta, or no-soul. Based on this analysis, the Buddha saw suffering (dukkha) to be a pervasive characteristic of material existence, and ascribed this suffering to man's desire for unattainable permanence and a false clinging to a mistaken notion of individual self-importance. Early Buddhists used several arguments to demonstrate this ultimate unreality of an atta or permanent self.

The most widely quoted of the arguments against the soul appear in the questions of King Milinda (Greek: Menander), in which the king and Nagasena discuss the concept of the self; although post-dating the Buddha himself, they are representative of Theravada thought on the issue. In these illustrative but typically very repetitive conversations, Nagasena asks the king whether a chariot can be equated to its yoke, axle, wheels, body, or flagstaffs. Of course the king denies that a chariot is equivalent to any of its components taken alone, but he defends his use of the word "chariot" as an appellation or designation of the composite entity. The conclusion to be drawn is that the word "chariot" refers to nothing other than the aggregate of these material ele-

ments, and that there is no innate "chariot-ness" within it.[4] (This is strikingly similar to Gilbert Ryle's illustration of a category mistake, in which a man asks to see the university, after he has been shown its campus, buildings, students, and facilities. The university is nothing other than those elements, working together as they are, and the search for any other "university" is mistaken.)

Just as the chariot can be analysed into its material components, with no residue of "chariot-ness" left over, the Buddhists teach that man can be analysed into five essential aggregates, which exhaustively describe the human being and eliminate the need for any underlying soul. These five aggregates (panca-kkhanda) are not limited to material elements, but include sensory and psychological components, viz.:

(1) rupa, matter or form, including earth, water, fire, and air;

(2) vedanâ, feeling, both physical and psychological;

(3) saṅna, perceptions;

(4) samkhâra, mental states, activities, volitions (numbering 50);

(5) viṅṅana, conscious awareness. In a broader categorization, these aggregates can be conceptualized into those of matter/form (rupa), and those of mental faculties (nama); most of the khandas are clearly more closely related to mental processes than to matter. This is not, however, to imply that either rupa or nama could exist without the other in a dualistic system; rather both form and faculty are interdependent on each other, and all of the khandas are necessary in concert for there to exist what we can call a person.

Since a person cannot be identified with any of the khandas taken alone, and the khandas taken together exhaust the description of the person, the Buddhists conclude that there is no remaining self or atta, outside of the interdependent complex just described.

The five-khanda analysis provides a logical, philosophical reason for rejecting selfhood. But there are even more important psychological reasons for trying to rid oneself of the conceit of selfhood--particularly the argument from suffering. The body (and each of the other khandas, in turn) is first recognized to be impermanent. This impermanence is seen as a source of suffering (dukkha)--particularly with sickness, aging, or physical limitations. Thence it is argued that it is not proper to view anything which essentially is impermanent and productive of suffering as one's own, or atta. This renunciation of the view of selfhood is the beginning of emancipation from false cravings which lead to rebirth and thus to further suffering.[6]

With human essence, self, or soul (atta) thus analysed out of the picture, the question of what happens to man after death becomes even more serious. Superficially, it might seem that when the body disintegrates at death, all of the other khandas, which are mutually interdependent on bodily processes, must also cease and disperse. But we have already observed that the idea of rebirth is indispensible to the coherence of the Buddhist philosophy. In fact, the Buddha taught that the karma (action, especially mental volitions) of the dying man had a cause-effect relation, and

in that sense a continuity, with the birth of new beings. He used the term rebirth, as opposed to reincarnation, which might imply that a single soul were reincarnated in several consecutive bodies. Rebirth, on the other hand, suggests a causal continuity, but not personal identity, between one birth and the next.

Buddhists hold that this teaching was not merely a crude attempt to reconcilde traditional Hindu concepts of karma and reincarnation with an ethical theory which de-emphasized the centrality of the self.[7] Rather, they say that these conclusions were based upon the direct paranormal knowledge of the Buddha, attained through years of meditation. These extrasensory capacities, common to many meditative traditions, enabled the Buddha a clear recollection of his previous lives (pubbe-nivasa-nussatina, retrocognition) and a direct vision of the death and rebirth of beings (cutapapatanana).[8]

Even Buddha's contemporaries found his formula confusing. In order to reduce self-centredness, Buddha denied the reality of the self. But to maintain the justice of the universe, he accepted the notions of karma and rebirth, that thoughts and actions have effects in future lives. But if the individual is already denied, how can there be rebirth of an individual, or reaping the fruits of one's previous deeds? Some interpreters try to escape this dilemma by saying that Buddha was inconsistent or did not mean what he said. A more adequate understanding demands an answer to the question: what is it that is reborn, if anything?

2) What is Reborn?

Even in his own day, Buddha was frequently misinterpreted by rivals as denying the doctrines of karma and rebirth. The Buddha, when questioned, explicitly denied this interpretation.[9] Another philosophical reconstruction would resolve the dilemma by asserting that the karmic effects of actions influence other future generations, but not the reborn individual.

> [Buddha's] later followers endeavored to reconcile his two-fold doctrine of no-permanent-soul and the moral responsibility of the individual....In the Hindu view, the same individual acts and suffers in different lives; the usual modern Buddhist view is the same; but the strict original Buddhist view is altruistic, the actor being one, and the ultimate sufferer or beneficiary another individual.[10] (emphasis ours)

This is an ingenious attempt to make the idea of karma more palatable to modern behaviourists, but it flies in the face of the letter and the spirit of early Buddhist teachings. Since a permanent underlying self is denied, it is true that there is no absolute identity between the original actor and the later recipient of the fruits of that karma--just as I am not the same person now that I was when I started studying Buddhism. But the causal connection between my earlier studies and my present views and experiences is unmistakeable. Buddha's theory of karma is not humanistically reducible to biological and sociological influences continuing after death. Nor is death the end of the road for the individual, or else suicide would relieve us of the suffering of existence. Man dies and is reborn. The corpse and the new baby are causally conditioned and interconnected, but not identical.

a) Analogical treatments

Numerous analogies in the early texts help to explain the importance of continuity over strict identity in the causal process. Nagasena gives the case of the man who steals mangoes, and later pleads that the mangoes which he stole were different from the ones which the owner planted. King Milinda agrees that although the stolen mangoes are not identical with the ones planted, they are nevertheless causally conditioned; neither the same nor totally unrelated, they are different parts of a single causal sequence. Again, if a fire were to spread from a neglected campfire to an adjacent field, the burning field could be called neither the same fire nor a different fire from the campfire. Similarly, the curds which form today from yesterday's milk, or the verse which the student repeats after learning from his teacher, are neither absolutely identical to nor different from the original milk or original poem. There is merely a causal sequence of events which enables us to identify one with the other, or to say that one has given rise to the other. Rebirth is taken as another case of this same sort of process.[11]

This is a far more sophisticated treatment of personal identity than that of Leibniz, which caused so much difficulty above in identifying fathers with sons or old generals with footsoldiers in former years. Clearly the sort of identity which humans have throughout their lives is a continuity of constantly changing mental and physical conditions, only identifiable with previous

states through its spatio-temporal and causal contiguity. Opposing the Hindu analogies of the soul as an inchworm moving (relatively unchanged) from one leaf to another, the Buddhists prefer the analogue of the flame passing from wick to wick--a process lacking any permanent shape or substrate. It would appear that in answer to the question of "what is reborn?" we should accept the Buddha's answer that there is no permanent thing or stuff which flits from body to body, but rather that when the five khandas are dissolved at death, the four non-material khandas continue, like a causal current or stream of existence-energy (bhava-sota) to influence another material substrate--a foetus in a receptive womb.[12]

b) Intermediate states

However accurate this characterization may be, it is very difficult to depict to ourselves just how this immaterial causal current operates. Skeptics might argue that analogies of flames and curds are appropriate to the case of identity between a boy in 1941 and the man he became in 1981, where a continuous material substrate and memory are available. But it is precisely the lack of such a material substrate between the dying man and the newborn baby which renders these analogies inadequate. Even in Buddha's day, there were strong movements to reinstate the atta, or one of the khandas, or a subtly material self, as the stuff that went from point A to point B (i.e. the corpse to the foetus). One of the most eligible cadidates for the "entity which is reborn" is the vinnana, the khanda most closely connected with consciousness.

Pande lists several texts which support this view, suggesting that the idea of a transmigrating vinñana is pre-Buddhist. This vinñana resembles the attā (Skt.: atman) of some Upaniṣads, with the important difference that it is not taken to be something permanent, but rather as an ever-changing complex.[13] Later Buddhists seized on the Buddha's use of the term gandhābba, the mental complex essential to the birth of a baby, as the stuff which is reborn, or they confused the psychic body (manomayam kayam) admitted by Buddhist meditation theory, with that which is reborn.[14] The vajjiputtakas came to be known also as Puggalavadins, because they proposed that there was a puggala, or self, neither identical to nor different from the khandas, and that it was this puggala which was reborn. They claimed that Buddha's teaching of anatta did not mean that there were no self whatsoever, but simply that there were no eternal and unchanging self.[15] Buddhaghosa criticises the puggalavadins from the standpoint of the Abhidhamma school, centuries later, but then he proceeds to substitute the term bhavanga, or "existence-factor" in exactly the same role.[16] Asanga, in the Yogacarabhumi, discusses an intermediate state between the death of the former person and the birth of the latter:

> There is synonymous terminology. The term "intermediate state" is used because it manifests in the interval between the death state and the birth state. The term gandharva is used...the term manomaya is used....the term "resultant" [abhinirvrtti] is used because it is productive in the direction of birth.[17]

Such a proliferation of the very terms used to refer to the entity which is reborn, and such theorizing about the intermediate states

between death and rebirth, are contrary to the teachings and anti-speculative attitude of the Buddha. But they demonstrate the difficulties of even the most outstanding classical commentators in making sense of rebirth as an energy transfer across distances without a substrate.

Hindus like Radhakrishnan, and westerners like Grimm and Mrs. Rhys-Davids suggested that the Buddha developed the anatta theory for ethical reasons, but that he actually believed in a sort of atta being reborn in successive bodies.[18] The cultures of China, Japan, and Tibet, lacking both the vocabulary and the sophisticated philosophical tradition of the Buddha, adopted even more concrete ideas of transmigrating souls, which we shall examine further below. Historically, however, we may accept that early Buddhism taught an instantaneous rebirth of thought-complexes, neither identical with nor different from the dying person, and not definable in terms of a single permanent underlying substance. For the moment, let us examine the philosophical assumptions and consequences necessary to make sense out of this early Buddhist doctrine of becoming and rebirth.

c) The Determinants of rebirth

Since there is no single element nor substrate which is reborn, if we wish a more detailed description of rebirth, we must inquire not about the object or stuff which is reborn, but rather about the process and the factors which influence it. The belief in rebirth in new bodies was quite widespread in India

even prior to the Buddha's time, and there was already protracted debate about its implications. Some people contended that, in accordance with the law of karma, those who had done a preponderance of good deeds would be reborn in happy states, and those who had done a preponderance of evil would be reborn in evil states. Others, while admitting the concept of rebirth, denied the effect of karma in placing a soul in a new womb; they gave counter-examples of good men who had purportedly been reborn in evil circumstances, and evil men who were reborn in happy situations. The Buddha discusses each of these views with Ananda in the Mahakamma-vibhanga sutta (Greater Analysis of Deeds Sutra). In each of many similar sections, the Buddha asserts first of all that there are such things as good and evil deeds, and that we should not allow ethical distinctions to become blurred. Then he proceeds to support the idea of karma even further by declaring that all deeds will ultimately produce their effects, good for good and evil for evil. Both prior views: that good and evil lives inevitably produce good and evil rebirths, respectively, and (conversely) that there is no correlation between actions and rebirths--all these views are condemnved as the result of over-generalization from too limited an understanding, perhaps from psychic visualization of too limited a sample. The Buddha suggests that some deeds (kammas) are operative and others inoperative. However, the total balance-sheet of good and evil deeds performed during a given lifetime is summarized in the state of mind held by the dying person. This is fully in accord with the Buddha's teach-

ing that there are no underlying substances but only sequences of thought-processes, and that the transition from death to rebirth is but another instant in the continuity of such psychophysical processes. The Buddha explains:

> At the time of dying a right view was adopted and firmly held by him; because of this, at the breaking up of the body after dying, he arises in a good bourn, a heaven world....or at the time of dying a false view was adopted and firmly held by him; because of this, on the breaking up of the body after dying he arises in sorrowful ways.[19]

The Buddha is not saying that these firmly-held views at death are the exclusive determinants of rebirth. He is suggesting that both previous deeds and the last-held thought-complexes may influence rebirth, in accord with his avoidance of strict determinism and indeterminism. Historically and philosophically, this teaching is important because it opens the door to future schools of Buddhism which place increasing emphasis on the holding of right views at the moment of death, and which consider this to be more important than living a moral life in determining one's future rebirth.

A somewhat clearer version of the nature of the transference of energies at death is gained by placing it within the Buddhist view of conception. In the Buddhist view, sexual intercourse alone is inadequate to give rise to a conscious human being. For conception to take place, there must be present not only the male sperm and the female ovum, but also karmic energy (sometimes also called gandhabba) from a third source. In Nyanatiloka's words:

> Father and mother only provide the necessary physical material for the formulation of the embryonic body....The dying individual with his whole being convulsively clinging to life, at the very moment of his death, sends forth karmic energy which, like a flash of lightning, hits at a new mother's womb ready for conception. Thus, through the impinging of karmic energies on ovum and sperm there arises, just like a precipitate, the so-called primary cell.

The analogy of lightning here may be illustrative. We know that light is generally given off by physical objects glowing, burning, or reflecting other light, and we know that sounds are generally produced by collision or friction between two objects. And yet, on careful analysis, the lightning is seen to be neither a physical object nor the collision of physical objects, yet it produces light and thunder. In fact, by the time that the light and sound reach our senses, the atmospheric processes which gave rise to the phenomenon we name lightning are already stabilized and the infinitesimal electrical particles involved are already absorbed in a new state in which they are no longer identifiable. In the case of lightning, there is a visible manifestation of the imperceivably rapid movement of imperceivably small particles. In the case of rebirth, the Buddhists would say, the character of the person born demonstrates that there had been, prior to his birth, the influence of these life-clinging karmic forces, imperceivable except through their effects.

The Buddha sought to avoid speculative and doctrinal extremes in any direction. He said that his understanding of rebirth was gained, not from metaphysical speculation nor Hindu mythology, but from direct (paranormal) perception of the workings of the universe.

The Buddha purported to be completely empirical in his teachings (in the sense of being experience-based, not necessarily materialistic). He invited his students and followers to try to come to their own conclusions based on their own meditations. Today, we lack some of the meditational and parapsychological abilities which the Buddha gained through long years of asceticism. Yet, to a certain degree, our philosophical skills may help us towards an evaluation of the Buddhist system. As in the previous sections dealing with Christian views, we may argue that concepts which are not even clearly formulable or conceivable cannot merit our commitment. Moreover, we can look for the sorts of philosophical problems which might be expected to arise from the Buddha's system and the ways in which these issues might be resolved.

3) Philosophical Difficulties with the Buddhist Concept of Rebirth

There are at least three obvious philosophical difficulties in the Buddhist case for rebirth: (a) the problem of the spatio-temporal gap between the dying man and the newly conceived foetus; (b) the problem of population increase in the number of living beings; and (c) the problem of evidence for or against the rebirth theory. Let us examine the Buddhist resolutions to each of these issues.

a) Spatio-temporal gaps

The Buddha's descriptive analogies of rebirth are very effective in explaining the senses in which the person born is neither identical to nor different from the person who had just died. But in each of them (mango, flame, wave, child becoming a man, etc.),

there is a spatio-temporal continuity from one stage to the next, which enables us to identify the latter with the former as part of the same larger process or pattern. In the case of death and rebirth, however, there is no visible continuity between individual A_1 on his deathbed and foetus A_2 which receives the karmic life-clinging impulse at A_1's death. There is at least a spatial gap between the location of the final thoughts and volitions of the dying man and the arising of the first rudimentary consciousness in the infant or foetus. While there is no precise way of determining whether there is such a temporal gap or not, the gap between the season of the greatest number of deaths (winter) and the season of the greatest number of births (spring) would seem to suggest a gap between the last thoughts of dying men and the first thoughts of newborn babes. Moreover, there is a vast difference between the complexity of verbal and intellectual thought-patterns possessed by the majority of old men at their deaths, and the manifestly non-verbal and undiscriminating thought-structures of all newborn infants. Thus the continuum of death and rebirth observed paranormally by the Buddha might seem to be contradicted. To make sense of the Buddhist theory, then, we must approach it not only objectively, but from within the philosophical view of reality which the Buddhists held. A return to the Buddhist perspectives on khandas and kamma will help us resolve these apparent dilemmas.

In the Buddhist view of the person, only the first of the khandas is grossly material; the rest are fundamentally psychological characteristics, nonetheless ontologically real for being immaterial.

The Buddhists admit that all material elements return to dust at death, and therefore we are wrong to seek any physical traces linking a dying man with a newborn babe. The non-material khandas, however, are not limited to spatial dimensions--which is imply to say that a dream or a thought cannot be located spatially within a cranium. Moreover, telepathy, clairvoyance, and "out-of-body" travel are accepted within the Buddhist worldview as natural results of long ascetic and meditative practice. Practice of such powers (siddhis) is condemned by the Buddha as being unconducive to enlightenment, and likely to distract the practitioner from more spiritual goals. While modern westerners would consider telepathy to be an inexplicable example of causation at a distance, early Buddhists could easily accept this phenomenon of one well-trained mind reading the thoughts of another, or transmitting its thoughts to one not physically present.

If we grant that thoughts cannot themselves be spatially located (although associated with a specific person), and that they can be sensed or transmitted psychically by individuals who are physically separated, then we have also conceded that causation at a distance is possible in the realm of psychological phenomena. This is precisely what the Buddhist rebirth theory contends: that psychological factors continue to influence one being or another uninterruptedly. More specifically, the dying man's wish for life naturally becomes associated with that baby whose psycho-physical make-up is most receptive to precisely those psychic complexes.

We may or may not choose to reject the theory of rebirth on other grounds, but any a priori dismissal on the basis of spatial gaps alone is thus eliminated by this analysis. The problem of temporal continuity need not arise at all if we accept the early Buddhist tradition completely. But if it is held that the problem of temporal continuity does arise, or that it is another aspect of the spatio-temporal causality problem, it might be answered in any of several ways.

(i) First, along the analogy of the non-spatial character of consciousness outlined above, it might be argued that consciousness is essentially non-temporal, as demonstrated by our abilities to vividly remember past situations or to clairvoyantly foresee future situations. Thus, it might be argued, psychic components (khandas) neither exist nor cease to exist when dissociated from their cranial counterparts; they simply are not amenable to temporal measurements until they are again affiliated with neural, physiological structures existing within this temporal continuum.

(ii) Another approach would be to argue that there are formless realms where old thoughts, actions, and desires (kamma) await fruition. Such a postulate is sometimes taken as a prerequisite for the acceptance of a non-deistic karma theory. If it is admitted that all thoughts and deeds are "stored" in some not merely physiological sense, until the situation is right for their fruition as moral reward or recompense, then there need be no additional difficulty in admitting that the consciousness

complex or karmic energy of a dying individual might be similarly "stored" temporarily until the optimally suited conditions for its rebirth matured. However, the mechanism of such a "storage" process, either for karma or for individuals, remains inexplicable.
(iii) A third approach would be to suggest that consciousness is reborn immediately--not necessarily in a human realm, but perhaps as a god, spirit, animal, or other creature whose birth passes unnoticed. This possibility will be discussed more seriously below. The important conclusion to be recognized here is that, if any of the above perspectives are admitted as possible, then the period between death and rebirth can be accounted for, and the problem of spatio-temporal continuity no longer stands as an objection to the theory of rebirth.

b) Overpopulation

The problem of overpopulation is often raised against the doctine of rebirth or reincarnation. Simply stated, it observes that there are more people on planet earth now than a millenium ago, and asks where all the souls of the new people came from. The argument itself rests on several assumptions which do not apply to the Buddhist theory, but let us reason our way through them.
(i) In the first place, Buddhism believes neither in a temporal nor eternal soul, as has been emphasized above. Therefore, we should not imagine a condition of millions of disembodied souls "waiting around" in ethereal heavens for embodiment. Rather, both mind and body are evolved from material and psychological compo-

nents. It is completely within the realm of reason that psychic complexes have evolved with ever-increasing complexity to suit their material bases, over the course of millions of years. It is possible that some dying people's thoughts influence more than one fetal organism at a time. Alternatively, it is possible that beings elsewhere in the universe, on other planets or in spirit realms, are reborn as men. Finally, the increasingly animal tendencies of mankind, if they are such, might be taken as an indication that an ever-increasing number of animal souls are finding expression in human minds and bodies these days.

While these responses are largely speculative, the important point is that the Buddha recognized many levels of existence of beings not recognized by most modern westerners. Although these resemble those of the pre-Buddhist Upanisadic tradition, the Buddha denies that he has merely copied a prior mythology. In numerous contexts and on many different occasions, he refers to his own interactions with gods and spirits, made possible by his paranormal powers. If there indeed exist such invisible beings, then a population-count of visible beings alone is inadequate to invalidate the theory of rebirth.

(ii) The Buddhist view of the universe is much more comprehensive than that normally held by modern materialists. We already observed how the Buddhist analysis of human personality into khandas gives equal ontological footing to psychological and physiological components of persons. In its broadest categories, the Buddhist

universe may be divided into the realms of things immaterial and formless (ārupadhatu), those with form but only subtle matter (rupadhatu), and the physical/sensual realm of form and gross matter (kāmadhatu). It is thought that rebirth can take place in realms of hell, ghosts, titans (asuras), animals, men, and gods.[22] Just as there are many classes of men and animals within the visible material realms, so there are many classes of gods, spirits, and demons in the invisible realms. But it is generally held that only on the human level can man's karma (thought and action) influence his destiny; the other levels are essentially expiatory or compensatory, places where the merit or demerit of prior lives is rewarded or punished. Neither heaven nor hell are taken to be eternal in the Christian sense. Gods and demons are also subject to causal laws and to the cycle of death and rebirth, although their lives are held to be longer than human lives. These other realms (lokas) are not necessarily seen as physically above or below this one, but as interpenetrating it; sometimes they are conceived as generated by consciousness in an idealist fashion.[23] There is some question as to whether the Buddha really believed all of the mythology behind the doctrines of heavens and hells, or merely taught it as a moral goad for the common people in his audience. It is clear, however, that the Buddha believed in the existence of (and claimed to have interacted with) invisible gods and spirits, and that he saw people born into higher or lower realms of existence depending on their karma and mental states.[24]

From our modern philosophical vantage point, we may suspect that the complex cosmology of early Buddhism was borrowed in part from the mythology of the Vedas and Upanisads.[25] However, the existence of invisible realms, whether of subtle matter or ideas, is one of many factors which could eliminate the objection of overpopulation against the theory of rebirth. These spirit-realms could also stand as loci where karmas and consciousnesses have an intermediate but continuous existence until the appropriate circumstances emerge for their fruition on the gross material plane. Thus the answer to the population problem is also straightforward, if seen from a Buddhist perspective on the universe.

c) Evidence

The difference between the intellectual structures of dying men and those of newborn infants does seem to pose a problem in identifying the two. For no newborn babe has begun to speak, write, gesture, or in any other way communicate that it had any more than the most rudimentary consciousness. Piaget, Bettelheim, and many other psychologists have attempted to trace the mental development of infants; there is widespread agreement that the infant cannot even distinguish object from object, color from color, or self from other, let alone make the kinds of logical and axiological distinctions which most mature people learn to make before they die. How can the infant's mind be anything like a dying man's?

(i) The first and most obvious answer to this query might be that the physical (neural, cortical) apparatus of the newborn infant is

simply unable to comprehend or express the full range of psychic energies which are "transmitted" from dying man to foetus. Not only have the muscles of the body not been trained to move, but the greater portion of the brain has not been taught to sort and label experience as its first few years of education will train it to do. This need not imply that a consciousness from a former person did not contact or influence the fetal brain, but only that the former consciousness was unable to function fully through the infantile brain.

(ii) Secondly, it might be argued that the incredible trauma of coming from an essentially submarine foetal environment into a walking, waking world of objects would be enough to virtually obliterate the memories and dispositions of most individuals, as often happens in traumatic accidents. Or alternatively, we might observe that the Buddhists are not committed to the transmission of an entire memory set, dispositional complex, or psychic structure of the dying man to the foetus. The major, if not only thing which is transmitted is the craving for life and the emotions attendant thereto. If additional memories or talents emerge later in life, they may be attributable to the latent proclivities of the psychic complex from a previous existence--but their absence in the baby is not validly construed as a refutation of rebirth theory.

(iii) The Buddha claimed that all of his conclusions are empirically testable or experiencable. The experiential tests required, however, depend on long-disciplined, carefully-cultured psychic abilities, the existence of which many modern westerners might doubt.

Against rebirth, westerners generally adduce the fact that very few children seem to remember their previous lives. On the other side, the Buddhists might argue that even a few documentable cases might indicate the plausibility of the rebirth theory, for what is expected is not perfect memory by everyone of former lives, but simply some indications of influence. More careful examination of the facts behind these arguments will be conducted in part III. In the meantime, it is important to note that the rebirth theory has not been shown to be logically self-contradictory nor to face the sort of insurmountable philosophical difficulties confronting the purely materialistic theory of the resurrection. For this early Buddhist formulation to work, however, it demands acceptance of at least (1) causality at a distance, (2) the existence of psychic powers not dependent on physical bodies, and probably (3) the existence of some realms other than the visible material one. If these Buddhist premises are granted, then the Buddhist theory of rebirth based on psychic continuity and influence can be rendered coherent and in that sense tenable. The question of whether rebirth theory in fact accounts better for observed data than other theories then becomes an empirical one which we shall consider shortly. There may be many psychological reasons for personally preferring or averring from the theory of karma and rebirth (e.g. the oft-cited allegation that it leads to a philosophy of resignation and stagnation), but these feelings clearly have no bearing on what is actually the nature of reality.

B) Nirvana: The Alternative to Rebirth

The Buddha did not envision rebirth in a happy heaven as the ultimate goal of life. For even the heavenly realms, although pleasant, are causally conditioned and therefore impermanent, producing additional suffering in their demise. The common majority of suffering humanity might well wish to escape its suffering even temporarily through a heavenly rebirth. But a more enlightened perspective would suggest that the entire cycle of birth, death, rebirth, and change is inextricably interlaced with suffering. In that case, the ultimate goal to be sought is not a temporary stay in heaven but a permanent release from the entire cycle of birth and death. In early Buddhism, such a release can only be obtained from right practice and thought while in the human realm; even the gods and demons must become human (and male) before such freedom can be realized.[26] Therefore, although the human realm experiences more suffering than the heavenly realms, it is privileged above all others in its access to this soteriological option: the complete escape from the wheel of rebirth.

This escape, or freedom, is generally known as nirvana (Pali: nibbana). Its etymological roots suggest the meaning of blowing out or extinction.[27] It is often analogized to the blowing out or extinguishing of a fire (the passions). It might seem that if all existence is suffering, the the only escape from suffering is in non-existence. Such reasoning has led many western interpreters

to conclude that nirvana is simply the utter extinction of personality, although the Buddha sometimes explained it in more palatable terms so as not to shock his listeners. Since nirvana is the final goal of Buddhist life and teaching, it is essential that we come to terms with this question: does nirvana actually imply annihilation, or some form of survival after death?

The early Buddhist scriptures are far from unambiguous about the meaning of nirvana. Their allusions to it tend to be more allegorical than literally descriptive. Problems of interpretation are intensified when we try to translate the words and concepts of nirvana into English, in a dramatically different culture and age. One approach to understanding nirvana might be to try to put ourselves into the cultural and meditative framework in which the Buddha lived and taught, and to conduct our further analyses in Pali. But this is impractical for the majority of us--and it may be a further test of a philosophy's universality to see how it translates into other language and thought systems. Therefore, while referring frequently to the early texts, we shall concentrate on the debates of western scholars as to the meaning and interpretation of nirvana, just as we reviewed modern debates on the resurrection. Within the modern interpretations of the meaning of nirvana, we may take four views as representative of the major schools of thought: (1) nirvana as annihilation; (2) nirvana as eternal life; (3) nirvana as an ethical state in this world; and (4) nirvana as a transcendent, ineffable state in which time and person are superceded.

1) Nirvana as Annihilation

Among the first modern interpreters of Buddhism to the West was Eugene Burnouf, who translated the Lotus Sutra and other Pali and Tibetan works into French in the mid-19th century. Burnouf's view of nirvana is typified by his translation of a passage in the Avadanasatakam:

> Until finally, Vipasyin, the completely perfect Buddha, after having performed the totality of obligations of a Buddha, was like a fire of which the fuel is consumed, entirely annihilated in the element of nirvana in which nothing remains of that which constitutes existence.[28]

This analogy of extinguishing a fire or lamp becomes archetypical for annihilationist interpreters, its conclusions based primarily on etymological grounds.

Burnouf's prize pupil, Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, is even more severe. He argues from the premises of anatta and dukkha (that all is selfless and suffering) that the only logical escape from such conditions must be utter extinction. Saint-Hilaire sees, however, a hidden Brahmanism in the Buddhist view, and supposes that the goals of Buddhism and Brahmanism are the same: absorption in deity. But this too he reduces to annihilation:

> Absorption in God--especially the God of Brahmanism--is the annihilation of the personality, that is to say, true nothingness for the individual soul; and I cannot see what is to be gained from imposing this new form on the Buddhist nirvana.[29]

Traditional Christians, who prize the unique and eternal individuality of the human soul, feel an abhorrence for such an absorption theory. The words of Burnouf and Saint-Hilaire were seized upon and utilized by preachers and popularizers to decry

the godlessness and nihilism of Buddhism--and in turn to condemn its inferiority to the Christian view of salvation and afterlife.

The prolific translator Max Muller was also a friend of Burnouf's. Muller not only agrees that Buddhism is atheistic and nihilistic, but he condemns this nihilism for "hurling man into the abyss, at the very moment when he thought he had arrived at the stronghold of the eternal." However, when Muller examines the historical and textual contexts of this interpretation more critically, he comes to the conclusion that the nirvana of total extinction was a superimposition of later Abhidharma philosophers. Pointing to the fact that the Buddha continued to live after having attained nirvana, Muller concludes that the original meaning of nirvana should be understood as the extinction of desires, pleasure and pain, and that the view of annihilationists, while pertinent to some of the later schools, should not be attributed to the early Buddhists.[30]

Later scholars recognized this apparent dual-aspect of nirvana: sopadhiṣesa ("with remnant") and nirupadhiṣesa ("without remnant") nirvana. Nirvana with remnant is that sort of nirvana attainable within this life while the body continues to live; nirvana without remnant is that nirvana attained at death when no physical substrate continues. R.C. Childers interprets these as two stages through which the Buddha and enlightened persons pass, and not two doctrines formulated in different periods:

> The word nirvana is used to designate two different things, the state of blissful sanctification called Arhatship, and the annihilation of existence in which Arhatship ends.[31]

James D'Alwis joins Childers in proclaiming the doctrinal unity of the early Buddhist texts, including both the Nikayas and the Abhidharma literature. D'Alwis thus attacks Muller's proposal that there was a stage of early Buddhism in which nirvana was not conceived as total extinction after death. D'Alwis declares that nirvana "with physical remnant" (i.e. of the still-living Buddha) should not be interpreted as true nirvana. Rather, it is a state of insight and calm, based upon the psychological qualifications which will enable the Buddha or Arhat to be completely extinguished upon death.[32]

Scherbatsky develops a different attack on Muller's idea that nirvana is something other than utter extinction of the person. Where D'Alwis had tried to show that all the early texts were unified in theme, Scherbatsky rejects the entire Pali canon as muddle-headed religiosity, and declares that it is only the later sastras which are philosophically important:

> Accuracy, indeed, is not to be found at all in the Pali canon. Accuracy is not its aim. It is misleading to seek accuracy there. Accuracy is found in later works belonging to the sastra class. All Buddhist literature is divided into a sutra class and a sastra class. The first is popular, the second is scientific.[33]

On this basis, Scherbatsky then boldly contends that the sastras are the only texts of Buddhism worthy of careful study; the truth of Buddhism is to be sought, not in the hearsay discourses of Gautama, but in the "scientific" commentaries of Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu. Based on these sastras, Scherbatsky proceeds to deny that

any element or state exists in nirvana, or that there were any branch of Buddhism which did not take the quiescence of total self-extinction as its final goal.[34]

The difficulties and assumptions behind these approaches of D'Alwis and Scherbatsky are too glaring to rehearse. Increasingly, the trend in modern scholarship has been to seek scrupulously the earliest words which might be genuinely attributed to the historic Gautama Siddhatha, rather than arbitrarily grouping all literature together or dividing it into structural classes. The 20th century has seen great strides towards identifying the early texts of the gospels, based largely on philological and stylistic grounds; similar studies are slowly coming into their own in the domain of Buddhism as well. While it may prove ultimately impossible to identify which words were really those of the Buddha, such studies may at least provide better bases upon which to separate early texts from late. Particularly where apparently contradictory statements are made about the same subject--such as nirvana--such textual discrimination may enable some resolution, by showing which doctrines were earliest, and when the conflicting ideas entered.

However, the Abhidharma interpretations of nirvana as self-annihilation, promulgated by Burnouf, Muller, and Scherbatsky over the past century, took strong hold in the mind of the western public. Thus oversimplified, the idea that all existence is suffering seems to point only too clearly to the conclusion that the escape from suffering must be non-existence. Moreover, as we have seen,

interpreting Buddhism in this way created an easy "straw man" for Christian missionaries to attack. Fortunately for our understanding of Buddhism, these interpretations were not allowed to pass unchallenged.

2) Nirvana as Eternal Life

Even within the Buddha's lifetime, his opponents were quick to accuse him of teaching a nihilistic philosophy with the goal of self-annihilation. The Buddha was equally insistent in countering these charges, for there had been annihilationist philosophers before him, and he scrupulously avoided their paths. Refuting the annihilationist misinterpretations, he addressed his monks:

> [I] am accused wrongly, vainly, falsely, and inappropriately by some ascetics and Brahmins: "A denier is the ascetic Gautama; he teaches the destruction, annihilation, and perishing of the being that now exists..." These ascetics wrongly, vainly, falsely, and inappropriately accuse me of being what I am not, O Monks, and of saying what I do not say.[35]

There are even passages which would indicate that the Buddha took a much more positive, even eternalistic view of the nature of man.

> I did exist in the past, not that I did not; I will exist in the future, not that I will not; and I do exist in the present, not that I do not.[36]

Perhaps it was a more serious encounter with passages like these which caused Western interpreters to re-think their original annihilationist interpretations. For some, it was a belief in the eternality so strong that they could not believe that a religion which denied the soul could ever have been taken seriously. For others, this reinterpretation seems to be based on a more serious consideraton of death and dying, accompanying their own aging and

deaths. In any case, some of the major western interpreters of nirvana, who initially understood it to mean self-annihilation, revised their theories and switched to an opposite viewpoint in their later years. It is curious that such a phenomenon should be observable among not one but many of the major Buddhist scholars, most notable of whom were Muller, Oldenberg, Mrs. Rhys-Davids and LaVallee Poussin. Let us briefly review the stances of each of these buddhologists, and then continue with an overview of other "eternalist" interpreters and their reasoning.

We have already alluded to Max Muller's reluctant condemnation of the nihilist tendencies of Buddhism. This conflict within Muller is easily understandable, for he regarded the Buddha as a great and inspired thinker. At the same time, he could not bring himself to believe that such a thinker would propose annihilation as the goal of existence. Muller was a pupil of Burnouf's in the mid-1840's in Paris, so his early writings reflected his master's annihilationist views--with the condemnatory proviso that if annihilation were what the Buddha had really had in mind, then his religion were not worthy of much respect. This is precisely the conclusion which many Christian teachers had reached, and the point where they were content to leave it.

However, Muller himself continued to struggle with the problem of the meaning of nirvana, and after half a century of research, concluded that the nihilism of Burnouf was based upon the later metaphysical abstractions of the Abhidharma school of philosophers.

Nirvana, if extinction at all, was not extinction of existence, but only of the cravings which produce suffering. Nirvana was

> the entrance of the soul into rest, a subduing of all wishes and desires, indifference to joy and pain, to good and evil, and absorption of the soul in itself, and a freedom from the circle of existences from birth to death and from death to a new birth.[38]

It is not completely clear just what this "absorption of the soul in itself" means to Muller, but it is at least obvious that this is not annihilation. On the contrary, it is a state of freedom, rest, and indifference, if not bliss.

High in the hall of fame of Pali translators stand the names of the Rhys-Davidses, Thomas and wife Caroline Augusta Foley. Thomas Rhys-Davids, long-time editor of the Pali Text Society, held a rather agnostic view of nirvana, to which Caroline had more or less tacitly consented until his death in 1922. After her husband's death, however, Caroline launched into a campaign of revisionism unparalleled in Buddhist scholarship: an almost missionary campaign to document that the real meaning of Buddhism was an eternal state of blessedness. She did not attempt to deny that the word nirvana seemed to imply a state of non-being. Rather, she claimed that the real goal of Buddhism was not nirvana at all, but rather _attha,_ a metaphysical objective.

> The _attha_ (goal) which [early Buddhists] taught was _not_ nibbana, a vanishing less in a vanishing _atta_. It was a persistent living on in that More which saw the quest as a man becoming more in the worlds....[39]

The glorification of "persistent living on," the "More," and "the quest as a man," whatever those terms might mean, has a de-

cidedly un-Buddhist ring to it. Caroline Rhys-Davids said that her messianic motivation sprang from a new-found conviction that no religion could become as world-famous as Buddhism if it were based on a cosmic negation of human values and achievements. We might also infer a psychological attempt to deal with the death of her husband behind this new doctrine of immortality. Few if any serious Buddhologists came to agree with Mrs. Rhys-Davids' view that the goal of Buddhism were attha rather than nirvana. But she adduced numerous texts and arguments to support her case. She was at least a skilled and dedicated translator. Her arguments were at least valuable in demonstrating that a number of very different conclusions could be drawn from the same texts, thus serving as a warning against too-doctrinaire interpretations. Other scholars who agreed with her logic but not her hermeneutics tried to show that the goal of nirvana itself was eternalistic or soul-preserving.

Hermann Oldenberg's Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde was first published in 1881, undergoing five revisions until 1921, and numerous translations. Although this book was first published when Oldenberg was yet in his twenties, it led to Oldenberg's elevation to the position of a leading interpreter of Buddhism to the West. During the 40 years following the publication of his Buddha, Oldenberg revised his position on the reason for Buddha's silence about nirvana. In the beginning, he had held that the answer to the question of the existence of the ego after

death was simply, "Nirvana is annihilation." In his later years, Oldenberg came to the conclusion that the Buddhists held "an absolute as a final highest goal." E. J. Thomas interjects:

> This is a withdrawal of [Oldenberg's earlier] charge that if the Buddha had drawn the last conclusion of his own principles, he would have arrived at annihilation.[40]

Oldenberg was careful to avoid dogmatism, and he fully realized that the Buddha refused to clearly answer such questions. His change of mind was not based on a reading of new texts nor on a reinterpretation of old ones, but rather on a personal reconsideration of what the silences of the Buddha should be taken to mean. Dumoulin observes:

> The chief exponents of the nihilist nirvana interpretation [include]...H. Oldenberg in the early edition of Oldenberg's work Buddha. Later Oldenberg came to the conclusion that nirvana signifies something absolute, not in the sense of the cause of the universe, but as an absolute final goal.[41]

Surely these changes of mind are not solely attributable to a failure of nerve in the face of personal aging and death, but reflect the product of a life-long struggle to come to clearer terms with the message of the Buddha.

Yet another Buddhologist who came to change his interpretation from a nihilistic to an eternalistic one was LaVallee Poussin. In his early years, LaVallee Poussin took annihilation to be the logical consequence of the doctrine of anatta, and he treated the nihilism of the Madhyamika school as the logically correct interpretation of the Pali texts. Later, however, he switched to the antipodal view: "Je suis actuellement tres certain que le Nirvana

est une 'chose en soi,' un Absolu eschatologique, le refuge éternel."[42] Nevertheless, LaVallee Poussin advocated that westerners continue to think of nirvana as a kind of annihilation--because western thought-patterns will not enable us to conceive of blessedness or existence apart from mental and physical objects, which are not present in nirvana.[43] In short, LaVallee Poussin came to believe that there are states of blessedness and existence beyond the power of language to depict or mind to imagine until actually experienced. To avoid building mythical "castles in the air," which would not correctly describe the reality of nirvana, the Buddha remained silent--but this silence should not be taken to imply that nirvana were not a real state. If LaVallee Poussin is correct in this interpretation, it goes a long way towards explaining both the reticence of the Buddha to verbalize his understanding of nirvana, and the difficulty of westerners to see nirvana as anything other than annihilation.

The scholars discussed above all switched from annihilationist to eternalist interpretatons of nirvana. Well aware of the arguments on both sides, they knew too that personal preference played a large part in one's interpretation of Buddhism. There were other scholars, however, who were more radical in their absolutistic interpretatons. Their arguments tended to rest either on the _a priori_ rejection of a negative goal within a viable religious system, or on connecting the Buddha with previous Hindu thinkers and interpreting nirvana in a Hindu context.

As early as 1863, J.B.F. Obry had written a work on nirvana in response to Saint-Hilaire, specifically to deny the negative implications of Saint-Hilaire's conclusions. Obry repudiates the Madhyamika nihilism as a distortion of original Buddhism, and argues for an interpretation of Buddhism within the context of Samkhya philosophy. He sees a "thinking principle" (purusa) as an eternal element in both Buddhist and Samkhya systems, and feels that he can resolve the meaning of "nirvana without remnant" along these lines:

> The thinking principle remains intact by virtue of being simple, pure, immaterial, and indissoluble. The only difference is that in the one [nirvana with substrate], this principle still has a support, a prop, a buttress (lingam according to the Samkhyas, Upadhi according to the Buddhists) while in the other it no longer has any support or reason for its existence than itself. It has become Svayambhu, existing in and for itself.[44]

P.E. Foucaux warmly supported Obry, by tracing numerous similarities between Buddhism and pre-Buddhist Brahmanism, documenting a Brahmanic interpretation of nirvana as a principle in a state beyond form, being and non-being.[45] On a different tack, Schrader argued that the anatta theory applies only to the five khandas, but fails to refer to that which is absolute. The anatta theory was "thereby to prove that our real entity must not be looked for in, but beyond the world."[46] These thinkers agree in considering nirvana to refer to a positive state of absolute Being, based on the influences and similarities they perceive between Brahmanism (or Samkhya) and early Buddhism.

If western scholars have seen Hinduism as a clue to a positive interpretation of nirvana, Indian scholars have been even more emphatic about this relationship. N.P. Jacobson concludes that Indian Buddhologists

> display a tendency to want to save something of the self and to interpret the Buddha as intending to destroy the narrowly regimented personality in the interest of a more inclusive truer self....U San Pe defends this view with a clarity and mastery of ancient Pali texts....Radhakrishnan takes this position in his translation of the Dhammapada. So does [P.L. Narasu].[47]

The Thai Abbot of Wat Paknam, Monghol-Thepmuni holds a similar view: nirvana is neither extinction of self nor of perception, but only of the compulsive motivations which bind the person to samsara (the cycles of rebirth). T.R.V. Murti lists numerous adjectives applied to nirvana to demonstrate its real existence:

> A reality beyond all suffering and change, unfading, still, undecaying, taintless, peaceful, blissful. It is an island, the shelter, the refuge and the goal.[49]

In the West, these views have been echoed by Kieth, Grimm, Frauwallner and Hoppe.[50]

While there are many arguments that the Buddha did not believe in a nirvana of annihilation, the arguments that he did believe in the eternal bliss of a soul in nirvana can be summarized into three types: (1) Buddhist borrowing from Samkhya or Brahmanism; (2) the theory that anatta applies only to the khandas and that a soul might exist outside of them; and (3) the positive metaphors and adjectives used to describe nirvana. However, none of these arguments are very strong, and they often amount to little

more than a rationalization for the conviction that a great world religion could not be nihilistic. There are dangers in both the annihilationist and eternalist viewpoints, as K.N. Upadhyaya appropriately comments on the views of Grimm, Kieth, and Radhakrishnan:

> All this clearly shows that these scholars, while countering the annihilationist view of Nibbana, are carried away by their own arguments to the opposite extreme of eternalism. It is indeed, very difficult to steer clear of these two opposite views....[51]

It seems that the Buddha had tried to avoid both extremes, and one way to follow him in this is a humanistic agnosticism.

3) Nirvana as an Ethical State in This World

When questioned as to whether the saint exists after death, the Buddha remained silent. Had he spoken, this debate, and perhaps this chapter, would be unnecessary. Because the Buddha was silent on life after death, numerous schools of interpretation have grown up on this question. It is clear, however, that the Buddha intended to avoid both extremes of annihilationism and eternalism. And there is widespread agreement on one point: the reason for the Buddha's silence on this question was that he felt that such speculation or knowledge did not lead to spiritual or moral advancement.

The man in this world is analogized to a man wounded by an arrow, who can waste no time in asking the shape and origin of the arrow and the man who shot it. Rather, he must exert all his energy towards removing the arrow, the immediate cause of his suffering. Similarly, the Buddha taught a way towards the relief

of the suffering of this immediate material existence, and not a system of metaphysics. It is at least clear that the circle of birth, death, and rebirth can be broken if desires and cravings are eliminated. It can similarly be argued that the entire teaching of anatta was more to encourage a selfless moral life than to provoke discussions on the nature of a soul. These considerations lead many Buddhist scholars to the conclusion that nirvana refers not to any ontological state, nor to a view of existence or non-existence after death, but rather to an ethical state here and now. This conclusion does seem to have the happy advantages of not reading too much into the Buddha's silence, and not leading to invidious comparisons of Buddhism with other religions.

In the mid-nineteenth century, H.T. Colebrooke was already arguing for an ethical rather than an ontological interpretation of nirvana. A true Indologist, Colebrooke saw the Buddhist teachings within a thoroughly Indian frame of reference. Yet he refused to concede that the goal of all Indian philosophy was in the eternal and transcendant. On the contrary, he understood the common aim of Hinduism and Buddhism to be the destruction of the joys, sorrows, lusts, fears, and passions which otherwise tend to dominate this worldly existence:

> A happy state of imperturbable apathy is the ultimate bliss to which the Indian aspires: in this the Jaina, as well as the Bauddha, concurs with the orthodox Vedantin....It is not annihilation, but unceasing apathy, which they understand to be the extinction [nirvana] of their saints.[53]

In this view, nirvana refers not to the extinction of existence, but to the extinction of the cravings which fetter and trouble man.

Although it may seem contradictory at first glance to assert that this apathy is at the same time somehow blissful, this is precisely the conclusion which is reached if we grant the Buddhist premises: that the realm of material acquisitiveness is essentially suffering, that selfless apathy is the opposite of material acquisitiveness, and that the opposite of suffering is peace and in that sense, bliss. Not a flighty transcendence, but self-disciplined detachment seems the best way to avoid the struggles and sufferings of this world. Thomas Rhys-Davids supports similar conclusions:

> Nibbana is purely and solely an ethical state, to be reached in this birth by ethical practices, contemplation and insight. It is therefore not transcendental....Expressions which deal with the realisation of emancipation from lust, hatred, and illusion apply to practical habits and not to speculative thought.[54]

Mr. Rhys-Davids personally had little patience with talk of karma and rebirth. By this interpretation of nirvana, he emphasized its this-worldly significance, and in doing so, undoubtedly came closer to the anti-speculative attitude of the Buddha himself.

Nor is the ethical interpretation of nirvana limited to nineteenth century scholars. Twentieth century positivism gave training and fuel to "empiricist" interpreters of Buddhism who read the tripitaka after their own leanings, rejecting all "transcendental" tinges. Roy Amore, known for his attempts to trace Buddhist influence in the Christian gospels, is one who holds this view. Amore quotes with evident approval from the Samyutta Nikaya and contends that:

> Buddhist thought more commonly employs the straightforward statement that Nirvana is the extinction of the three evil root causes [deep-seated mental complexes]: lust, hatred, and delusion. Once a wandering ascetic questioned the learned disciple Sariputta as follows...'Tell me sir, just what is this nirvana? Sire, [sic] the destruction of lust, hatred, and delusion is what is called nirvana.' [55]

Amore adduces further quotations from Sri Lankan monks to confirm his viewpoint, although their transcendentalist leanings are not easily concealed.[56]

David Kalupahana is another whose "radical empiricism" has won him fame for his unique interpretations of early Buddhism. He claims to be carrying out the intentions of his teacher Jayatilleke, who he feels has betrayed his own principles and "undermined the whole basis of Buddhist empiricism,"[57] by his admission of transempirical states after death. Kalupahana insists that nirvana is a state to be found only within the experience of this life:

> It is a state of perfect mental health (aroga), of perfect happiness (parama sukha), calmness or coolness (sitibhuta), and stability (anenja), etc. attained in this life, or while one is alive.[58]

While insisting that the Buddha was silent because there is no way of knowing about trans-empirical states after death, Kalupahana seems to deny the possibility of such states in his positivist-empiricist premises.

Japanese Mahayana Buddhists also tend to emphasize the ethical implications of nirvana in this life, which they prefer to term satori, or "enlightenment." In Mahayana Buddhism, the ethical state of the enlightened person is not merely one of apathy

nor of total detachment; it is one of action and compassion as well. It closely follows the Bhagavad Gita's model of selfless action (niṣkamkarma) and makes way for the model of the Bodhisattva: the compassionate enlightened being who returns to this suffering world to save and help unenlightened sentient beings. Yamakami explains:

> In its negative aspect, Nirvana is the extinction of the three-fold fires of lust, malice, and folly....In its positive aspect, Nirvana consists in the practice of the three cardinal virtues of generosity, love, and wisdom.[59]

D.T. Suzuki denies that non-Buddhists are even qualified to deal with the problem of nirvana, but his own interpretation appears very similar to Yamakami's. For Suzuki, nirvana is destruction

> ...of the notion of ego-substance and of all the desires that arise from this erroneous conception. But this represents the negative side of the doctrine, and its positive side consists in universal love or sympathy (karuna) for all beings.[60]

Many scholars of stature have thus interpreted nirvana as a state purely limited to the world of living men, with little or no reference to existence after death. Some interpret nirvana as mere detachment from worldly desires; others add the requirement of positive ethical action within the world. While this may seem to be a more noncommittal, and hence safer, approach than the extremes of nihilism or eternalism, it still tends either to one side or the other. If this line of thinking denies altogether that the Buddha was concerned with life after death, then the whole cycle of existence, of karma and rebirth, is rendered meaningless and unimportant. If the entire message of the Buddha were simply that

men should be moral and not concern themselves with the afterlife, then no matter how profound this philosophical attitude, it lacks the conviction of one who has seen that men are reborn repeatedly into lives of suffering and that all karma must bear its fruit. If being detached or compassionate alone is enough to eliminate suffering and karma, we should expect some further description of how such actions or attitudes stop the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth, which are the bottom line of Buddhist philosophy.

Most "ethical state" interpreters of nirvana tend to indicate that, for the enlightened man, there is no life after death worth worrying about. This is clearly Suzuki's attitude, and is noticeable in other writers mentioned above. But if there is no life whatsoever after death, then we are led again into the camp of the annihilationists, which we have already seen is inappropriate. By shifting the emphasis to the this-worldly realm of ethics, the interpreters just discussed above have changed the focus of Buddhism from ontology to axiology. They seem, by their silence, to avoid some of the criticisms which were leveled against early annihilationist views, and wrongly against the Buddha himself. For the purposes of our study, however, they either fail to provide any answer to the question "is nirvana a state surviving death?" or else they provide an annihilationist answer, which we have already shown to be unacceptable to the Buddha himself. Thus the question remains: can there be a state after death, compatible with the Buddha's teachings, which avoids the eternal soul doctrine?

4) Nirvana as a Selfless State of Post-Mortem Existence

We have already seen that early Buddhism has reference to two types of nirvana: sopadhisesa ("with substrate") and nirupadhisesa ("without substrate"). The former is the state of the saint still living in the world; the latter is the state of the saint after death. Even if we admitted that the "ethical state" interpretation adequately explained the meaning of "extinction" (in terms of extinction of desires while the body still lives), we would still be left with the troubling question of what is meant by a bodiless ethical state, the second kind of nirvana discussed! Surely it makes no sense to speak of apathy, detachment, or compassion, if nothing continues to exist after death! Moreover, we have already seen that the Buddha repudiated nihilism and affirmed that he would continue to exist. We also know that nirvana refers not to a personal, body-dependent existence after death, for the body and khandas are held to separate. And Buddhism clearly repudiates the notion of permanent or unchanging entities, including souls, in this material phenomenal universe. In Conan Doyle's famous phrase, when all else is ruled impossible, the improbable must remain the fact. So it seems with early Buddhiism: both eternalism and annihilationism have been ruled impossible--and nirvana must mean something more than an ethical state, since there is a type of nirvana after the body is dead and inactive. Thus, however distasteful to our language-bound western thought-patterns, the only alternative seems to be that there is a state which lan-

guage does not adequately describe--and yet which the Buddha and Arhats experienced before and after death. This state, although difficult to characterize or talk about, is not nothing--it is nirvana.

The analogies of a flame passing from wick to wick and ultimately extinguished, or of different water always flowing through the "same" river, are often used to describe the ever-changing nature of the phenomenal world, and the similarity-in-difference of the man who is reborn with the man who has died. Indeed, the analogy of the flame seems especially appropriate in expressing the burning, fleeting nature of the passions, which leap from one object to another and are eventually extinguished. But extinction of the flame is not the only analogy for nirvana. Another important one is that of the small flame swallowed up in a larger one. As King Milinda learns from monk Nagasena:

> "Reverend Nagasena," said the King, "does the Buddha still exist?"
> "Yes, your majesty, he does."
> "Then is it possible to point out the Buddha as being here or there?" ....
> "If a great fire were blazing, would it be possible to point to a flame which had gone out and say that it was here or there?" [61]

Thus, there is a sense in which the individual flame is no longer identifiable, no longer individual, no longer limited to a single wick, but not therefore utterly destroyed, but rather expanded by losing its prior individuality. Like raindrops in the ocean, they do not lose all existence whatsoever, but rather lose the prior limitations and characteristics of their separateness.

Of course, all such materialistic analogies have serious drawbacks in expressing states of consciousness. The point is, that while there is a sense in which the smaller flame is extinguished in the great bonfire, there is also a sense in which it is not thereby annihilated but rather expanded. Pande concludes:

> [Nirvana] takes away the sting of death and leads to immortality in the sense of the "Upasama" [merging] of the individual in a higher reality, like that of a burning flame in its source.[62]

Narasu also insists that "the denial of a separate seld, an atman, does not obliterate the personality of a man, but liberates the individual from an error...."[63] This may seem like a very foreign concept to individualistically indoctrinated Westerners. How can we reconcile such a view of a world of peace and bliss, a nirvana of no birth, death, nor change, with the Buddhist dictum that all is change and suffering?

Conze answers that the rules of change and suffering apply to this phenomenal world, but that nirvana refers to a noumenal, ultimate reality which stands beyond the pale of "the sensory world of illusion and ignorance, a world inextricably interwoven with craving and greed."[64] Conze feels that the realm of nirvana is a realm akin to that which Western mystics also have so much trouble describing, and which can be reached in one's own experience by long meditative discipline. Sarathchandra similarly insists:

> In the state of nibbana, considered both as an objective sphere beyond that of the world of matter, as well as subjectively as a state reached by meditation, the individual attains final release from transmigration in the world of gods and men.[65]

There is a famous passage in the eighth Udana in which the Buddha asserts that there _is_ a state which is unborn and uncompound.[66] From this reference also, we may conclude that nirvana _is_, that the Buddha who has attained nirvana _is_, and that this teaching is not merely a sugar-coating for a doctrine of annihilationism. Why, then, was the Buddha so adamantly silent about the nature of this state? Pande suggests that

> One describes it best by preserving silence, for to say anything about it would be to make it relational and finite.... Buddha adhered to this position so rigorously that his silence has become enigmatic.[67]

Thomas concludes that the Buddha had reached the realisation of a state about which neither existence nor non-existence as we know it could be asserted. LaVallee Poussin agrees that western language lacks the subtlety needed to convey the nature of nirvanic states. If Conze is correct that only mystical knowledge is possible of nirvana, then it is understandable that the Buddha should desire to avoid easily misinterpreted metaphors. Jayatilleke reasons that

> The person who has attained the goal is beyond measure (_na pamanam atthi_). Elsewhere, it is said that he does not come within time, being beyond time (_kappam neti akappiyo_) or that he does not come within reckoning (_na upeti sankham_). In other words, we do not have the concepts or words to describe adequately the state of the emancipated person.[68]

It is just this inaccessibility to verbal description which has rendered nirvana such a difficult concept for language-bound western philosophers. The negative adjectives so often applied to nirvana should not be taken as evidence of Buddhist nihilism. Instead, like the _via negativa_ of the mediaeval Christian descriptions

of the mystic Holy, they deny that nirvana has anything in common with the mundane or conceptual. Upadhyaya explains

> They by denying everything mundane and conceptual to Nibbana suggest its supramundane and non-conceptual nature in the best possible way, though the positive expressions are also useful in so far as they assert the reality of Nibbana and allay the fears of the nihilistic conception.[69]

With typical Buddhist logic, we are left with the conclusion: Nirvana neither exists nor does not exist; i.e., it is neither within the realm of existence as we know it, nor is it an illusion. The saint is not reborn, nor does he die, nor is it proper to use any ordinary adjectives about the ineffable state he experiences. His old personality does not continue, and yet the person is not utterly annihilated. Such a state of nibbana is achievable, and it is a viable alternative to rebirth after death.

Two-valued logicians may dislike this approach. However, it is important to recognize that nirvana is not a purely theoretical and unfalsifiable entity, but a goal which the Buddha invites every man to try to find and experience for himself. Christians may fear the loss of personal identity in the "absorption" into the ultimately real. We can only observe that some great Christian mystics have shared this vision and these figures of speech. Nor is there anything inherently preferable in the Christian view that man's individuality is of paramount importance, over the Buddhist view that man's individuality is the source of his suffering. To accept that there are states of being beyond the phenomenal, not even amenable to description in everyday discourse, may

require a radical change of world-view for westerners lacking in mystical experience. Yet this idea--that there are blissful and otherwise indescribable nirvanic states--seems to be the clearest conclusion we can reach concerning what the Buddha experienced and was trying to communicate. Even the Buddha, who had tasted nirvana in this life, realised also the ineffability of his attainment. He called it "profound, difficult to comprehend, tranquil, subtle, beyond reason, excellent, realisable by the wise."[70] We have seen that his interpreters, both Indian and Western--have struggled with various nihilist and eternalist versions of nirvana; and we have seen that neither is necessary.

Buddhism presents us with two alternatives to the Western ideas of survival in heavenly realms: (1) a "rebirth" of mental processes and characteristics into another human (and possibly non-human) body; (2) an achievement of a transcendent bodiless state defying further referential description, but characterizable by peace, bliss, and absence of change and desire. Whether these theories can be empirically demonstrated will be the burden of a later section, but we have seen that rebirth and nirvana are viable concepts, at least within the Buddhists' logical systems. Moreover, the drastic difference between the logic, assumptions, empiricism, and world-views of Buddhists and modern materialists demonstrates that linguistic analysis of English alone, or positivistic demands for visible referents may be misguided in some cases. Now let us see how the idea of heavens developed within Buddhism too.

CHAPTER II: AFTERLIFE IN PURE LAND BUDDHISM

Introduction

In previous chapters, we observed that Early Buddhism offered two post-mortem alternatives: (1) continuing rebirth and suffering, and (2) nirvana. Both of these conditions deny the permanence of the self or a soul-like entity. Within the first thousand years after the Buddha's passing, however, arose many Mahayana Buddhist sects with radically different interpretations of life after death. This chapter will (A) trace the history of Mahayana ideas of "Buddha-fields" (Buddha-ksetra) and see where these other worlds fit within Mahayana Buddhist ontology, and (B) investigate Pure Land epistemology, i.e., the ways in which Pure Land Buddhists claimed to know the nature of Buddha-fields.

To limit our scope, we shall take the philosophy of Pure Land Buddhism as the prime example of Buddhist depictions of otherworldly heavens. While Pure Land Buddhism was neither a single school nor extricable from its connections with other sects, we shall concentrate on those features and sources most representative of it. We shall distill our accounts of Pure Land ontology and epistemology from the three Pure Land sutras, and from the writings of the major figures of the Pure Land tradition in China and Japan. We shall also refer briefly to experiential evidence on the nature of life after death in the Pure Land tradition.

A) The Pure Land in Mahayana Philosophy

1) Historical Background

The purpose of this chapter is to show how Mahayana Buddhists, exemplified by Pure Land schools, made philosophical sense of personal survival in heavenly realms invisible to this world. In its search for logical consistency and practical verificaton principles, early Pure Land Buddhism falls well within the demands of contemporary philosophers and scientists. After studying this system, we shall be better able to evaluate its philosophical viability, to resolve the issue of its foreign borrowings, and to advance our understanding of the alternatives possible in personal survival of death, in a Mahayana Buddhist context.

a) The Mahayana idea of Merit-Transference

Early Buddhism taught a path midway between the extremes of self-mortification and hedonism, emphasizing mental discipline and insight as well as physical self-control. The India in which early Buddhism was born already contained a plethora of religious philosophies; among the most important of these were priestly hierarchies which practiced ritual sacrifices according to the Vedas for the benefit of military and political patrons. The Buddha's teachings, however, seemed to offer liberation only to the individual who could devote his entire life to religious practices. It is not surprising to find that traditional priests criticised the Buddhist teachings as inferior to rituals which benefit many people simultaneously.[71]

From its Hindu contemporaries--and later from evangelical Christian missionaries--Theravada Buddhism faced charges of atheism and self-centredness. Yet not long after its inception, the seeds of a theology of compassion and altruism were already evident. At one point in the Kuddhakapatha, it is suggested that heavenly rebirth and even nirvana may be obtained through accumulation of merit.[72] In the Kathavatthu, we find a debate about the production of merit by making gifts to departed spirits (pretas).[73] By the time of the Milindapanha, the idea that a surplus of merit can be shared with or transferred to the departed is fairly well established.[74] If suffering spirits can thus benefit from human compassion, then analogously, suffering humans might benefit from the compassion of beings still higher on the "chain of being", such as deceased arhats or bodhisattvas.

Such Mahayanist ideas took ready root in Chinese soil. The Chinese had long believed that their ancestors benefited from offerings made by their living descendants.[75] Funeral practices were designed to assist the souls of the departed,[76] and there was a growing pre-Buddhist literature about dead men who visited heaven and later returned to earth.[77] The Chinese mind did not separate this world from the next as consciously as modern thinkers would. Giving food or even merit from one realm to another was like sending gifts or praise from one earthly kingdom to another. The origins of the central Mahayana doctrine of "merit-transference" can thus be found in both pre-Buddhist Hindu and Chinese societies.

b) Bodhisattvas

The early Buddhist concept of nirvana--a state transcending all realms of birth and death, causality, time, and change--was grounded in the meditative experiences and insights of the Buddha himself. However, the disciplined path of the Buddha was not open to the average person, although he asked his disciples to try it for themselves. Nor were the imageless descriptions of selflessness and quiescent beatitude designed to capture the minds of the multitudes. The terms used to characterize nirvana in a positive way were attractive enough, to be sure--peace, bliss, coolness, calmness, etc.--but they lacked any sensual imagery. To make these qualities of nirvana more understandable and desirable, they were first analogized to physical pleasures like the coolness of water or the light of the sun. Gradually there arose the notion that there actionally existed paradisaical lands in which these nirvanic qualities were embodied and experiencable,

> ...fostered by people's need for a concrete realm in which to look forward to being reborn, and by the growing desire to worship Buddha and be with him in person.[78]

Along with the gradual deificaton of the Buddha came the growth of the Bodhisattva idea. For the Buddha had declared that all men could test his path for themselves, implying that others could achieve similar spiritual insights by their own efforts. Admittedly, there were no other Buddhas on the horizon at the time. But in the vast expanses of cosmic time and the vast stretches of space envisioned in the Indian world-view, surely

there were other realms in which other beings had reached enlightenment after kalpas (cosmic eons) of discipline and self-perfection. While time and space might prevent common men from perceiving them, these bodhisattvas, in their perfected powers and wisdom, could see man, and reach out compassionately towards him, reasoned the Mahayanists. They developed the image that, just as the Buddha was surrounded by attentive disciples and arhats during his lifetime, now the Buddha (who had not died but passed into nirvana) was surrounded by bodhisattvas in a near-nirvanic state, continually listening to his blessed dharma (teachings of truth). The precise ontological status of this realm, somewhere between samsara and the nirvana of non-distinction, became a problem (like that of heaven in Christianity) which we shall examine in detail later. First we should try to understand the historic origins and development of these ideas of bodhisattvas, and their heaven-like Buddha-fields.

Even in early Buddhism, the concept of a dharma-propagating world-monarch, who also bears the marks of a Buddha (!), is found in the Digha-Nikaya.[79] The Samyutta-Nikaya explains how Sakka, the king of the gods, attained his position through long ethical disciplines. These accounts may well serve as forerunners or models of the early Bodhisattva concept; Rowell finds this influence of the Cakravartin (world-ruler) model particularly compelling.[80] So we can trace the roots of the bodhisattvas to a combination of factors: the idea of merit-transference, the idea that enlightened beings survive death in a near-nirvanic state, and the ideas of divine kings.

c) Buddha-fields

While many arhats or bodhisattvas might conceivably surround the Buddha, the scriptures made it clear that there was only one Buddha within any given world system.[81] At the same time, there was a growing tendency in Buddhism to expand the conception of the universe from that of a single network, to that of millions of universes, either infinitely distant from each other, or as interpenetrating systems.

> Cosmological discussions soon found their way into Buddhism, and their picture of the make-up of the total cosmos soon outreached the paltry ten-thousand-world systems which seem to have stood for the whole universe in the time of the earlier Nikayas....Just as this world has its Buddha Sakyamuni and constitutes his field, so (when the cosmos had expanded to include many sets of world-systems) each of the myriad other universes has its own Buddha and constitutes his field.[82]

Fujita finds four external influences which may have encouraged the development of the concept of Buddha-lands: (1) the idea of the universal monarch, and descriptions of his mythological kingdom of Kusavati; (2) stories of the northern land of Kuru, around Mt. Meru; (3) tales of the Hindu heavens; and (4) worship of stupas (originally burial mounds of the saints, which became embellished into ornate temples, the center of much pomp and ceremony.[83] He finds the myths of the Hindu heavens especially analogous to those of the Buddha-lands, both (1) in their development of visual imagery to depict an invisible realm of principle (brahman or dharma), and (2) in the specific contents of the Brahma-loka and Buddha-ksetra (Buddha-fields), following Nakamura.[84]

In short, by the time of the Christian era, five centuries after the passing of the Buddha, Buddhism had undergone numerous major theoretical adaptations. Some were in an effort to relate to or compete with contemporary Indian religions; others were part of a maturation process which demanded compassion, visual imagery, and attainable salvation. These factors resulted in the doctrines of the transference of merit, of compassionate bodhisattvas, and of many simultaneous heavenly Buddha-lands. In fact, by the second century of the Christian era, numerous competing sects had each developed their own versions of blessed Buddha-fields which could be attained at death for any of various meritorious practices. Transcendent heavens had become such a common feature of Buddhist literature that the name Sukhavati, which originally referred only to the land of Amitabha bodhisattva, became used as a general term for anything heavenly.[85]

When Buddhism encountered China, it was neither a self-centered asceticism nor an anti-metaphysical empiricism. It included concrete images of god-like bodhisattvas, who compassionately reached across whole world-systems to help their devotees, and layers of heavenly Buddha-lands intermediate between this cycle of rebirth (samsara) and ultimately selfless nirvana. To better study the ontology and epistemology of Buddha-fields, let us now turn to Pure Land Buddhist philosophy, as the outstanding example of a well-developed Mahayana view of the afterlife.

2) Scriptural Descriptions of Amida's Pure Land

Scriptural authority for the Pure Land of Amida is found in the Larger and Smaller Pure Land Sutras (sukhavati-vyuha; 無量寿経; 阿彌陀経) of which Sanskrit and Tibetan as well as Chinese versions are available. There is some debate about their precise dates, but scholars tend to place the first Chinese translations in the third century A.D., suggesting that the Sanskrit originals might have been composed a century or two before that date.[86] A third scriptural source, the Meditation on Amida (Amitayur-dhyana sutra; 観無量寿経) lacks non-Chinese equivalents and does not appear until perhaps 440 A.D.[87] The Gatha on the Larger Sutra, (優波提舎願生偈), attributed to Vasubandhu,[88] and the writings of T'an-luan, Tao-ch'o, and Shan-tao are often treated with almost scriptural authority by modern Pure Land Buddhists. Minor differences in these scriptures give rise to factionalism in the Japanese context, but the descriptions of the Pure Land in each of the sutra sources are generally in agreement.

a) Access to an Intersubjective Pure Land

The Larger Sutra tells the story of Dharmakara, who lived a life analogous to that attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, renouncing luxury to work for many kalpas of meditation and self-sacrifice to become a bodhisattva. Before Lokesvaraja, the lord of the universe, he vowed to save all beings in the pure Buddha-land which he would create through his merit at the completion of his endeavors. His vows describe both the perfections of that land, and

the beings in it, and also the methods by which humans can reach his land. Each vow concludes with the prayer, or vow, "[if I fail in this...] may I not attain enlightenment." It is a premise of the sutra that Dharmakara has already completed his practice, and now rules the Pure Land as Amida. Therefore the descriptions of heaven and the conditions of salvation are also taken to be established. The conditions necessary for birth in the Pure Land are epitomized by the 18th, 19th, and 20th vows, which may be summarized as follows:

(18) All beings in ten directions with sincere profound faith who seek to be born in my land and call upon my name ten times, except those who have committed the five cardinal crimes or injured the true dharma, shall be born in my land.

(19) I will appear at the moment of death to all beings of the ten directions committed to enlightenment and the practice of good deeds, who seek to be born in my land.

(20) All beings of the ten directions who hear my name, desire the Pure Land, and practice virtue in order to attain the Pure Land will succeed.[89]

The bodhisattva who is "speaking" in this passage about the means to reach his Buddha-land is alternately reffered to as Amitayus (the Buddha of limitless life) and Amitabha (the Buddha of limitless light), both of which are implied by the abbreviated form, Amida.

The land which Amida has established and over which he presides is also characterized by radiance and light. Its trees, ponds, fields, and palaces are of precious metals and gemstones. The ground is said to be covered with flowers which perfume the gentle breezes, and the birds and trees make soft harmonious music.

In the center of all this harmony is the hugs golden figure of Amida himself, surrounded by bodhisattvic disciples, preaching the dharma. There are no impurities: no ghosts, beasts, nor women; there is no sickness nor death; food is abundant but unnecessary.[90] There are no rules and no conflicts; free will is universal, but since cravings have been eliminated and everyone's wills are in accord with the dharma, there is no sin.[91] This Pure Land is a unique state intermediary between samsara and nirvana, from which attainment of nirvana is ultimately guaranteed.

b) Will-dependence

Another unique feature of the Pure Land of Amida, which has important philosophical consequences, is that the environment of the Pure Land is said to conform itself to the (non-conflicting) wills or wishes of the individuals therein. Many interesting specific examples are given. The 24th vow (22nd in Sanskrit versions) promises that if the beings dwelling in the Pure Land should wish their "stock of merit" to grow into any beautiful perceptible form, it should appear before them immediately. Later it continues:

> Again, O Ananda, the borders of those great rivers on both sides are filled with jewel trees of various scents, from which bunches of flowers, leaves, and branches of all kinds hang down. And if the beings who are on the borders of those rivers wish to enjoy sport full of heavenly delights, the water rises to the ankle only after they have stepped into the rivers, is they wish it to be so; or if they wish it, the water rises to their knees, to their hips, to their sides, and to their ears. And heavenly pleasures arise. Again, if the beings then wish the water to be cold, it is cold; if they wish it to be hot, it is hot; if they wish it to be hot and cold [!], it is hot and cold according to their pleasure.[92]

Similarly, it is related that those who wish to hear music, or the dharma, or some sermon, hear it as soon as they wish it--and those who do not wish to hear, hear nothing at that time. Those who wish to smell any fragrance have merely to think on it, and it wafts to their noses, while those who wish for different (or no) fragrances smell according to their desires. There is apparently a contradiction here; for how could two people in the same place have very different sensations of sounds or smells? The sutra makes clear that this is possible precisely because it is an idealistic realm (in the Berkeleyan sense). Neither the bodies of the perceivers nor the objects of their perceptions are objectively external to them; rather, all reality is ideational and perceptual:

> And again, O Ananda, in that world Sukhavati, beings do not take food consisting of gross materials such as gravy or molasses, but whatever food they desire, such food they perceive, as if it were taken, and become delighted in body and mind. Yet they need not put it into their mouths.... If they desire cloaks of different colors and many hundred thousand colors, then with these very best cloaks, the whole Buddha country shines. And the people feel themselves covered....And if they desire such ornaments, jewels, [etc.] ...they perceive themselves to be adorned with these ornaments....And if they desire a palace, with colors and emblems [etc.]...exactly such a palace appears.[emphasis ours][93]

Since there are only perceptions and no physical objects, one person's desires and perceptions need not infringe on any other's. This unique correspondence of the Buddha-land to the wishes of its inhabitants is the final characteristic of the Pure Land listed in Vasubandhu's description; it is similarly noted and praised by contemporary Master Hua in his exposition of the Smaller Sutra.[94]

c) The solipsistic "calyx state"

There is nothing explicitly purgatorial about the Pure Land, which is seen as a "waiting stage" or "intermediate state" ideal for meditation and practice conducive to the attainment of nirvana. There is a curious provisional state, however, for those who are born into the Pure Land by their own merits and by hearing the dharma, but who "doubt the knowledge of the Buddha."[95] The faithful are born full-grown from lotuses in the ponds of the Pure Land (there is no sexual reproduction). But these doubters are born into the dark tubular cayxes of the lotuses, where they exist in (spiritual) darkness, hidden from the light of Buddha and dharma.

They are still free from all evil, disagreeable, and painful experience. They can experience palaces and gardens, in an even more subjective idealistic sense; they are analogized to a king imprisoned alone in his own luxurious palace. They are provided with all comforts. Their punishment is that they cannot escape, cannot hear the dharma, cannot amass more moral merit nor progress spiritward for a period of "500 years". So they soon lose all satisfaction in their illusory pleasures and desire only their full birth into the presence of Amida Buddha and consequent knowledge of the dharma. Pure Land Master T'an-luan (d. ca. 554 A.D.) comments:

> Although they dwell in seven jewelled palaces, and have fine objects, smells, tastes, and sensations, yet they do not regard this as pleasure. Rather they regard it as suffering that they do not see the Three Precious Ones [Buddha, Dharma, Sangha] and that they cannot revere them and practice all of the various kinds of good deeds. They recognize their basic transgressions and deeply repenting them, seek only to leave that place.[92]

3) The Ontology of the Pure Land

a) The Buddhist schema of levels of existence

If we are to understand the nature of the Pure Land, we must place it in the context of the Mahayana view of the universe. The entire realm of samsara--of birth and death, causal conditioning, impermanence and suffering--is believed to consist of three "worlds:" the world of desire (this world), world of form, and world of no form. The latter two worlds are heavenly realms only inhabited by gods and only accessible by meditation or rebirth; they are rarefied planes devoid of matter, and they are so rarely experienced that they are little discussed.

The world of desire, lowest on the continuum, consists of six paths or levels (gati,趣) comprised of gross (visible) and subtle (invisible) matter, ranging from hell-dwellers, ghosts, and animals to titans, men, and desire-ridden gods. Although ultimately unreal, in the sense that it will be transcended, this material realm seems to possess a physical nature independent of our perceptions of it, and seems relatively imprevious to merely mental attempts to change it. The Buddha born into this realm is called the nirmanakaya, or transformation body. (化身)

In traditional Buddhism, the only alternative to this samsara was nirvana, which underlies and transcends all change and distinctions. Here is pure bliss and truth, characterized positively, or negatively described, it is pure void, the realization of the illusoriness of all else. The Buddha eternally exists at this level,

but has a body of truth (dharmakaya, 法身)only in a metaphoric and not in a physical or perceptible sense. Somewhere between samsara and nirvana (either within or beyond the three-worlds, according to different sects) must lie the Pure Land, which is neither subject to change and suffering, nor identifiable with nirvana itself. We might tentatively diagram the situation as follows:[97]

NIRVANA

I Dharma-realm (法土); Noumenon, expressing the dharmakaya 法身 of Buddha. This realm is not only above, but underlying and interpenetrating all levels; the supersensible ground of all.

BUDDHA-FIELDS

II Recompense realm (報土) from merit-accumulation in the "Triple World," also called the Response realm (応土), emanating from the higher Dharma-realm for the sake of responding to the needs of beings. Into this realm is expressed the Reward Body (報身) or Compensation Body (応身) of Amida and other transcendent Buddhas (sambhogakaya). It includes the inter-subjective idealism of the Pure Land, and the subjective idealisms of the calyx states.

SAMSARA (Birth and Death)

III Transformation realm (化土), in which the nirmanakaya is manifest. Called the "Triple World," it may be subdivided into:

A) World of no-form (arupadhatu; 無色界) incl. four heavens corresponding to 5th to 8th bhumis (meditational stages).

B) World of form (rupadhatu; 色界) incl. 18 heavens; nine for the 4th bhumi; three each for 1st, 2nd, 3rd bhumis.

C) World of desire (kamadhatu; 欲界) incl. 6 divisible levels:

1) Heavens of Desire (6) (satkamavacara; 六欲天)

2) Men (manusya; 人)

3) Titans (asura; 阿修羅)

4) Animals (tiryag-yoni; 畜生) incl. insects.

5) Ghosts (preta; 餓鬼)

6) Hell-dwellers (naraka; 地獄) incl. eight levels.

The sutras themselves do not make explicit where the Western Pure Land of Amida falls within this Buddhist scheme, and this naturally led to numerous interpretations. The commonest anti-Pure Land objection was that if laymen could hope to reach the Western Pure Land by simple devotionalism, then it must be within the realm of form, like the heavens of the gods.[98] Others, like Ching-ying Hui-yuan admitted that the Pure Land trascended heavens of desire and form, but emphasized the shallowness of an idealistic land: "Although this land it pure, it is generated by erroneous thoughts and hence is as empty and unreal as what is seen in a dream."[99] In fact, this criticism might apply appropriately to the calyx state, where all experiences and impressions are the solipsistic product of the individual's mental activity. However, it fails to see the objective idealism conferred on the major features of the Pure Land by Amida Buddha (acting in much the same role as God in Bishop Berkeley's idealism). It is true that even the perceptual forms of the Pure Land must at some point be overcome. It is not true that they are therefore unimportant, nor that they are materialistic because they seem to have form to the perceivers.

b) Objective idealism of the Pure Land

Those who are now accepted as the "patriarchs" of the Pure Land tradition are fairly unanimous in their placement of the Pure Land above samsara. Vasubandhu rhapsodizes, "When I meditate on the aspects of your land, they go beyond the way of the three worlds."[100]

T'an-luan takes a more careful logical approach, arguing that:

(1) Sukhavati has form, so it is not in the formless realm;

(2) It has solidity and location, but rupadhatu has no location nor solidity, so Sukhavati is not in rupadhatu (the world of form).

(3) Sukhavati transcends desires, so is not in the world of desire.

Conclusion: Sukhavati is not in or of the triple-world of samsara. Yet we know, from meditative experience, that the Pure Land exists. Therefore, its existence must be subtle and transcendental; outside of samsara, but not yet nirvana. Corless observes, "The subtle existence of a realm outside the triple world is a key point in T'an-luan's thought."[101] T'an-luan adds that since the Pure Land is created by Amida's mind, it has an objectivity and ontological status superior to the mental illusions which men create.[102]

Tao-ch'o is more explicit that "Amida is the Recompensed Buddha [sambhogakaya]; and the land of bliss, adorned with gems, is the recompensed Land."[103] Tao-ch'o had to defend the aspiration for the Pure Land from critics who held that any notion of shapes, forms, lands, or gems was an unworthy ideal. Tao-ch'o found theoretical justification for seeking the Pure Land by an inversion of the Two Truths theory. In the Vimalakirtinirdesa sutra, it is said that bodhisattvas, while knowing the lands of their creation to be noumenally unreal, are still justified in creating such illusions as the Pure Land to save sentient beings. Tao-ch'o takes this to mean that we humans are equally justified in discriminating and using these phenomenal forms for our own benefit, since this is in response to the bodhisattva's creation

of the Pure Land.[104] Of course, the "use" of phenomenal forms in the Pure Land is on a very sophisticated level, for the purpose of enlightenment and not sensual gratification, since there are no lusts nor non-spiritual interests in the Pure Land. Still, Tao-ch'o's interpretaton of the Two Truths theory served to philosophically legitimatize the concretization of nirvanic qualities into Pure Land imagery. This reinforced the idea that the Pure Land, although ultimately idealist and illusory, would nonetheless be experienced as a very real-seeming phenomenon after death.

Although there may seem to be a contrast between the relatively objective worlds of form and matter (visible and invisible) and the relatively subjective worlds of idea-projection (response lands), ultimately, these are variations only in degree of delusion (of the percipients), and not in underlying ontology. From an ultimate standpoint, even the most stubbornly objective realms of appearance are themselves mere productions of mind. This is made clear in numerous scriptural sources. The Karuna-pundarika relates a curious little dialogue between the Buddha and Mahabrahma, in which the Buddha persuades Mahabrahma that he had not created the world, and he asks the Buddha for instruction. The Buddha responds:

> It is by karma [mental action, volition, and conception] that the world has been created...made to appear; by karma that beings have been created; it is from karma, arising from karma as a cause that the distinctions of being come to be.[105]

Since karma refers primarily to mental activity, it is mental activity, then, which has produced the world, as Rowell has argued, relying on Abhidharma as well as Mahayana texts.[106]

The Hua-Yen (Avatamsaka) Sutra is even clearer that all Buddha-lands arise from the mind, taking on any and all forms; all are phenomenally real in the sense that they are experiencable, but all are noumenally grounded in mind alone.[107] There is a subtle but important philosophical shift in the meaning of the word karma taking place in these discussions. The early Buddhists had felt that karma would lead man to be reborn in a world causally suited to his past thought and action; that he would choose just the right womb and environment that his past karma might come to fruition. Mahayana Buddhists, on the other hand, were now proposing that previous karma not only affected the choice of, but in some sense actually created the whole world into which one would be reborn. The projections by both humans and bodhisattvas are analogized to the siddhis (psychic powers) demonstrated by yogins and meditators in both Buddhist and Yogic traditions. Ultimately, therefore, both the Pure Land (and Amida's sambhogakaya) and the triple worlds (and Gautama's nirmanakaya) are equally illusory projections of one underlying Buddha/dharma--and they are equally real-seeming to those trapped within perceptual or discriminatory perspectives. But then how can we determine which experiences are fundamental, which misguided? Do meditative states reveal reality or merely psychological conditions? More critically, if we are caught up in this realm of materialist desires, how can we know of such idealistic Pure Lands, much less attain to them? This questioning brings us to the important issue of epistemology.

B) The Epistemology of Pure Land Buddhism

1) Meditation in Theory and Practice

Like the early Buddhists, the later Mahayana Buddhists considered themselves to be basing their philosophy on real experience, not fantasy. In this sense, they may equally be called empiricists --but without the mechanistic materialist presuppositions which have traditionally dominated modern western empiricism. Pure Land Buddhists accepted the provisional reality of all experiences, including dreams, visions, and meditative states. In particular, their meditative experiences tended to shed doubt on the ultimacy of the realm of sense-impression and its underlying "objectivity." The verification of the existence and investigation of the nature of the Pure Land was considered to be within the capacities of sincere Pure Land Buddhist practitioners. Meditative vision--a long-standing Buddhist practice for gaining true knowledge--is the first tool of Pure Land epistemology, and its origins stem from the scriptures themselves.

a) Objects of meditation

The Meditation on Amitayus Sutra is a veritable handbook of the procedures to be followed in order to gain a vision of Amida. It begins by describing meditations on physical objects, such as the setting sun, or a bowl of water. The meditator is told to fix the objects permanently in his mind, so that he can visualize them realistically even with his eyes closed. This process, which

we have called meditation, is not a discursive "thinking about" these things, but an envisioning, an imaging so clear that the object of concentration actually seems to stand before the visualiser, objective in its own right. Then the practitioner is told to hold this apparently externalized thought-image steadfast and to inspect the image in minute visual detail.[108]

Following the meditations on the sun, water, and physical objects, the Sutra tells the practitioner to visualize jewel trees, flowers, and then buildings of the Pure Land. Thereafter, he is to focus on the Buddha Amitayus and his surrounding bodhisattvas in minute and attentive detail. As he focuses on each tiny part of the image or mark of the Buddha, it seems to expand and loom immense before him. Finally, he is told to meditate upon and realistically visualize his own rebirth in the Pure Land:

> Imagine thyself to be born in the world of highest happiness in the western quarter, and to be seated cross-legged, on a lotus flower there. Then...thine eyes will be opened so as to see the Buddhas and bodhisattvas who fill the whole sky; thou wilt hear the sounds of waters and trees, the notes of birds, and the voices of many Buddhas preaching the excellent Law in accordance with the twelve divisions of the scriptures. When thou hast ceased from that meditation, thou must remember the experience ever after....The innumerable incarnate bodies of Amitayus, together with those of Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, constantly come and appear before such devotees [who have once achieved this meditation].[109]

Although the Meditation Sutra does not detail the postures and preparations for meditation, much of this may be assumed to be known already by practicing Buddhists and therefore superfluous.

b) The practice of meditation

Among Chinese meditators, Shan-tao is most clear in discussing the practical aspects of Pure Land meditation. To obtain such visions of the Pure Land, he says, one should ritually purify himself, limit his diet to small amounts of rice and vegetables, control his mind, repeat tens of thousands of mantras, and go without sleep for seven days (!)[110] In another context, he declares that confessions of one's sins should leave the practitioner crying streams of tears--an emotional catharsis--preparatory to these meditations.[111]

Pure Land meditations were also an important part of Tendai practice adopted by Saicho and Ennin (Jikaku), who established Japanese Tendai Buddhism on Mt. Hiei after studying in China in the ninth century. Genshin (945-1017) is among the Tendai masters who remain famous today for their emphasis on Pure Land meditation. He describes their "constantly walking meditation" (常行三昧) in the following terms:

> For a single period of ninety days only circumambulate exclusively....You should make this vow: "Even if my bones should wither and rot, I will not rest until I realize this samadhi." If you arouse the great faith nothing can equal you; no one can rival the wisdom which you will enter into. Thus always obey your teacher. Until the three months have elapsed, have no worldly desires even for the snap of a finger. Until the three months have elapsed, do not lie down even for the snap of a finger. Until the three months have elapsed, constantly walk without stopping [except for natural functions].... [112]

In theory, then, the meditators of tenth century Japanese Tendai Buddhism were not distant from their predecessors in China and

even India. Both took vegetarianism, abstinence, and long, steady, devoted efforts to be the minimal prerequisites of visions of the Pure Land.

Modern medical studies have shown that practices of sensory deprivation, sleeplessness, or emotional catharses alone are enough to produce visions. In Pure Land Buddhism, these practices were taken together with incessant mantra repetitions, and the conscious desire to project images of heavens or Buddhas. There can be little doubt that such visions were experienced as reported by some practitioners. The critical difference, of course, is that modern medics would tend to interpret such experiences as non-referential hallucinations of an unbalanced and disease-prone mind. This is based on their presupposition that the material world as perceived is the only normal and "real" standpoint. Buddhists, however, would say that it is precisely such meditative experiences which give the lie to the modern materialist's assumptions, and demonstrate that there are in fact other levels or layers to reality, which is itself ultimately mind-dependent.

c) Evidence of visions in China and Japan

Although not directly connected to the later Pure Land tradition, an early development in Chinese Pure Land meditation and practice was the establishment of the White Lotus Group on Mount Lu-Shan by Hui-yuan in 402.[113] Hui-yuan himself was both interested in and personally prone to having visions of the Pure Land. He encouraged both meditation and the painting of imagery condu-

cive to visualization by his followers. He was frequently ill in his later years, but his writings about the subtle powers of the soul, moving detached from individual bodies, are very reminiscent of modern out-of-body experiences.[114] Visions were widely reported among his disciples as well. Liu Ch'eng-chih, who had helped to draft the charter of the White Lotus Society, saw images of the Buddha floating in the air around him after his meditations (as we saw the Meditation Sutra had predicted). He also predicted the date of his own funeral and passed away sitting upright and facing west, without a trace of disease.[115]

Even devout Buddhists did not always accept such experiences uncritically. Hui-yuan himself was troubled about the ontological status of such visions, and sent many questions to Kumarajiva to clarify the matter.[116] We have already observed that Tao-ch'o felt that the observable forms of Amida and the Pure Land were created by the bodhisattva for our benefit, and thus were as provisionally real and useful as any other objects; and his disciple Shan-tao strongly supported this claim.[117] Shan-tao too had many impressive visualisation experiences which inspired his art, his teaching, and his life.[118] He encountered the Pure Land in repeated trance experiences, which he attempted to communicate through sermon and sculpture--and he was so convincing that at least one listener promptly committed suicide in the hopes of attaining the Pure Land.[119] Master Fa-chao, often called the "second Shan-tao," had a vision of his master-to-be (Cheng-yuan) while in meditation on the Pure Land, and promptly sought him out.[120] Fa-chao had nu-

merous visions in constantly-walking meditation, and felt that he had been taught a five-tone mantra recitation by Amida himself while in meditation.[121] It was this same Fa-chao who became the teacher of Ennin (Jikaku) visiting from Japan, who in turn conveyed the practices and teachings to Mt. Hiei.

We have already mentioned Genshin, whose Essentials of Rebirth (往生要集) and paintings of hells and the Pure Land gave a substantial impetus to Amida-worship in Japan. The important thing to note about Genshin's paintings in this context is that they were inspired by vivid dreams and visions.[122] Rensei relates: "It was after his dreams that Eshin [Genshin] wrote the Ojoyoshu, and Chingai his Ketsujo Ojoshu."[123] Also on Mt. Hiei, the Bishop Ryonin, who had meditated for years in the Mudo-ji (temple), changed his life-style and left to start the first Japanese Amidist sect after a vision:

> In 1117, at the age of 46, Ryonin experienced the most significant event in his life....Amida appeared during his nembutsu meditation and directly revealed the philosophy of the yuzu nembutsu as the pathway to salvation. At the same time, [Ryonin] was presented with a visual mandala of Amida.[124]

Ryonin thereupon went to the capital, converted the emperor, and had several visions of Bishamonten, one of which left him a scroll "as proof of the heavenly visit."[125] The scroll no longer exists, but the philosophically interesting point is that no one protested about the interaction of the visionary world with the physical world in this way, since both were accepted as being in some sense illusory and ideational.

Gods also appeared to Ryonin's disciple Eiku while he was praying,[126] and it was this same Eiku (along with Koen, compiler of the Fuso Ryakki) who was to train the monk Genku, better known as Honen. Honen emulated Shan-tao particularly because "Master Shan-tao embodied the virtue of samadhi [meditative vision]."[127] Honen also believed strongly in meditation, and in the first two months of 1198 alone he perfected the meditations on water, on the lapis lazuli land, on the jewelled lakes and towers and the lapis lazuli palace of the Pure Land.[128] So numerous and important were Honen's visions that he kept a careful record of them for eight years (1198-1206), with the notation that they were to be kept private until his death.[129]

It is interesting that Honen's greatest oppnent and detractor, Koben (Myoe) respected him throughout his life. It was only after the posthumous publication of Honen's Senchakushu, which advocates recitation over meditation, that Koben attacked his position.[130] Koben himself kept an elaborate record of his dreams for 40 years, "seemingly indicative of an inherent inclination to fall easily into samadhi, and also of his serious reverence for such experiences." Although Koben was of the Kegon school, his protest was not against the Pure Land; on the contrary, it was that Honen's advocacy of recitation over meditation strayed from true Pure Land practice![131] Thus, even monks from other schools respected Pure Land meditations as a central practice and key to verification of the scriptures. Pure Land Buddhists, however, had another chance to glimpse the Pure Land: the moment of death.

2) Deathbed Visions: Philosophical Background

a) Theory of deathbed visions

Even in Early Buddhism, the focus of consciousness at the moment of death was thought to have particular importance for the nature of rebirth.[132] While the Hindus envisioned karma as a supernatural storehouse of seeds waiting to bear fruit, and the Jains depicted karma as subtly material dust clinging to the soul, the Buddhists thought of each moment influencing subsequent moments in and through itself. While it seems probable that bad men would harbor bad thoughts and good men, noble thoughts, at their deaths, this need not necessarily be the case. The Buddha reported that in his enlightenment experience, he had seen bad men born into good situations, and vice-versa, depending in part on the nature of their thoughts at the moments of death.[133] When King Milinda asked how an evil man with sins as weighty as a stone could fail to fall into hell at death, it was explained that even a stone could float if placed in a boat.[134] In Pure Land Buddhism, the divine grace of Amida is analogized to this boat, which can save all men regardless of the weight of their misdeeds, if they simply trust in it. There are even some Hindu precedents for this idea, which was developed more thorougly by later Vedantins.[135]

All three of the Pure Land Sutras are predicated on the view that man's consciousness at death can enable his rebirth into the Pure Land, through the miraculous power and aid of Amida. The Larger Sutra makes this explicit in the 19th (Skt: 18th) vow:

> O Bhagavat, if those beings who have directed their thoughts towards the highest perfect knowledge in other worlds, and who, after having heard my name, when I have approached the Bodhi [knowledge] have meditated on me with serene thoughts; if at the moments of their deaths, after having approached them, surrounded by an assembly of Bhiksus, I should not stand before them, worshipped by them, so their thoughts may not be troubled, then may I not obtain the highest perfect knowledge [which has already been obtained].[136]

We find a text of similar import in the Smaller Sutra as well:

> Whatever son or daughter of a family shall hear the name of the blessed Amitayus, the Tathagata, and having heard it, shall keep it in mind..., when that son or daughter of a family comes to die, then that Amitayus, the Tathagata, surrounded by an assembly of disciples and followed by a host of Bodhisattvas, will stand before them at the hour of death, and they will depart this life with tranquil minds. After their deaths, they will be born in the world Sukhavati, in the Buddha country of the same Amitayus....[137]

The Meditation Sutra goes into still more elaborate detail, describing how the deathbed experiences of people will differ according to their nature of their meditations and faith. Thus, the most accomplished of meditators sees Amida surrounded by countless Bodhisattvas, his land and palace, all at once, and Amitayus sends radiant light to shine upon the face of the dying believer. Those of lesser belief see flowers, thrones, and different colors of light according to their grades. The lowest grades of people to be born into the Pure Land first briefly taste the fires of hell, and then are rescued into flower-covered lakes, or they may see a sun-like disc (without the retinues of Bodhisattvas or Amida's form) to be followed by birth in the Pure Land 49 days (a short time) thereafter.[138] The important thing about these descriptions is that they tally with experiential accounts whch have been preserved.

b) Death-bed practices in Pure Land Buddhism

If we turn our attention first to the best-known early cases in China, it is clear that Lu-shan Hui-yuan's White Lotus Society was not merely a meditational group, but was also a common compact to help each other achieve the Pure Land after death. Shan-tao, always an advocate of meditation during his life, placed no lesser importance on the visions of the moment of death. He invoked his monks tending the deathbeds of Pure Land believers:

> If the [dying] patient has a vision, let him tell the attendant about it. As soon as you have heard it, record it just as you have heard. Moreover, when the sick person is not able to relate it, the attendant should ask over and over, "What kind of vision do you see?" If he tells of seeing his sinful deeds [= a life review?], let those beside him reflect on the Buddha for him and assist him in his repentances and thoroughly cancel the sinful deeds. If the sinful deeds are canceled, and he sees before him in response to his Buddha-reflection the lotus dais holy assembly, record it just as described...[139]

The Japanese monk Genshin relates the above recommendation with evident approval, and clearly Honen also felt that it was important to die composed in mind while reciting the name of Amida continually (nembutsu) , to assure the vision of and passage to the Pure Land at death.[140]

Just as meditating monks first validated their religious faiths by their ascetic visualisation practices, and later found images of the Buddha spontaneously appearing in front of them, so all believers were taught to expect Amida to meet them at their deathbeds if they were at peace with the cosmos.[141] Some later commentators have tried to interpret Pure Land Buddhism in a more

existential and less soteriological sense, but this simply does not square with the clear meaning of the three central Pure Land scriptures. This interpretation is particularly unequivocal in the Chinese of T'an-luan.[142]

It was not until 1385 that Ryoyo Shogei "wrought nothing short of a revolution" in Pure Land Buddhism by declaring that:

> ...the ordinary conception of the soul's being transported to Paradise and born there was merely a figure of speech... the fact being that neither Amida, nor the sainted beings, nor the "nine ranks" are to be conceived as existing "over there" at all, because the Pure Land is the ultimate and absolute reality, and that is everywhere, so that we may be identified with it right here where we are...[143]

This interpretation, which has come to be accepted as the standard by many modern Pure Land Buddhists, is a radical departure from the origins and faith of a millenium of Pure Land practitioners. Despite its deviance from the ontological commitments of the early Pure Land Buddhists, even this interpretation is not like the materialists' assertions that there is no heaven because the known physical world is all that exists. Rather, it asserts in a truly Buddhist fashion that the Pure Land is not a distant place, but a transcendent reality of which we can become conscious here and now through proper practice.

The widely reported deathbed experiences of Pure Land believers served to confirm the conviction of the validity of this source of knowledge. The available documentation is immense, so let us review just a sampling of important cases as representative of the phenomenology of death-bed experiences of Pure Land Buddhists.

c) Deathbed experiences in China and Japan

There are occasional pre-Buddhist accounts of Chinese visiting heaven on their deathbeds, or dying and later reviving to describe their experiences to their astounded witnesses.[144] Before Amida had come to the fore, there were already accounts of visions of heavens opening at the death of Tao-an, a devotee of Maitreya, and others.[145] It is not surprising that the majority of such accounts, however, are found within the Pure Land tradition, which placed such great emphasis on the moment of death and on recording the events surrounding that moment, as we observed above.

Among the disciples of Lu-shan Hui-yuan, one by the name of Seng-chi had a dream while very ill, that the Buddha of light took him through the void of the whole universe. He awoke free from all signs of disease and suffering. The next night, he sought his sandals, said that he must leave, and then lay down and died, staring into the void with joyful anticipation on his face.[146] Hui-yuan's star disciple Hui-yung, in the throes of a grave illness in 414, suddenly asked for his clothes and sandals, folded his hands, and tried to stand, as if he were seeing something. "When the attendant monks asked him what he saw, he replied,'The Buddha is coming.' When he finished speaking, he died."[147]

The first Pure Land master recognized by most Japanese scholars is T'an-luan, who "saw a golden gate open before him" while recovering from a grave illness. This inspired him to seek more knowledge about the afterlife. He studied first Taoist and then

Buddhist texts, finally accepting the Pure Land Sutras given him [by Bodhiruci?] as the truth.[148] His spiritual disciple, Tao-ch'o, also had a grave illness at age 65. He felt himself to be dying when he suddenly had a vision of T'an-luan, who commanded him to continue teaching.[149] It is recorded that T'an-luan's voice was heard and heavenly flowers were seen by all present. Thereupon Tao-ch'o quickly recovered, gained a new set of teeth, and was revered like a god by his disciples as he continued to preach for 18 more years.[150]

It was Chia-ts'ai, who lived shortly after Tao-ch'o, who compiled the first collection of deathbed experiences, the Ching-t'u-lun.[151] Of the twenty accounts collected, half are of monks, the other half of laypersons. In at least one case, that of "Dharma-master Chu-hung," not only the dying person, but all present were said to have seen the body of the Buddha coming from the Pure Land to welcome him.[152] In other cases, devout laywomen[153] and laymen have visions of heavenly hosts at their deathbeds. In yet another, a butcher had first a vision of hell, whereupon he was terrified into chanting the name of Amida, whereupon he had a vision of Amida offering him the lotus seat, and passed away.[154] By the eleventh century, such accounts numbered more than one hundred. Whalen Lai typifies their deathbed descriptions as follows:

> The "visitation" scene is the climax and this usually involves mysterious fragrance, light, clouds, music or colors (the best of the senses) and on rare occasions, actual ascent to the West....Visions of hells or Pure Lands are common, and no doubt Shan-tao's evangelical zeal in depicting these contrasting destinies in picture helped in inculcating an appreciation of the splendors and horrors of the two alternatives.[155]

In Japan, the first distinctly Buddhist compilation of miracles is the Ryoiki (822). Its stories date mostly from 724-796, and provide specific names, dates (down to the hour and day) and locations for their occurences, a fact favoring their historicity.[156] The Ryoiki contains many accounts of human visits to the land of the dead, usually by someone who dies and is revived a few days later. The revived persons tell of their experiences in bright clouds and golden mountains (I,5), in golden palaces (I,30; II, 16) or in a hell where sinners are judged by Yama, god of the dead, from which they are sent back and revived (II, 19; III, 9).[157]

In the Nihon Ojo Gokurakuki (ca. 985-6), not only monks but commoners see the Pure Land or Maitreya's heaven while temporarily dead.[158] In the Konjaku Monogatari of the 11th century, the Bodhisattva Jizo (Ksitigarbha) saves or escorts the dying people because of their morality or worship of him during their lives. Carmen Blacker summarizes:

> A remarkable number of tales can be found which describe a priest who falls sick and dies. For one reason or another his funeral is delayed and...he suddenly comes back to life. He has meanwhile been on a long and strange journey, he tells his astonished disciples and friends....They cross a dismal river and eventually arrive at a glittering palace....[160]

Similar tales of deathbed revivial with visions of Jizo, Maitreya, or Amida are reported in the Fuso Ryakki, compiled in the mid-12th century about events through 1094.[161] The Fuso Ryakki is important partly for its accounts found in no other sources, and pratly because its compiler was the eminent monk Koen of Enryakuji, who taught and ordained Honen.[162]

The Uji Shui Monogatari is variously dated from 1188 to 1215, with the latter date most strongly favored by scholars.[163] It has accounts of revived corpses who report having been saved by Jizo (III, 12-13), admonished to lead holier lives (VIII, 4), or even finding that Jizo and Yama are one and the same (VI, 1). An increasing incidence of tales of hell over the Pure Land may reflect the troubles of that uncertain era. In Kamakura Japan, the Genko Shakusho became yet another prominent source of resuscitation records. In one case, the monk Enno dies (at age 57) and revives only to find himself deaf and dumb for three years. When he regains his faculties, he speaks of the Pure Land, Maitreya's Palace, Yama's hells, and a miraculous rescue by six figures of Jizo Bodhisattva.[164]

The catalogue of Buddhist rebirth tales continues even up to the present century.[165] But these examples should suffice to show that in each century, there have been either documented cases, or at least overwhelming and widespread belief in the possibility of visiting the Pure Land or hell and later returning to the world.

Nor should we assume that the scholars who recorded such tales were all credulous, uncritical, or propagandizers. Pure Land Buddhists found philosophical support in the coherency and consistency of the visions described in several sources: (1) the authority of the sutras; (2) the visions of practicing meditators; and (3) the experiences of laymen as well as monks on their deathbeds, or during temporary death. Sixteenth century Chu-hung, among others, was particularly concerned with the status of the objects experienced in these states. He concluded that although there was a sense in which

they were mind-dependent, the fact that everyone at death reports essentially similar imagery demonstrates that the Pure Land is indeed intersubjective and substantial and not hallucinatory or illusory.[166] So Pure Land Buddhists would say that the Pure Land is immediately given through phenomenal experience, and also that this experience is confirmed by and found consistent with several types of testimony based on others' experiences. Moreover, the concept of a Pure Land above the realm of samsara fits well with a theory of idealism which makes sense of both this and future worlds, in a way which a materialistic metaphysics cannot.

d) Popular piety and the decline of meditation

Throughout the history of Sino-Japanese Pure Land Buddhism, there is considerable discussion of the proper practice, called meditation (Skt: smrti; Ch: nien; Jap: nen). It is clear that the character [念] originally means "to think on" or "to hold in mind." All three Pure Land sutras stress that, whatever other practices might enable one's birth in the Pure Land, holding in mind the thought of Amida and the Pure Land was a minimal prerequisite. Pictures, sutras, or mantras might be used as aids to visualisation, but the central process was one of meditation.[167]

By the time of the Chinese patriarch T'an-luan (ca. 488-554), Chinese Buddhists were already feeling pressures to simplify and concretize Indian meditative practices into forms more familiar and accessible to the Chinese. T'an-luan still preferred to use nien as meditation, or thinking continuously on the Buddha, but

he occasionally consented reluctantly to oral recitation of Amida's name in preference to the even less meditative brush writing.[168] The later patriarchs, however, were even more convinced of the infirmities of their age and of the need of ignorant laymen for simple practices. Therefore they placed increasing emphasis on a recitative nien-fo (Jap: nembutsu), a mantra calling on the name of Amitayus.[169] Neither Tao-ch'o nor Shan-tao excluded a range of other practices which include discipline and meditation. But in popular practice, the recitative aspect of nien-fo began to usurp the meditative from this time.[170] This change from meditative to recitative emphasis contributed to the increasing popularity of Pure Land Buddhism in the lay community. At the same time, it deprived such practitioners of a tool which had been crucial to the verification of their scriptures in personal meditative experience.

The process of secularization continued in Japan. Although Chiko and Gyogi had had impressive visions of the Pure Land in the Nara period,[171] and Genshin's rebirth tales and paintings were based on his visions, it was rather the paintings themselves, or the song-and-dance nembutsu practiced by wandering monks like Koya[172] which led to the spread of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. In Honen, we see the almost paradoxical situation of a master of meditation, with many personal visions of the Pure Land, writing in secret that recitation alone is adequate to assure rebirth,[173] while traditional meditating Buddhists denounced such heresies.

It was Honen's disciple Shinran who saw the logical consequences of this move: if man were really powerless to meditate or save himself in this age, then even recitation could have no salvific power. Salvation was totally beyond man's power, and available only through the power of Amida. In this context, the nembutsu becomes merely a cry of hope and gratitude.[174] Shinran's letters make clear that he expected to live an individual, personal life with his disciples and friends in another world after death.[175] But his abandonment of meditation--and the celibacy and vegetarianism prerequisite to meditation--deprived him of the ability to confirm this fate, and left him vacillating in continual doubt.[176]

Furthermore, Shinran reinterpreted many traditional Buddhist terms to suit his own reformed theology. Rebirth (ōjō) he took to mean simply the experience of feeling Amida's grace in this world. Raigo he changed from "Amida's welcome at the deathbed" to mean "Amida's bringing man home [in this life]." Nirvana, which used to refer to an unqualifiable state experiencable only in meditation or upon dissolution of the personality, Shinran treats as a blissful but still personal state hoped for after death.[177] Thus Shinran thoroughly secularized Buddhism, leaving the way open for new interpretations that the Pure Land were simply a state of faith to be gained here and now, or a useful psychological myth with no deeper ontological ground.[128] Modern Japanese Pure Land schools teach mantra recitation alone, and remain agnostic on the crucial philosophical question of personal survival of death in the Pure Land.[179] But if there were really nothing more after death, then

this recitation and devotionalism is at best an object-less delusion, and the Pure Land tradition is reduced to a hollow, man-made mythology. It is important, therefore, to distinguish the ontologically noncommittal modern Pure Land sects from the philosophically rich traditions from which they depart.

The traditional Pure Land Buddhist could epistemologically justify his knowledge of the Pure Land on several mutually supporting grounds. He could point to the phenomenologically self-validating character of direct experience, and the correspondence between descriptions given in the scriptures and the visions which he had while in meditation. To the challenge that daily worldly experiences somehow show his trances to be hallucinatory, he had several replies in favor of his metaphysical idealism:

(1) The idea that the common-sense world is more real than the visionary is no more than an unprovable assumption.

(2) The idealistic account of visionary experience makes better sense than that of the materialist, for the materialists are unable to explain either mental events or the similarities of the contents of different persons' visions in physico-chemical terms.

(3) The idealistic account is also preferable because it makes sense of survival, which is necessarily of the mind, because not of the corpse. If conscious survival of any form at all is accepted, the Buddhist may hold that his idealistic world view is more consistent than either a dualism which must explain the relations of matter and mind, or of an ontological materialism which cannot deal with the survival of disembodied consciousness.

3) Conclusions

The issues addressed in this chapter have significant implications for modern scholarship in the areas of psychology, philosophy of religion, and ontology. Let us consider each in turn.

a) Correspondence with medical evidence

It is fascinating to note the many parallels between the descriptions of the Pure Land seen at death or in meditation and the results of contemporary statistical surveys of what people "see" at death.[180] Compassionate figures of golden light, "leading" the dying person to a realm of peace and joy, with multicolored flowers, splendid trees, lakes, and pavilions, are reported frequently by modern western man as well as by the ancient Chinese. The peace and "mood elevation" promised by the sutras is widely observed among modern patients with deathbed visions, enabling them to forget or transcend their physically painful conditions. Patients resuscitated from death generally report a realm free from all personal conflict, in which communication is completely through thought alone. The Buddhists' dark tubular "calyx" which eventually blossoms into the land of light is a good metaphor for the experiences of many subjects who report being drawn through a dark tube or tunnel. Sensations of the "tube," of floating, of hearing a rush of wind, of time and space distortion, may all be caused by malfunctions of the temporal lobe in drugged or near-death situations.[181] Magnification or enlargement of images, and shining geometric patterns, or "jeweled nets" are common to both

the later sutras and to many hallucinatory drug "trips."[182] The point of all this is not to reduce it to purely physiological interpretations, which are clearly inadequate to account for the range of phenomena,[183] and which may be correlates but not causes of the experiences in any case. Rather, the more important point is the relative universality of such experiences in disparate cultures and ages, and their dramatic impact on the lives of those who encounter them. Whether they are archetypes dredged up from some collective unconscious at the moment of death, projections of the subliminal wish-fulfilments common to all men, or genuine glimpses into another realm which follows this one, it is impossible to adjudicate at this point. None of the above hypotheses has any _a priori_ preferability over rival claimants.

We cannot but be struck by the similarity both of the experiences reported, and of the arguments used to interpret them (e.g. by Chu-hung in China and Osis today). The juxtaposition of our modern data with those of medieval China and Japan, by their extreme coincidence, tends to reinforce the conclusion that such experiences really happened, and were not simply some trumped-up hoax or cultural myth alone. Even accounts of deathbed visions and of white or purple clouds in the death-chamber need not be written off as hagiography, since we have similar reports by western witnesses in this century.[184] We shall study the medical and experimental data collected by modern researchers in more detail in the following section of this study. It will be worth bearing in mind that such experiences are not new or unique to our culture.

b) Amida imagery is not borrowed from other religions

The above discussion can also lead us to a stronger position on the origins of Pure Land Buddhism. Western critics of Pure Land thought have suggested that it was a Chinese adaptation and distortion of Indian Christianity [Dahlmann], or a borrowing of Zoroastrianism or Manichaeism via the silk routes.[185] However, the idea of salvation by faith alone, as we have noted, came to flourish only after Shinran's time in Japan, devoid of Christian influence. Moreover, we must acknowledge a meditative basis for the descriptions of the Sanskrit and Chinese Pure Land Sutras. It was the meditative experience of the Chinese themselves which enabled visionaries like T'an-luan to accept the newly imported and otherwise very foreign religious texts of Indian Buddhism. The later Chinese commentaries also are based, not on further misunderstanding of Christian sources, but on personal religious experiences, both of meditation and of deathbeds witnessed. If parallels are found between the Pure Land theology and that of Christianity, they indicate not borrowing, but the strikingly similar, life-changing religious experience of saints and sages in two very different cultures and philosophies. The similarities of early Christian and early Pure Land religious experience need no more be explained on the basis of contact than do the similarities of either one with modern deathbed experiences prove contact between them. In short, the reason Pure Land Buddhism resembles Christianity is not historical contact, but the similarity of religious experience in both cases.

c) A model of an idealist next world

In both the scriptural and experiential accounts of the Pure Land, we have another significant description of what the "next world" might be like, if there is one. This in itself is enough to rule out the objections of certain logical positivists who would assert that a coherent conception of what an afterlife might be like cannot even be formulated. But there is again a more startling coincidence. The Buddhists have described the Pure Land as a mind-dependent world. It shares certain intersubjective features for all of its inhabitants, has various areas for various types of consciousnesses, and responds in its minor events to the thought and will of its "inhabitants" or experiencer/creators. This is precisely the same sort of world which philosopher H.H. Price has envisioned and defended in making a case for a coherent conception of the afterlife.[186] There is the same notion that bodies will not really exist in the way they seem to exist in this material world, but that they will feel equally real and present to those who do not yet realize that both body and discrimination are their own projections. There is the same notion that there will be several different levels of delusion and projection--all of them feeling equally real to the projectors, but intersubjective in more or fewer ways. There is the same notion that there will be no punishment *per se*, but that gratification of one's physical desires will soon become flat and valueless, while real joy will come in seeking spiritual insight into one's own nature and the nature of Truth, *dharma*.

In fact, since the Buddhist formulation is even more detailed than Price's, it can help us escape from a philosophical difficulty encountered earlier. Price's "next world" is criticised because its will-dependent nature leads either to solipsism or destruction of identity, as when several people will to speak to the same person in different places at the same time. Price has not made a clear reply. The Pure Land Buddhists explain that objects are perceptible by the mere thought of or wish for them, but human consciousnesses are still uniquely localized in individual discrete places. So one may conjure a meal or a bath which he may phenomenally experience by merely thinking of it in the Pure Land. But if one wishes to speak to a person, he must seek that person wherever he is at that moment (both spatially and psychologically!), and await his disengagement from his present activity so that he may relate to him. Thus, in Pure Land Buddhism, the subjectivity of impressions of objects is not incompatible with a higher objectivity of individual consciousness and the bodies they project.

In sum, we have traced Pure Land Buddhism from its origins in early Mahayanism, and studied the ontology and epistemology which is presupposed by Pure Land scriptures and practitioners. We have seen parallels between their meditations and death-bed experiences, and that idealist ontology makes good sense of both. We have indicated that Pure Land Buddhism is not a borrowing from other religions, but a reflection of common religious experience, pointing to a reality envisioned in the west as well: an idealist life after death.

CHAPTER III: TIBETAN BUDDHISM AND THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

A) The Tibetan World-View

Tibet's unique geographical setting has strongly influenced its philosophy and history. Occupying over a million square miles in the middle of the Asian continent, Tibet is severely isolated from its neighbors by the Himalaya and Kunlun mountain ranges. Although its snows feed the Mekong, Brahmaputra, Indus, Yang-tse, and other rivers, the mountains block out the monsoons from the south, and annual rainfall is extremely scanty. Therefore the Tibetans can raise few crops, and must depend largely on nomadic sheep and yak-herding for their livelihoods. Tibet's barren plateaux range from 11,000 to 18,000 feet in altitude, where oxygen becomes too thin for the unacclimated visitor. Because of the extreme altitude, the daily sun is very strong, but temperatures at night plunge to freezing even in the summertime. The winter adds to sub-zero temperatures the perils of blizzards, hailstorms, and windstorms carrying abrasive gravel and destructive stones. Thus, the land has never been particularly hospitable, and this environment early gave rise to its inhabitants' beliefs in malevolent powers greater than man. More than in other countries, the unusual environmental conditions of Tibet were a strong influence on the philosophy and world-views of its people.[187]

1) The Pre-Buddhist Tibetan Philosophy and Religion

The nomadic, meat-eating habits of the Tibetans stand in obvious opposition to the Buddhist philosophy and life-style in semi-tropical India. Since fuel is scarce and boiling temperatures are lower at high altitudes, boiling is the chief means of cooking, further robbing the Tibetans' already limited diet of needed nutrients. Taken together, a poor diet, severe climate, lack of oxygen, and frequent bouts with plagues early disposed Tibetans to take for granted many hallucinatory and para-normal experiences. This in turn led to their ready acceptance of philosophies which explained such phenomena and placed them in a systematized picture of the universe. The first of these systematized philosophies was known as the Bon.

Like the early Chinese philosophies, the Bon religion held that there were twin spirits in man (pho-lha and dGralha), which cooperate to protect and govern him, and which depart at death for other realms.[188] Shortly after death, the disembodied spirits of man were said to haunt his former habitation or site of death if not properly exorcised.[189] Malevolent spirits inhabiting the air, earth, and water were held to cause sickness and death unless propitiated by human or animal sacrifices (replaced by effigies after the advent of Buddhism). After death, the souls of virtuous people were thought to ascend to heaven, while wicked souls were condemned by the lord of demons, rTsiu (Yama) to vividly described hells.[190] To assist the soul in its post-mortem adventures, the corpse was

carefully interred with clothes and provisions--a striking contrast to the later Buddhist practices of cremation or dismemberment and exposure. The Bon beliefs that shamans communicated with the spirits of the dead through trance-possession, or could visit the world of the dead and return, persisted to influence the Tibetan interpreation of Tantric Buddhism when it arrived.[191]

It would be unfair to dismiss Bon as mere animism; several Bon ideas play decisive roles in Tibetan Buddhism's development. Concern with control of nature is undeniably present in both. More importantly, Bon had already accorded a central role to death and funeral ceremonies, and Tibetan Buddhism was to continue this theme in a way quite foreign to Indian Buddhism.

The non-Buddhist notions that there is an intermediate period during which the soul may return, that there is a judgment followed by heavens and hells, and that living men can communicate with dead, all find their places in Tibetan Buddhism. Tucci claims that the original ideas of hell came from India, but that the Tibetans supplemented the Indians' visions of "hot hells" with their own "cold hells," founded on their own deathbed experiences:

> The Tibetan, with his tendency to the macabre, drew an even grimmer picture of hot and cold hells and frightful tortures which are dwelt on in a hair-raising literature, the delo. This is a series of accounts given by those who, on the brink of death, caught a glimpse of life beyond the tomb, but then returned to tell of the terrifying things they saw.[192]

Whether Tibetan ideas of hell came originally from Bon or from India may be impossible to conclusively prove, but we know they were an important theme in Tibetan thought by the time Buddhism arrived.

Within the early Tibetan folk tradition, there are also many accounts of those who died, passed on to judgment and hell, and returned to life to describe their experiences a few days later.[193] Or again, there are descriptions of yogic masters who went to the Tusita heavens to commune with their dead masters while in trance,[194] and then returned to normal waking life in this world, following the example of the founder of the yogacara Buddhist school, Asanga.[195] There was widespread agreement within Bon and popular Buddhism that prayer services and ceremonies could vicariously assist the progress of the departed souls, somewhat parallel to the Ulambana (Jap.: O-bon) services in China and Japan.[196] Such facts tend to refute the Christian prejudice that similarities in liturgy and doctrine concerning the afterlife must be borrowings from the Christian tradition, which after all did not reach the borders of Tibet until the fifteenth century.[197]

The important point here is that the Tibetans, like the Chinese before them, did not merely adopt Buddhism in its entirety out of political or aesthetic considerations. They accepted Buddhism insofar as it clarified processes which they already knew and illustrated new truths which they had not yet verbalized. An oversimplistic view might suggest that it was Buddhism that brought to these countries certain views of heaven, hell, and after-life. The evidence cited here documents that such views pre-dated Buddhism in each separate location, and modified Buddhism based on the real death-bed experiences of people in each of these cultures.

2) Vajrayana Buddhism

In previous chapters, we have observed the evolution of Buddhism: from a strict disciplinary system in which each individual might achieve cessation of rebirth (nirvana) by his own detachment from desires (Hinayana Buddhism), to the pietistic religion where the power and grace of Amida was taken to be the ultimate determinant of salvation in a gilded heaven (Mahayana Buddhism). The third of the yanas, or vehicles of Buddhism, and the last in its philosophical and chronological developmnet, was the vajrayana or tantra yana. Vajra means diamond, and symbolizes the indestructible, absolute, or void. Tantra means "thread" or "cord," referring to the uninterrupted chain of teachers who supposedly passed these teachings down from generation to generation. In short, the vajra yana or tantrayana is an esoteric philosophy bordering on mystery religion. It is concerned with ultimately achieving the absolute, and passed on orally from master to disciple. To attain this self-identification with and understanding of the absolute, it advocates mantras (spells) and mudras (hand gestures) and yogic meditation.[198]

As Vajrayana Buddhism depends on a lineage of teachers and disciples, it has directed more attention to the personalities of its various teachers than to their doctrinal disagreements. Buddhism was first formally introduced in the years 747-749 A.D. by Rinpoche (Padma Sambhava) from the Indian university of Nalanda. Despite its rapid assimilation of Bon ideas, it faced repeated opposition from both government and priesthood until the 11th century, when Atisa, Marpa, and others arrived from India to create

vigorous native Tibetan sects of Buddhism. Meanwhile, the previous Bon-Buddhists "discovered" hidden sutras to give them fresh claims to authority.

a) Cosmology and the trikaya doctrine

Mythologically, Vajrayana Buddhism developed a system of five great Buddhas, lords of the four directions and the center, viz.: Vairocana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amoghasiddi, and Amitabha (!). These are all taken to be visible manifestations of the ineffable and primordial Adibuddha, the void or absolute. It is thought that other buddhas and bodhisattvas, such as Kannon, Maitreya, and their female counterparts, also exist on this level.[199]

The trikaya (three-body) doctrine is essential to Vajrayana philosophy. We have seen that in Pure Land Buddhism, there was already the idea that Amida and other bodhisattvas have three bodies: an earthly body (aeons in the past), a super-physical body (now in heaven), and a law body (one with Truth or dharma). In vajrayana Buddhism, the three kayas, or bodies, point to different levels of reality.[200] Ultimately the only real is Mind, the Absolute, formless Truth and Light, which is the body of law, or dharmakaya. As in Mahayana Buddhism, the buddhas and bodhisattvas possess bodies of spirit and light, which seem to have form, but are essentially the projections of the dharmakaya. This spiritual form, of spiritual beings just short of total selfless nirvana, is called the sambhogakaya. Finally, there is the "material" level of the nirmanakaya, the body in which men and animals, mountains and dreams

are perceived. This realm, although analogous to the modern "realists'" world, differs from it in two important respects. First, it includes levels of "subtle matter" invisible to our eyes but equally real, in which exist demons, ghosts, titans, and gods (which comprise the six worlds, slong with men and animals). These apparently divine beings are unlike the bodhisattvas sambhoga-kaya level in that they are still composed of subtle substances and thus still subject to laws of causation and rebirth. But then, the Vajrayana goes one step further: it asserts that all phenomena and experiences are ultimately no more than the illusory projections of consciousness--the material level being merely a grosser distortion of truth and reality than the spiritual level.

b) Mind-only doctrine

It was in the fourth century A.D. that the philosophers Asanga and Vasubandhu formalized the "mind-only" or Yogacara sect of Buddhism. As its name implies, this system of absolute idealism held that nothing is real outside of the mind. There exist both individual minds, and the ultimate absolute mind of which they are emanations. The logical demonstration of these conclusions is predicated on the Buddhist principle that all phenomena are fleeting and in this sense perceived but unreal. The empirical basis of these conclusions, however, was the ancient tradition of Indian yoga. in Yoga, lengthy meditations first lead to the paranormal powers which the Buddha attained, and ultimately to the realization of the illusoriness of all material appearances.

In the yogacara view, there is a sense in which any experience is just as real as any other, whether apparently internal and hallucinatory, or ostensibly external and objective. All that is ultimately real and continuous of the individual is the pure subject, the mind-store (alaya-vijnana)--although it too changes. It is this mind or alaya-vijnana which experiences, judges, contemplates, and remembers, thus constituting the locus of identity and continuity through many apparent "bodies," or "lifetimes."

It might well be argued that the alaya-vijnana concept is merely a rehabilitation of the old Hindu notion of the atman, without the insistence on its ontological permanence and immutability. Indeed, in its more popular interpretations, the alaya-vijnana may be reduced to little more than an animistic soul. In fact, it goes far deeper, because it represents a fundamental shift. The early Buddhist perspective says that phenomena are all that exist, and the self is determined by the phenomena which it encounters. The yogacara, by contrast, says that mind is all that exists, and all apparent phenomena are merely its own projections.

The concept that all is mind only, coupled with the belief in mystic teachings, has tremendous implications for Vajrayana Buddhism. Since all is in mind, the process of death and rebirth is no longer an inevitable aspect of an external reality to which all must submit. It is unnecessary to physically undergo a long succession of lifetimes, for by changing one's conscious thoughts, the whole sequence can be broken or abridged. Even the law of

karma is elevated to an entirely different level. No longer is it physical actions which are seen as having inevitable physical effects. Rather, mental acts are all which have any effects at all, either in apparently external happenings, or in apparently internal feelings and visions. Karmic determination of an individual's future good or ill can thus also be avoided or aborted by mental purification and concentration.

To affect this change of consciousness necessary to attain nirvana, mantras, mudras, and samadhi are said to be required. Here too the Vajrayana departs from orthodox Samkhya yoga, in allowing the consumption of meat, wine, and even intercourse with women, encouraging at each step the realization that none of these phenomena are ultimately real. Under the tutelage of a Vajrayana Lama (guru), the student expects to develop psychic powers, to leave his body, and to experience the Absolute in trance. Thus he will prepare himself for the moment of death, when he will direct his consciousness out of his body and into final union with Truth, the Dharmakaya, rather than allowing any further cycles of rebirth.[201]

We have here treated the Vajrayana school as a significant departure from the ontology and practice of Gautama Siddhartha. Many Vajrayana Buddhists believe that the historic Buddha shared their views but concealed them because his immediate followers were not ready for them. Most scholars, however, believe either (a) that the Buddha held no opinion on ontology whatsoever, or (b) that he was a phenomenal realist, accepting the existence of

things outside of the mind, and in fact that the mind cannot subsist by itself. But this debate need not be resolved here, if it is clear at least how the Vajrayana differs from these views.

The vastness of Tibet, the repeated introductions of Buddhism by different Indian monks in different regions, and the varying degrees of assimilation of the old Bon religion into the new Vajrayana Buddhism--all account for the development of numerous schools of Buddhism within Tibet. The details of these sects need not preoccupy us here, for there are several excellent histories of Tibetan Buddhism which treat them thoroughly.[202] More important is the fact that ultimately, all the sects came to use the Book of the Dead as the central scripture concerning death, dying, and the states immediately following death. More than any other Buddhist text, this book purports to explain the experiences of consciousness after the death of the body, and therefore it is of particular interest and relevance to this present study.

B) Vajrayana Views of Post-Mortem Experience

While early Buddhism tended to deny the possibility of disembodied consciousness between death and rebirth, the Buddhist tradition soon developed the idea of just such an intermediate state after death, or antarabhava.[203] This state was little discussed, but it accounted for the personal and psychic continuity needed between a man's death and the rebirth of his consciousness in another body. Since Vajrayana Buddhism had already rehabilitated the soul, alias the alaya-vijnana, which was thought to

continue from one body to another, it was natural that it should also welcome the concept of an intermediate state between incarnations, called the Bardo in Tibetan.

1) The Book of the Dead

a) Origins and background

The sutra called the Bardo Thodol (or thosgroll) is a text of "Salvation by Hearing While in the Intermediate State."[204] It is read to the soul of the dying or dead man, to explain to the soul the various phenomena which it will encounter and encourage it to a desirable rebirth. The text of the Bardo Thodol, or Book of the Dead, as it is commonly translated, purports to date back to the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Padma Sambhava himself. There is no doubt that many of the teachings therein are indeed of great age, for both the imagery and philosophy show traces of Bon influence. However, the first known uses of the Book date to the eleventh century, when it was miraculously "discovered" among the many "treasure writings" (gTermas) which Padma Sambhava had buried for posterity.[205] Some of these writings were obviously fakes designed to lend an aura of authenticity to the old Nying-ma-pa Buddhist school in the face of Buddhist reform and innovation in the eleventh century. Its doubtful authorship notwithstanding, the Book gained wide acceptance among all the major Tibetan Buddhist sects in similar versions, thus demonstrating its inherent compatibility with the Tibetan world-view. Lama Govinda's statement is representative of the general view of Tibetans:

> The descriptions of those visions which, according to the Bardo Thodol, appear in the intermediate state (bardo) following death are neither primitive folklore nor theological speculations. They are not concerned with the appearances of supernatural beings, like gods, spirits, or genii, but with the visible projections or reflexes of inner processes, experiences, and states of mind, produced in the creative phase of meditation....The Bardo Thodol is first of all a book for the living, to prepare them not only for the dangers of death, but to give them an opportunity to make use of the great possibilities which offer themselves in the moment of relinquishing the body.[206]

In short, the sacred text was thought to have been verified by the meditations of yogins in this lifetime, and it held out the invitation to test its truth by similar practices of meditation. Thus it served simultaneously as a description of what dying men and yogins in death-like trances have experienced, and also as a guide on how to deal with such experiences in one's own meditations and finally in death.

b) Traditional death-bed practices

The mind or soul (sems) of the dead man is held to linger around its corpse for several days after the cessation of breathing. While unable to speak, it can see and hear all that goes on. So the Book of the Dead is read in the home in the presence of the corpse (and soul) to protect and encourage it. Even when the soul goes through terrifying or surrealistic visual experiences, it is said that it can still hear the Book being read, echoing like a soundtrack behind the other-worldly visual imagery it experiences. In fact, the practice at death is neither so simple nor unified. It is not unusual to find several services conducted at once: a

Bon service chasing evil spirits out of the house and convincing the spirit of the dead man that he is indeed dead and must leave; a Pure Land service invoking Amida to come to the deathbed and escort the soul of the believer to heaven; and a Bardo service occupying one or several weeks, in which the Book is read to guard and guide the soul through its immediate post-mortem adventures.[207] We may doubt the depth of belief or criticise the timing of these apparently incongruous practices. But they are not as contradictory as they may seem at first sight, for there is a sense in which the Bardo allows each soul his choice from among these options: to become a ghost, to be reborn in the Pure Land, or to transcend everything. One authority suggests that these variations depend upon the spiritual advancement of the deceased: the average man will experience a loss of consciousness before awakening in the Bardo state; gods and gurus will come to greet the especially pious man at his deathbed; and trained yogins will pass directly into higher states with no loss of consciousness.[208]

The moments immediately surrounding death are sometimes said to be accompanied by a tremendous roaring and crashing sound, and by flashes of light or periods of darkness. Commentators consider these to be simply the physiological effects of the disintegration or dissociation of the consciousness from the body, a physical but not spiritually important phenomenon.[209] The location from which the "soul" or semi-material consciousness leaves the corpse is also considered highly important. There are said to be nine places from

which the soul may leave the body, but it will fall into sub-human wombs unless it leaves by the parietal aperture (at the top of the head where the skull is joined). This rationale is given for not touching the corpse except by the priests and their helpers, who try to coax out the soul by pulling some hairs from the top of the head.[210]

The departure of the soul at death is thought to be identical to that departure of the soul discussed in the literature of "out-of-body experiences" or "astral projection," feats commonly attributed to accomplished yogins.[211] When the consciousness is transferred out of the body, in a process called pho-wa in Tibetan, it is thought to be able to travel freely over distances, or to take up the (dead) body of some other creature. Meditative pho-wa, or "soul travel," is considered highly dangerous; it is only to be undertaken by the adept under the careful guidance of a guru, while someone else remains to protect the original body.[212]

The important point for our purposes is that in both yoga and Buddhism, the processes involved in meditative travel and death are essentially alike. The only major difference between the yogic trance and death is that in trance, the soul returns to its body after its sojourns, while at death it cannot do so. In a later chapter we shall compare the similarity of experiences of those in trances and those who have revived from death or near-death. Now let us turn our attention to the Book of the Dead, as a chronology of the phenomenology of conscious experience after death.

2) Structure of the Bardo

a) The three stages

According to the Book of the Dead, there are three stages in the Bardo, or intermediate disembodied state following death. Each of these stages corresponds to an opportunity to enter a different level of existence in an ontologically different form, viz. the dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya.[213]

(i) The first stage is called the Chikhai Bardo. There,

> At the moment of death, the empiric consciousness, or consciousness of objects, is lost. This is what is popularly called a "swoon," which is however the corollary of super-consciousness itself, or of the Clear Light of the Void.... This empiric consciousness disappears, unveiling Pure Consciousness, which is ever ready to be "discovered" by those who have the will to seek and the power to find it. That clear, colourless Light is a sense-symbol of the formless Void....The Void is thus, in this view, the negation of all determinations, but not of "Is-ness" as such....it is the Perfect Experience which is Buddhahood...consciousness freed of all limitation...Nirvana.[214]

These visions of pure light may be accompanied by "such a Dazzlement as is produced by an infinitely vibrant landscape in the Springtide."[215] Or it may remind one of transparent moonlight, sometimes mistaken for heaven; but it is most often analogized to a blindingly clear open sky.[216] The dying consciousness is advised to identify itself with this light and abandon all traces of self-identification or self-consciousness. Some observers take the halo around a dying saint to be evidence of such identification with the absolute Truth and Light. For the enlightened saint or yogin, this is the consummation of existence: personal

consciousness is transcended, temporality is no more, and there is only the unqualifiable Suchness of Nirvana. Lesser yogins or blessed people may be able to retain this vision of the Light for several days, but they are eventually pulled away from it by their other desires or deluded habits of thinking. For still others, the experience may be no more than a brief flash of light.[217] Bound by their karmic cravings and habits of believeing in illusions, they regress downwards to other levels.

(ii) In the second stage, called the Chonyid Bardo, the consciousness clothes itself with a psychically projected body which images the physical body which it had once projected on this material plane. Over the course of seven days, the seven benign Buddhas appear to the consciousness: the pentad described above, then the Buddha representing the combined deities of the six realms, and then the Buddha representing the "wisdom-holding deities." Each of these Buddhas is symbolized as a blinding colored light, and with imagery like that of the Tibetan tanka paintings. Again the soul is urged to identify itself with these lights, for he still has these seven chances to bring himself into spiritual oneness with these Buddhas. If successful, he may dwell indefinitely on their heigher planes as a bodhisattva, with no need for further rebirth and with ideal conditions for progress towards final nirvana. On the other hand, if at any point he is repelled by these visions, because of his recognition of his own impurities --or if he is more attracted to the dull lights of the lower sensual realms in the opposite direction--he will be reborn into one

of the six realms of worldly existence. There is some disagreement among the various sects as to exactly what the order of appearance and the color of the seven Buddhas is, but this question is of little importance to our study.[218]

If the dead person's consciousness has passed through these seven days of Buddha-manifestations and has neither been able to identify with any of their luminosities nor has fled to any lower realm, it is then confronted by another seven periods in which terrifying deities appear. The Book encourages the soul to see these gruesome apparitions also as mere projections of his own subconscious, and to embrace and absorb them without fear, rather than accepting their reality and fleeing from them. Catholic interpreter Tucci explains:

> The forces thus represented are present in all of us and go to make up our personality of which they form the underlying pattern; they are therefore also the means of salvation, when our gnosis, on understanding their nature, absorbs them. This is the knowledge that annihilates, bringing us back from the apparent to the real, a return to our origin.... When recognition is absent, such visions would be regarded as the god of death, and death would be believed to be a reality, and the dead man caught up in the succeeding phases of the karmic process.[219]

These terrifying apparitions must not be thought of as the evil counterparts of the previous "good" Buddhas, for in Vajrayana Buddhism there is neither good nor evil. In fact, both the Buddhas and these Herukas, or lords of death, are no more than the projections of the subconscious mind. One can attain spiritual rebirth by knowing that all is spirit, by identifying with these brilliant or terrifying images and granting neither them nor himself any

objective reality. If the consciousness has still been unable to yogically identify with any of these apparitions during the first two weeks after death, it then proceeds still further into a period of pre-material existence.

(iii) The third period, called the Sidpa Bardo, depicts the consciousness clad in a body of subtle matter. Conscious of the material world and its six realms, the soul has the powers of astral projection such as moving through objects and across distances instantaneously. The consciousness first perceives its old home and family in mourning, and tries to convince them that it has not died, but to no avail.[220] Unable to re-enter its cremated or dismembered corpse, blown by the "winds" of karma, it wanders forth feeling homeless and miserably alone, realizing for the first time that it is dead to other humans. It may try to rest in graveyards or temples, but as its nature is pure consciousness which it has not yet learned how to calm and control, it may not rest for long in any one spot. Visions of fearful precipices and chasms and feelings of being crushed or squeezed into crevices are predicted. Finally the soul perceives the lord of death and his demons, come to judge him.[221] He sees his good and evil deeds weighed, and feels himself racked and hacked by demons. Since his body is a mental projection, it is not destroyed, but continues to feel the (self-)punishments as long as the reality of that body and its sins is adhered to. Finally he is released, only to be pursued by furies across many strange landscapes prior to material rebirth.

b) Transcendence or rebirth

At any point in this last process of the Sidpa Bardo--as a disembodied soul, as a judged and tortured being, or as a spirit pursued by furies--he may yet escape. He may transcend the whole illusion of misery and suffering by holding in mind Amida, Kannon, or any other patron bodhisattva. If he can fix his mind on such imagery, he is able to cast out all other self-created imagery of fearful visions, and he may yet rise to the Pure Land or Tusita heavens to avoid further rebirth and meditate in the company of the saints. However, it is much harder to hold an image of Amida in mind while one imagines oneself being tortured, than when that image presents itself vividly and naturally in the Chonyid Bardo visualisations. Therefore not many are able to transcend at this stage, although the Book is read as a spur in that direction.

The more average consciousness, after a seemingly endless period of tortures (which actually takes place in a few weeks of human time), again finds himself looking at the six material realms, now chastised in spirit. Premonitory signs of different landscapes indicate the type of body into which his consciousness will be reborn. Seeing beautiful bodies in the sex act, he is drawn towards his old pasttime, and finds himself inside a womb of his own choosing. Some interpreters say that he may be drawn into animal or divine wombs depending on his flight from the furies; others, that all rebirth at this point is on the human level.[222] The Book urges the consciousness (if it is still listening at all!)

not to choose by physical attraction, but to choose a home with parents of pious character and adequate wealth to permit their offspring to follow the yogic religious path, and progress yet higher in his next round of existence.[223]

The saints and great yogins go directly to nirvana or to become bodhisattvas in the higher heavens at their deaths. The great incarnation lamas--spiritual and secular heads of the great monasteries and districts of Tibet--are said to have a somewhat different mode of progression. The Dalai (political head) and Panchen (spiritual head) lamas are thought to be the material manifestations of the bodhisattvas Kannon and Amida, respectively. Naturally, they undergo no illusions whatsoever during the 49-day period during which average souls are said to wander through the three Bardos. Before their deaths, they indicate the region of the country and the characteristics of the family into which they paln to be reborn. When they die, those regions and families are sought out. Babies showing miraculous signs 49 days after the lama's passing are inspected for birthmarks and other similarities to the departed lama.[224] They are then placed in a room with a number of sacred objects, some of which had belonged to the previous Dalai or Panchen Lama.[225] The baby who shows the most marked preference for those objects alone is then singled out for special attention. The priests put the child to further tests of identity, while conducting divination and prayer cermonies, and the country is temporarily ruled by a regent. The body of the departed predecessor is carefully preserved in a stupa (chorten).

At the age of four, the chosen child assumes the garb and tonsure of a monk; at eight, he is made abbot of the convent; and at eighteen, he is installed with the full powers of the highest lama.[226] Thus, there is a sense in which the highest lamas are never discarnate from the world for more than 49 days. This is only possible because the bodhisattvas Amida and Kannon are miraculously able to maintain both a nirmanakaya (fleshly body) in this world and a sambhogakaya (spiritual body) in their respective heavens or Buddha-fields. Although the practice of reincarnation lamas dates back only about 500 years, it is accompanied by such miraculous occurrences that even critical western observers have been impressed.[227] There are elaborate ceremonies surrounding the deaths of incarnate lamas, but there is no need for others to read to them from the Book of the Dead, since they already know the idealistic landscapes to come and how to deal with them.[228]

The Book of the Dead, then, is not a Dantean description of eternal heavens and hells. Rather it is a chronological review of the gateways to numerous post-mortem levels of experience during the intermediate state between incarnations, usually 28 to 49 days. Its imagery incorporates all of the afterlife possibilities which Buddhists have yet envisioned: nirvanic transcendence; ascension to Pure Lands; judgment and torture; disembodied existence as an invisible ghost; rebirth in this or other worlds. Its reconciliation of so many traditions is based, not on crude eclecticism, but on a profound philosophy of absolute idealism, buttressed by a long tradition of experience in yoga meditation.[229]

3) Philosophical Conclusions and Issues

The thrust of Vajrayana philosophy is that all these post-mortem and meditative visions are imaginary mental imagery. (We recall that Berkeley's idealism posed one of the only viable ways of philosophically making sense of resurrection in Christianity. We may remember also Price's discussions of post-mortem image-worlds and the inabilities of dead people to believe that they had died --paralleled by the experiences predicted in the Book.)[230] This does not mean, however, that imaginary experiences are any less real than this present world--for its experiences are equally illusory![231] Rather, it suggests two important conclusions. First, we should try to transcend this illusion of the material world at every opportunity--both through meditation and at death--rather than becoming caught up in its desires and pain. Second, the structure of even this material world is spiritual and psychological rather than external and physical. Thus, any attempts to explain the nature of reality according to the physical senses which we presently use, or according to the appearances of this material realm, are ultimately doomed to failure. Although there is a measure of shared illusion (intersubjectivity) on each level, the laws and structures of any given realm may be violated at will by one who has yogically perfected his mind and come to know their unreality. The Tibetans can also explain their siddhas, or miracle-working lamas and yogins, on this model. This idealistic philosophy naturally leads serious students of the Book of the Dead to predict

that the heavens, judgments, or ghostly scenarios described by other religious traditions have equal claims to validity; the afterlife is culturally relative insofar as the imagery is projected by the perceiver, and the perceiver has been conditioned by the culture in which he was educated.[232]

This leaves us with some important philosophical questions. If absolute idealism is indeed correct, do post-mortem experiences of consciousness reflect no more than one's preconceptions and expectations? Does this description apply equally to the division of the ideal realm into the three states of transcendence, spirit, and apparent materiality? Are these realms an objective ground of a true idealistic landscape, within which all cultures may shape their own illusions? Or are these concepts too subject to the mind of the experiencers?

We can put the question even more bluntly. Is nirvana a real transcendent state, to which some Christians are blind because they do not understand and accept it? Or is even nirvana itself a fiction or illusion which simply seems equally real for the Buddhists whose culture reinforces this concept. Is intersubjectivity of post-mortem experience based on cultural similarity, on Jungian archetypes,[233] on the similar physiology of everyone's brains, or on the structure of the idealists' universe? There are non-yogic methods and experiments by which we can study the nature of post-mortem consciousness, and to analyse their relation to psychophysical and cultural contexts. To critically review these methods and the evidence they have uncovered is the burden of the next section.

PART III: EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF SURVIVAL

Introduction: The approach of this section

The previous parts of this study have reviewed the contemporary western debates on survival, and have considered various alternatives proposed by Buddhists on the same questions. Both sections conclude that an ideational or idealistic next world is among the more consistent of the conceivable philosophic options. While logically conceivable, these theories require empirical evidence before they can become the bases for definite pronouncements.

Moreover, this whole dissertation is operating under Russell's principle: that the survival question is essentially amenable to resolution on scientific grounds and lends itself to empirical falsification or verification.[1] This section, then, brings the findings of medical and social scientists to bear on the philosophical discussions of the previous sections. In particular, it concentrates on the evidence purporting to bear on questions of: (I) reincarnation, (II) ethereal bodies, and (III) other worlds after death.

Each chapter will first define and restrict its focus by excluding phenomena of only tangential relevance, even if superficially similar. Then it will survey the evidence of the cases most indicative of survival. Thirdly, it will consider all possible alternative interpretations of the facts presented, to decide the relative merits of survivalist and non-survivalist theories in relation to this new information.

CHAPTER I: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE BEARING ON REINCARNATION

The case for "reincarnation" is based on the assumption of the regularity of the universe: if some people now alive have had previous lives, then some people in the future will have had lives which are now being lived. In looking for cases indicative of possible reincarnation, we are looking less for "future life" than for evidence of "past lives," which in turn suggests that similar reincarnations may occur in the future. As Stevenson has observed, in mediumistic attempts to contact those who have already died, we have the problem of proving that someone who has died is still alive somewhere. On the other hand,

> In evaluating apparent memories of former incarnations, the problem consists in judging whether someone clearly living once died. This may prove the easier task, and if pursued with sufficient zeal and success, may contribute decisively to the question of survival.[2]

Some researchers object to the title of "reincarnation," even when placed in quotation marks, for it seems to presuppose an explanation for the phenomena encountered, and is laden with religious nuances. H.N. Banerjee, Director of the Department of Parapsychology at the University of Rajasthan at Jaipur, prefers to call such phenomena cases of "extra-cerebral memory," i.e., memory which does not seem to have come from the head of the person who reports it.[3] More important than the name is the recognition that the phenomena to be considered do not prove reincarnation _per se_; its tenability as one hypothesis must be judged after the evidence is carefully wieghed and analysed.

A) Phenomena Not Considered

To further delimit our interests, let us first itemize several groups of phenomena which are not appropriate evidences of reincarnation or survival, despite their inclusion by some writers: (1) deja-vu, (2) auto-precognition, (3) child prodigies, (4) seance mediumism and spiritualism.

(1) Deja-vu

Almost all humans, at one time or another, have the uncanny feeling that they have "been in the same situation before," without being able to pinpoint either the experience or the origin of the feeling. This phenomenon is called deja-vu, French for "already seen." When deja-vu persists, the percipient has the distinct impression that he knows what will come next in his experience and that he has repeated the entire sequence of events at an earlier time. Some people take such deja-vu experiences to be intimations of having lived before, or of the myth of the eternal return.

Such interpretations are manifestly illogical and illegitimate. Deja-vu experiences are akin to hallucinations in the sense that (a) they are completely private, and (b) they are false impressions. The feeling of having been in the same place or situation before is not due to actually having been there before, but rather to some very minor brain dysfunctions. Deja-vu experiences are most common among people underdoing severe strain, undernourishment, or physical or mental exhaustion.

To put it simply, deja-vu situations could not be hidden memories of past lives, because deja-vu (by definition) is the feeling that everything is exactly identical to the way it was at some former time. But it is impossible that every element of the situation could be identically repeated, for each moment is unique and all things change over time. It is possible that someone could vaguely recognize a place and honestly not remember when or why he had been there before. But such a recognition would not be a case of deja-vu, lacking the deja-vu sense of exactness. Thus the very exactness of the illusion in true deja-vu guarantees that it could not be a memory from some previous situation, in this life time or in any other. Similarly, it is entirely conceivable that a person might arrive in a place where he had never been in his lifetime, and report a strange familiarity which he had no reason to expect. He might even recognize foreign idioms or describe correctly some details of the town which had been true of the town in a previous era. It might be the case that the town or scene inspired remembrances which had been suppressed from previous lives, or awakened psychometric powers; some cases of such phenomena will be reviewed below. Whatever else these cases may be, they are not cases of deja-vu.

For the sake of rigor, let us also avoid further discussion of such "vague familiarities" with locales not already known from this lifetime, since any number of factors besides former lives might give rise to false feelings of familiarity with a place.

2) Auto-precognition

Auto-precognition is the psychic ability to foresee what will happen in one's own life and in no one else's. Parapsychologists have sometimes argued that auto-precognition might be an indication of having been reincarnated.[5] The reasoning behind this assertion, however, demands postulation of numerous unprovable assumptions: (a) that there was an interim state between the previous death and the present life; (b) that the course of the present lifetime was already at least partially predetermined; (c) that the consciousness was able to observe major events in the life it was about to choose or receive, before birth; (d) that living human beings can sometimes recall elements of the lives they foresaw and selected while disembodied, without recalling the disembodied state itself; (e) that such people cannot distinguish such recalling from predicting, i.e., that it feels more like prediction than recollection, even though it is really recollection.

While there is nothing totally impossible or logically contradictory about such an account in itself, it involves many assumptions which are unsupported even by the descriptions of the people who possess such precognitive faculties. If reincarnation had already been established as fact, then it is just possible that this theory would provide an explanation of some of the cases of apparent auto-precognition now in evidence. However, the existence of auto-precognition *in ipso* is far from proving anything like reincarnation.

3) Child Prodigies

An argument frequently heard in Indian circles is that child prodigies such as Mozart or Edison must have acquired their talents in previous lifetimes, since they are inexplicable simply on the basis of their childhood training. Again, it is true that the reincarnation theory might contribute towards an explanation of such phenomena, but they cannot properly be taken as evidence of reincarnation in and of themselves.

As it stands, most psychologists and psychiatrists feel that the variables of heredity, environment, and "chance" personality development are adequate to explain such prodigies without resort to theories of reincarnation. Mozart, for example, was born into a highly musical family. He was encouraged to listen to, play, and write music by his family and friends, and he was provided with the perfect environment for the cultivation of those talents. Much as we admire his truly unusual abilities, we might attribute them as reasonably to his family and circumstances as to a past life. Of course, if the doctrine of reincarnation were found to be universally true, and if there were a way to determine one's previous lives, then we might gain a better understanding of the origins of children's talents and predilections. The presence of unusual talents or abilities might be a sort of confirmation of a case thought to be "reborn" for other reasons. Variations among children, however, seem adequately understood without resort to such hypotheses, and cannot stand as evidence for reincarnation.[6]

(4) Seance Mediumism and Spiritualism

Mediumistic performances have sometimes been interpreted as the temporary takeover of the body of one person by the discarnate spirit of another, who is "waiting in the wings" for reincarnation as it were. However, the emotionally-charged atmosphere of the dimly-lit seance hall lends itself to auto-suggestion. Careful guesswork on the part of the medium, abetted by overt or subliminal cues from other participants, and dramatized by a charismatic subliminal personality, may account for the majority of mediumistic sittings. Some mediums, who are genuinely psychic in one sense, may glean information through telepathy from the other sitters, or through psychometry from an object belonging to the deceased, and misrepresent this information as coming from the surviving personality. The theory that mediums communicate with discarnate intelligences becomes even more suspect in light of experiments in which "mediumistic contact" has been made with living (Gordon Davis) or fictional (Philip) characters! The manifest potential for fraud in this business has cast such suspicion on the profession that few parapsychologists now count mediumistic seances among their sources of evidence. Curiously, mediumistic communications have dramatically declined in the post-World War II period, with a few noteworthy exceptions.[7]

There is a further logical gap between seances and reincarnation theory. Even if it were to be conceded that spiritualism had proven the existence of discarnate spirits in a few instances,

it should not necessarily follow that any or all of such spirits would ever again have human bodies--which is just the claim which the reincarnationists wish to defend. In short, even if the phenomena genuinely involved paranormal contact with the dead, mediumistic seances are amenable to too many interpretations other than reincarnation to serve as good evidence for that hypothesis.

It is not our intention to impugn the integrity of mediums, nor to imply that all are hoaxes. However, the difficulty of sorting the meaningful phrases from the reams of trivia; the problems in identification of raps, voices, or accents, with real, previously-living people; the paucity of high-quality evidence from recent mediums; the logical gap between the mere existence of discarnate spirits and the conclusion that they will again assume human bodies--these are just some of the reasons why these phenomena cannot be treated as serious evidence for reincarnation.

B) Phenomena Considered

The major phenomena which we shall treat in this chapter are those of spontaneous possession, hypnotic regression, and spontaneous claimed memories of former lives. In each of these cases, we must ascertain that they demonstrate verifiable skills and memories which the agent could not have acquired in the present lifetime, through normal or paranormal means.

Lest it be contended that these three groups of phenomena are of the same calibre as mediumistic possessions, some critical differences between the two must be briefly noted. Most importantly, the typical seance medium has been deliberately hired to produce spirit voices, materializations, or other indications of contact with dead people known to the sitters. Moreover, the typical seance lasts only for an hour or two, while the parts of the medium's discourse which may be used as possible evidence occupy but a few minutes at a time. We must distinguish mediumistic seances from spontaneous cases of possession in which: (1) the surrounding people (and often the one possessed) neither desire nor approve of the "intruding consciousness," (2) they have no prior knowledge of the facts related by the possessed, (3) the atmosphere is normal daylight, and (4) the possession lasts over a period of weeks or even years.

Many other distinguishing factors might be identified, but these four are the most crucial in avoiding the objections which may otherwise be raised against paranormal interpretations of possession cases. This distinction also rules out shamanistic possession found in many primitive societies, which share with mediumism the short duration, emotionally charged atmosphere, sympathetic observers, and possible telepathic or subliminal communication of the desired information. However interesting as anthropolgical studies, such cases have little value as experimental evidence. Let us consider cases of spontaneous possession with these distinctions in mind and these fringe cases excluded.

1) Spontaneous Possession with Verifiable Memories and Skills

Possession is the name for the phenomenon in which a person suddenly and inexplicably loses his normal set of memories, mental dispositions, and skills, and exhibits an entirely new and different set of memories, dispositions, and skills. Cases of possession have been recorded around the globe since ancient times. Many primitive societies have attributed such cases to the occupation of a living body by the spirit of one who had already died, but this presupposes more than has been established. Psychiatrists prefer to consider most cases of possession to be varieties of mental disease, disorientation, and schizophrenia, to be cured by appropriate medical and psychiatric treatment.

The spontaneous cases of particular interest to our study are those in which (a) the new set of suddenly-acquired skills and memories is unknown to the person being "possessed," and (b) the secondary personality reveals traits and information which are independently verifiable as beyond the ken of the former personality. Several examples of such spontaneous possession with veridical memory should clarify this definition. One of the earliest cases was recorded in detail by Fromer in 1812. He reported witnessing a Polish Jewess who exhibited the characteristics of a learned German Jewish scholar who had suicided.

> I had a good place, from which I could see and hear everything. She sat down, languid and exhausted, with haggard, fearful eyes, and from time to time lamented, begging to be taken back to the house because she was afraid of the wonder-rabbi. Her voice, weak and beseeching, inspired sypathy and compassion. Suddenly, she sprang up and made efforts to remain standing.

> "Silentium strictissimum!"
> I could not believe my ears. It was a real man's voice, harsh and rough, and the onlookers affirmed that it was exactly the voice of the [scholar suicide]. Not one of us knew the meaning of these words. We only knew that it was a strange language, which the sick woman understood as little as ourselves.....
>
> Then she pronounced a long, confused discourse with High-German turns of phrase, of which I understood only that it greeted a festive gathering and wished to draw attention to the meaning of the feast.[8]

The account goes on to describe the interactions of the possessed girl with the "wonder-rabbi" who has come to exorcise the spirit. In the process, the spirit describes animal rebirths prior to this possession, and says that he was permitted to enter the girl's body when she was rapt in love-making. The episode concludes in fisticuffs between the rabbi and the girl, who gives up the spirit when she is finally knocked unconscious (!).

William James, in his Principles of Psychology, discusses several prominent cases in America. He cites the case of Mary Reynolds, who awoke one day in 1811 unable to recall anything of her family, surroundings, or even the use of words. Although she still had the body of an adult, she had to be re-trained as if a baby. When re-educated in her new personality, her character and disposition were utterly different from her pre-possession state. Alternations from one state to the other continued over 15-16 years, until at the age of 36, the second personality completely took over.[9]

The case of Lurancy Vennum/Mary Roff is an even more striking example of possession exhibiting veridical memoreis. Mary Roff lived from 1847 to 1865, her later years in an asylum.

Lurancy Vennum was a girl born to a nearby family in 1864. She exhibited no signs of abnormality until 1877, when she began to suffer spontaneous trances. After one of these trances, she lost all memory of the Vennums (her real family), declared herself to be Mary Roff, and begged to be taken to the Roff's home. When the Vennums finally consented to let her live with the Roffs, she greeted the Roffs emotionally as her own parents. She also exhibited many of the preferences and memories known only to Mary and the Roffs. To quote James' account:

> The girl, now in her new home, seemed perfectly happy and content, knowing every person and everything that Mary knew when in her original body, twelve to twenty-five years ago; recognizing and calling by name those who were friends and neighbors of the family from 1852 to 1865, when Mary died, calling attention to scores, yes, hundreds of incidents that had transpired during her natural life....The so-called Mary, whilst at the Roff's, would sometimes "go back to heaven," and leave the body in a quiet trance, i.e. without the original personality of Lurancy returning.[10]

After detailed study and subsequent publicity, this case came to be known as the "Watseka Wonder," after the Illinois town where it occurred. Philosopher C.J. Ducasse, among others, considered the Roff/Vennum case good evidence not only of split personality, but of survival of memories and character traits after death.[11]

In 1906, a 14-year-old schoolboy named Fritz was possessed by a spirit calling itself "Algar," which showed familiarity with Latin and Armenian. It was eventually ascertained that Fritz had seen some texts of Latin and postcards of Armenian. But this minimal exposure to a foreign language would not explain "Algar's" abilities to copy its pronunciation and grammatical structures—[12]

although this may have served as a point of departure for possession by an intelligence familiar with those languages. Most dramatic of the many cases on record is that of Iris Farczady, a Hungarian lady who awoke one morning in 1935 with the language and manners of a deceased Spanish charwoman. She showed no knowledge of her family, surroundings, or even of Hungarian, but a full memory-set and language ability in Spanish![13]

These cases certainly seem difficult to explain without resort to "spiritual entities." But they are far from proving reincarnation. In each case, the person is already an adult when the intruding consciousness, memories, and skills take over. At best, such phenomena might tend to indicate the existence of discarnate consciousnesses temporarily capable of occupying living bodies.[14] On the other hand, it is possible that they may be subsumed under some less exotic explanation; we shall review those hypotheses under "Objections," below.

2) Hypnotic Age-Regression

Hypnotic age-regression is a process in which a hypnotist, usually a psychiatrist, asks his patient to recall his childhood, using a trance to facilitate exact recall of events which may have caused severe psychological disturbance. On rare occasions, however, the patient has "regressed" beyond his childhood into prenatal states, and even to the recall of lives prior to the birth of his present body. There is need for verification of the memories reported, but regressions may thus be another source of evidence of rebirth or reincarnation.

The case of Pueblo (Colorado) housewife Virginia Tighe (pseud. Ruth Simmons) is colorfully depicted in the Search for Bridey Murphy.[15] Virginia agreed to participate in hypnotic experiments conducted by a young businessman named Morey Bernstein. After regressing to the age of one year, she regressed still further to describe a life in Ireland from 1798 to 1864, under the name of Bridey Murphy. She demonstrated detailed knowledge of Ireland, its language, customs, and physical objects with which she had no acquaintance in her normal waking life. Sensationalist newspapers were quick either to exaggerate her accounts, or to allege that her statements were incompatible with the facts of Ireland and had been gained from Irish people she had known in her youth. C.J. Ducasse went to great lengths to studiously investigate this complex case. He concluded that although not all of the information reported by the "Bridey" personality had been conclusively verified, none had been shown to be historically impossible. Moreover, Bridey did correctly describe many items, such as names of old neighborhoods and the stores in them, which cannot be explained by normal means of information-acquisition.[16] Curiously enough, in her waking state, Virginia neither cares nor believes in reincarnation, and is quite baffled as to what to make of the furor which has emerged from her hypnotic age-regressions.

More recently, British psychiatrist Arthur Guirdham collected detailed records on an Englishwoman sent to his hospital who was plagued by recurrent neurotic nightmares of battles and massacres.

Investigation revealed that the patient had had memories since her youth which corresponded closely to the history of the Cathars (Albigenses), heretic Puritans in 13th century France. It is particularly noteworthy that the language recorded in some of the patient's diaries is early French, unknown to her in normal life. Guirdham writes:

> In 1967, I decided to visit the south of France and investigate. I read the manuscripts of the 13th century. These old manuscripts--available only to scholars who have special permission--showed she was accurate to the last detail. There was no way she could have known about them. Even of the songs she wrote as a child, we found four in the archives. They were correct word for word....When I first wrote to Prof. DuVernoy at Toulouse, he said, "Get in touch with me about anything you want. I'm astonished at your detailed knowledge of Catharism." I couldn't say, "I've got this by copying down the dreams of a woman of 36,"...[17]

This case not only roused Dr. Guirdham to extensive travel and study of Catharism, but ultimately convinced him of the truth of reincarnation of at least some people.

Similar cases of true memory of foreign language (xenoglossy) are to be found in the persons of Edward Ryall, who recalled life in 17th century England with appropriate language,[18] and of Robin Hall, a Californian boy who spoke of a former life in Tibet, using Tibetan words.[19] In the Jensen,[20] Rosemary,[21] and Gretchen[22] cases, the subjects spoke in Swedish, Egyptian, and German, respectively, supplying both words and grammatical constructions to which they had had no previous exposure in this lifetime. Such cases of xenoglossy are importantly different from the non-linguistic babblings of people who rearrange the sounds of their own languages

to "speak in tongues," as at religious revival meetings. They are better evidence too than those cases of people who can make sense of what is said to them in foreign tongues which they have not learned, but who cannot speak grammatically in the language.

Still other studies have polled their subjects, who have undergone hypnotic regressions, about the nature of their immediately pre-natal experiences. They have brought to light many strange reports about disembodied persons choosing the wombs into which they were to be born.[23] Since there is no way to verify such accounts, in the way that we can verify statements about human history or test grammatical structures, these reports will not be treated further here. The important point for our purposes is not the frequency of verifiable regression cases, but rather that such cases exist at all. Their implications require careful analysis and examination, which we shall conduct below.

3) Spontaneous Memories of Former Lives

Belief in reincarnation seems odd to many Europeans, but in fact, it is so widespread among non-Europeans that Schopenhauer could cynically declaim:

> Were an Asiatic to ask me for a definition of Europe, I should be forced to answer him: it is that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible delusion that man was created out of nothing, and that his present birth is his first entrance into life.[24]

Schopenhauer may have had strong prejudices in favor of a Buddhist world-view, but he is correct in attributing the idea of former lives to the peoples of Asia. However, he is a little too short

with his European compatriots, for ever since Plato and Pythagoras, the notion of rebirth had held philosophical respectability as an alternative to the Christian views of survival by resurrection. But we may still wonder, "Why should peoples from vastly disparate cultures all believe in rebirth at all, if there is no experiential basis for it?" One theory might attribute the growth of parallel mythologies to Jungian archetypes in a collective unconscious. Another might suggest that the primitive mind, yearning for permanence and unable to face its own mortality, modeled its myths of survival on the cycles of seasons and plant life, leading to a cyclic notion of human life as well. An equally plausible suggestion is that even primitive peoples had encountered situations which they interpreted as indicating the reincarnation of those who had formerly died. The cases which shall be treated in this section are of precisely that nature; they lend prima facie support to the belief in rebirth.

a) Sample cases

The best examples of apparent "reincarnation" are those of children who dicuss their memories of previous lives, with no prompting from those around them. In many cases. these reports are supplemented by peculiar habits, speech patterns, or even physical birthmarks characteristic of the person who the child claims to have been in a former life. In some cases too, the memories of the child correspond to those we would expect of the deceased. We shall confine our attention to intersubjectively verified cases.

The classical "paradigm cases" of natural memories of former lives hail from as diverse cultures as Japan, Italy, and India. The case of Katsugoro was reported by professor Lafcadio Hearn, who took great interest in Japanese Buddhism. Katsugoro was born to a Japanese family in 1815. While playing with his sister, at age seven, he asked her where she had lived in her former life. Questioned by his parents and grandmother, he responded that he had remembered everything clearly until he became four years old, but he still could recall the central details: He had been the son of Kyubei and Shidzu in a town of Hodokubo. Kyubei had died when he was five, and his mother had lived with a man named Hanshiro, after which Katsugoro (then named Tozo) had died of smallpox. Katsugoro's grandmother escorted him to Hodokubo to pay respects to the grave of his "previous father." Katsugoro's report tallied completely with that of the family, and he observed correctly that certain shops had not existed when Tozo was still alive.[25]

The case of Alexandrina is quite similar, except that she was reborn into the same Catholic family. According to the well-attested accounts, Alexandrina Samona died at five years of age in 1910. She appeared to her mother in a dream and promised to be born again, although the mother's recent ovarian operation rendered further childbearing unlikely. Nonetheless, when twins were born late that same year, one so closely resembled her dead sister in birthmarks, habits of play, and likes and dislikes, that she too was (re-)named Alexandrina. When told of plans

for a trip to Monreale, Alexandrina (II) correctly described a trip that Alexandrina (I) had taken before her birth, to the surprise of her parents.[26]

Shanti Devi was born in 1926 in Delhi, and from 1930, she began to relate numerous details of a former life in Mathura, a city some 80 miles away. Out of sheer curiosity, her grand-uncle and some educated friends began to investigate her statements. Their inquiries brought an unexpected response from one Kedar Nath of Mathura, who confirmed that he had had a wife corresponding to the person Shanti claimed to be. Kedar Nath even came to Delhi to meet Shanti, and she replied correctly to intimate questions about things which only his former wife had known. Following this meeting, Shanti asked to be taken to Mathura, where she understood local dialect unintelligible to others from Delhi, identified friends and relations of Kedar Nath without prompting, and pointed out where wells, outhouses, and money caches had formerly been located.[27]

b) Recent research projects

Each of the cases mentioned above strikes the reader by its apparent uniqueness, emerging from local settings in which such inquiries were uncommon and unexpected. More recently, however, scholars have begun to systematically identify and study such cases in which children report memories of former lives. The leading researcher in this field is Dr. Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. In the early 1960's,

Stevenson began to compile and research cases of claimed memories of previous lives. He devoted particular attention to verifying or falsifying the information provided by the "memories," and to the physical and behavioural similarities between the living child and the departed person with whom the child identified himself. Stevenson's findings gave the lie to the popular assumption that reincarnation cases were peculiar to Hindu and Buddhist countries of the Indian subcontinent which most strongly believed in reincarnation since ancient times. Of 1300 cases in his files in 1974, the United States led with 324, followed by Burma (139), India (135), Turkey (114), Great Britain (111), and so on--showing a large number of such cases from among the modern western nations.[28]

In 1966, when Stevenson first published 20 Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation,[29] it became for a time the talk of the psychiatric world; it remains today a landmark in the scientific study of an unpopular hypothesis. In each of 20 cases, from India, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Lebanon, and Alaska, Stevenson identifies statements by children about their former lives. He then establishes that the child had no normal means of obtaining such knowledge, and compares the child's statements to the facts known to the deceased person with whom the child identifies himself. In a number of cases, the children are also found to have unusual birthmarks, either close to the peculiarities of the person remembered, or corresponding to the wounds by which the person had been murdered. Stevenson also itemizes preferences for certain foods, sports, speech-patterns,

or other aptitudes untaught by his present environment, which correspond to those of the deceased. When possible, Stevenson visited the most promising of these children, escorting them to the village which they claimed to remember, and carefully recording the number of correct and mistaken statements which the children made about things they would have known had they in fact lived there previously. In the 1970's, Stevenson has continued to collect cases at the rate of nearly 100 per year, and his work has been widely discussed in medical as well as parapsychological journals and conferences.[30]

Based on Stevenson's pioneering work, other scholars have been emboldened to publish their own similar studies in this field, including H.N. Banerjee of the University of Rajasthan (Jaipur),[31] Hernani Andrade of the Brazilian Society for Psychical Research,[3] Karl Muller of Switzerland,[33] Resat Bayer of the Turkish Parapsychological Society,[34] and the late K.N. Jayatilleke of the University of Sri Lanka.[35] Although not all reports are as detailed as Stevenson's, they do tend to indicate that such cases are a worldwide phenomenon.

c) Issues and criteria

The researchers in this new field generally agree that they have not "proven" reincarnation. Some from eastern backgrounds assume reincarnation as an article of faith requiring no proof, or capable of verification through personal meditations. Others, including Stevenson, feel that the evidence has not yet reached

conclusive levels--but that either the discovery of a "perfect" paradigm case, or the amassing of thousands of similar cases, will eventually swing scientific opinion towards acceptance of the reincarnation hypothesis in at least some instances. Finally, some serious researchers are of the opinion that reincarnation is the sort of hypothesis which may never be proven by field work, for alternate interpretations of the data are always possible. Nevertheless, this research is accepted as of at least psychiatric value, and it may provide a better basis for educated people to base their personal convictions upon.

Many personal responses are possible to the question, "What would constitute a really convincing case of reincarnation?" It is well to recall here Scriven's criteria of personal identity: (1) bodily appearance; (2) physical abilities; (3) memory of past experiences; (4) similarity of character; and (5) intelligence, mental and linguistic abilities.[36] While no single case to date has exhibited all of these characteristics, it is quite conceivable that some case might do so, and each of these criteria have been met in at least some of the cases studied by Stevenson. The physical discontinuity of corpse and foetus will still prove an intractible obstacle to some analytic philosophers. But for any one who accepts Scriven's criteria, the discovery of cases displaying all five will constitute a compelling argument for identifying the new child with the former person--particularly when the child himself calls the process his own "rebirth."

C) Objections to the Phenomena as Evidence of Survival

For religious as well as philosophical reasons, many people cannot accept the above cases as genuine instances of reincarnation. Their objections include (1) sheer refusal to accept the evidence, (2) theoretical objections to the consequences of the reincarnation theory, (3) the possibility of knowledge-acquisition by other normal means, and (4) explanations of the phenomena through other known but inexplicable psychic powers, not to include reincarnation. Any thoroughgoing interpretation of the data needs to consider each of these possible alternatives. In order for the reincarnation hypothesis to remain the strongest choice, it must be shown that there are at least some cases to which none of the above objections apply. Let us examine the objections and responses to them in the order just outlined.

1) Refusal to Accept the Evidence

a) Chance coincidence?

Refusal to accept the evidence for memories of previous lives may assume several guises. It may be claimed, for example, that many of the supposed memories are nothing more than "scattered shots,"[37]--a combination of guesswork, imagination, wishful thinking, and a child's desire to please an investigator. By this theory, the similarity of the child's comments to the actual facts as later uncovered are pure coincidence, however improbable. For every child whose memory "matches" the facts, it suggests that

there must be millions of children claiming memories which do not correspond to any facts at all. (This argument is analagous to the claim that correct guesses in the Duke U. Telepathy Experiments are nothing more than improbable chance coincidences.)

The response to this objection is fairly straightforward. The correspondences produced in the statements of many of the children studied are of the probabilities, not of one in millions, but of one in trillions of trillions. Moreover, the way the child reports his memories does not resemble guesswork at all ("Am I right about this? How about that?"). Rather, most consist of strong assertions with the same level of confidence as his statements about other memories of his present life. In short, guesswork alone is inadequate to account for the specificity, unique correspondence, and accuracy of many of these children. Nor, of course, could it account for birthmarks, habits, and predilections,

b) Deliberate distortion

A more strident claim is that the investigator or parents or both have deliberately distorted the facts to perpetrate a hoax in the name of empirical research. Ruth Reyna is one fanatic opponent to reports of natural memories of former lives. She has collected "refutations" of the reincarnation theory from many sources which unfortunately she cannot always name. One of her nameless sources:

> I was really shocked by the method of questioning. Almost all the questions were leading questions whereby he was trying to elicit the answer he wanted....An impartial probe was made impossible because of the enthusiasm of the boy's father, who had fully tutored everyone around, including the boy. I found it absolutely useless to make any investigation....[38]

Reyna then goes on to say that the most prolific researcher of claims of rebirth is Dr. Ian Stevenson, whose book,

> Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation, published in 1966, stands as the most revealing document of both chicanery and naivete--chicanery on the part of relatives of the claimants, and naivete on the part of the investigator.[39]

Reyna does not say specifically in what respects Stevenson is naive, but leaves us with just this general ad hominem character blast.

However, attestations to the scrupulous care of the investigators are not lacking on the other side. Banerjee himself (the one accused in Reyna's nameless letters?) rejects the uncritical attitudes of less careful investigators.[40] Many acquaintances of Stevenson, including those who neither share his enthusiasm nor believe in reincarnation, attest to his thoroughness and impeccable integrity. Harold Lief, M.D., who worked with Stevenson on earlier projects, calls him "methodical and thorough in his data collection and lucid in their analyses and presentation."[41] Montague Ullman, M.D., calls Stevenson's studies "models of investigative field work,"[42] and UCLA psychiatrist Thelma Moss praises his "meticulous diligence."[43] Jacobson goes to great length to show that in relation to Stevenson's cases, "the hoax hypothesis is very poorly founded."[44] Stevenson has personally revisited many of his cases during his twenty years of research, to observe personality development and check for signs of fraud or collusion. He is the first to admit that some cases may be tainted by the unconscious or conscious desires of his respondents. But it is unthinkable that all 1400-odd cases now studied by independent researchers are all en-

tirely mistaken. Can we imagine that in all these hundreds of cases, the local folk deliberately perpetrated a plan to hoodwink dozens of different investigators into bizarre hypotheses?

It must be re-emphasized that Stevenson is not the only researcher to arrive with such cases and conclusions. Banerjee has checked some of the very same cases which Stevenson had studied, arriving independently at very similar conclusions. Leading doctors and parapsychologists have found strong cases in Turkey, Lebanon, Brazil, and Europe[45]--not cultures which traditionally favor belief in reincarnation! Each of them has risked his professional reputation by publishing accounts which contradict the expectations and religious commitments of the scientific community in the west (--and of their readers like Ms. Reyna).

There are many cases, too, in which the information reported by the child as a memory of his past life was unknown to anyone he knew in the present life. It could not have been conveyed to him by his family or friends. The alleged desire of the parents for local notoriety is conspicuously lacking in most cases, nor could it constitute a motive for trumping up memories of past lives where none existed.[46] Finally, there are many instances in which the family and surrounding people disbelieved, rather than encouraged, the child's discussion of past lives, and yet the child persisted in his assertions. Considering the number and scruples of the researchers, and their independent corroborations, the hoax/fraud hypothesis must be discarded as inadequate to account for the data.

2) Logical and Theoretical Objections

Theoretical objections, or those which attempt to reject the evidence of reincarnation purely on the grounds of its logical consequences, have already been treated in our discussion of Buddhist rebirth. However, a brief review of those objections and answers may be appropriate here in the context of evaluating the results of empirical research.

a) Population

The claim is often heard that reincarnation is incompatible with the theory of evolution, for the number of the humans on the planet is steadily increasing. However, this objection might be answered in any of a number of ways, viz.: (i) that non-humans may be reborn as humans; (ii) that disembodied souls have awaited embodiment; (iii) that new souls evolve as the number of humans increases; or even (iv) that beings are reborn from other solar systems in which the population is decreasing. We need not resolve such questions here, but simply point out that the population question alone is not a sound basis on which to object to rebirth.

b) Scarceness of such memories

The other major theoretical objection in the light of our empirical findings asks why so few children remember past lives. If rebirth is a fact, should we not all expect to remember past lives? Here too, several answers are forthcoming.

(i) Few people have good memories of events which happened only

a few years before, especially if their minds are occupied and their environments stimulating. How much less should we expect people to remember events previous even to their own childhood! (ii) Memories of previous lives may have been suppressed and forgotten, either because they themselves were traumatic, or because the death and birth processes were traumatic. Discouragement of such talk by parents and companions may also account for the low instance of children reporting on their previous lives in detail. (iii) Alternatively, it is possible that we can all remember former lives through yogic or Buddhist meditation and right living. These particular children may have been karmically gifted in such a way as to remember their past lives without such training in this life. (iv) Finally, it is logically possible that not all people are reborn--there are many types of experience possible after death, and rebirth might be a relatively rare sort. Thus the fact that few children remember previous lives does not preclude the possibility that reincarnation may be the correct interpretation of some cases, although not of everyone.

3) Normal but Forgotten Memories

Another objection would suggest that the knowledge reported by children was obtained in some normal but forgotten means. This phenomenon, known as cryptomnesia (hidden memory), must be excluded before any acceptance of the above cases as indicative of reincarnation. Cyptomnesia is particularly prominent in cases of hypnotism. A famous example is a patient of Dr. Harold Rosen in Toronto,

who reproduced a ritual curse in the Old Oscan language while in trance, although he had never studied Latin, much less its precursors. Thorough examination revealed, however, that the patient had once glanced at a page in which that same curse was inscribed in large letters. He had apparently memorized it entirely unknown to himself, and therefore was able to reproduce it in trance.[47]

Critics of Bridey Murphy have claimed that Virginia had known someone of that name as a girl, that she had often spoken to an Irish immigrant, and that her childhood home had similarities with that reported by the trance personality of Bridey.[48] Such allegations have since been shown to be manifestly false, the product of fundamentalist Christian writers who never met Virginia nor studied her case. They completely fail to explain the many details of names, places, and dates with which the Bridey trance personality showed familiarity.[49]

Although the cryptomnesia objection might hold for certain hypnotic regression cases, it is unthinkable in most spontaneous cases. It would be impossible for children to produce factual accounts of people and places they had never seen, even in cryptomnesia. Nor is the "hidden memory" hypothesis adequate to explain the strong emotional attachments of such children to members of their "former families." and their persistence in habits or declarations which win them only the censure of their family and peers.[50]

4) The Super-ESP Hypothesis

The only alternative that remains open to critics of the reincarnation interpretation is (1) to accept the facts which have been discovered under rigorous controls, (2) admit that normal methods of information-acquisition are inadequate to explain them, but (3) propose that some other paranormal mechanisms should be held responsible. These critics suggest that ESP might account for the claimed memories of former lives equally as well as the reincarnation theory. However, the mechanisms and explanations behind other ESP faculties are at least as unclear as those which would explain apparently pre-natal memories on the reincarnation hypothesis. Thus, there is little explicit gain in explanatory power by this move. It does, however, allow its adherents to reject a position which they find distasteful for religious or cultural reasons.

Any so-called Super-ESP hypothesis attributes to man powers which violate the mechanist/realist world-views of analytic philosophers almost as thoroughly as would a reincarnationist approach. Whatever their respective motives or advantages, we may itemize the Super-ESP theories purporting to explain possessions and memories of former lives as follows: (1) psychometry, (2) telepathy, (3) precognition, and (4) retrocognition. Let us examine the case made for each of these hypotheses, observing how closely it fits the available evidence, and what modifications in our understanding of these paranormal powers would be necessary to make the hypothesis fit.

a) Psychometry

In the branch of ESP known as psychometry, a sensitive or subject reports information about past events while handling an object which as had intimate association with those events. Such objects as pens, wallets, watches, and even building stones are commonly used. In themselves, these objects do not appear to provide much information about the people or situations with which they have been associated. In the hands of a skilled psychometrist, however, they appear to provide access to detailed and independently verifiable knowledge of which he would otherwise be ignorant.[51] Although its mechanisms are inadequately understood, the phenomenon of psychometry gives evidence that memory traces may be attached to (or at least accessed through) material objects other than living human brains. Advocates of the "super-psychometry" theory over the reincarnation hypothesis propose that we are dealing with cases of memories surviving in some invisible object, "picked up" by children or hypnotized patients and misinterpreted as their own prior experiences.[52] What are the advantages and flaws in this proposal?

First, the phenomena discussed here are different from psychometric cases in important respects. They do not happen when an object is present and cease when it is removed, but rather continue over long periods of time. They are not reported as visions of something happening somewhere else to someone else, as in psychometry; rather they are first-hand accounts in which the child or patient really believes that the events happened to him.

Worse yet, the psychometric model loses the very explanatory power which it had hoped to provide, since there is no visible object to which the memories are associated. The proponent of this theory might try to extend his model of psychometry by asserting that in some cases, the carrier of memories is not a visible physical object. But then he is left to postualte an invisible, undetectable something which carries memories over time and distance from the body of a dying person to the body of an infant or to a subject undergoing possession or hypnosis. Insofar as this theory is essentially unfalsifiable, analytic philosophers might call it meaningless. At best, it is not a substantial improvement over the reincarnationist version.

The only crucial difference remaining between the two theories is that the psychometrist claims that the carrier of memories is an inanimate and unconscious physical (but invisible) object, whereas the reincarnationist holds that it is the surviving mind of the deceased person. The descriptions of some children and hypnotic regression subjects--of memories of states between death and rebirth--give prima facie support to a theory of animate consciousness rather than of inanimate memories survivng, although we have no independent means of verifying these claims at present. Between the dissimilarities of these cases of claimed memories and cases of psychometry, and the over-extension of the psychometric model necessary to make sense of the phenomena, the "super-psychometry theory" emerges as less adequate than that of reincarnation.

b) Telepathy

Telepathy is that branch of ESP in which information known to one person is paranormally conveyed to another through purely mental means. It used to be believed that this was a matter of one person projecting his thoughts to another, and indeed some telepathy does work in this way. Recent research has demonstrated that the "sender-receiver model" is not the only one; occasionally information may be telepathically obtained without deliberate attempts at sending or receiving.[53] The claim of the "super-telepathy" theory, then, is that the information reported by the subjects concerned was telepathically derived from the minds of other people, presumably those who knew the subject.

This telepathic model, however, simply fails to fit the evidence presented. People possessed, under hypnosis, or claiming to remember former lives often exhibit knowledge which is not part of the conscious waking knowledge of anyone known to them. Bridey Murphy's naming of places and markets, Guirdham's subject's knowledge about the Cathars, and the reports of some of Stevenson's child subjects, have required extensive digging in obscure historic records to confirm that these accounts were indeed correct.

There is also the question as to whose mind the subject is "tapping," if anyone's, to get the information which he reports. Critic Ruth Reyna believes that in some cases, the parents are projecting ideas through the mouths of their children:

> Assisted by parents and older relatives, the hallucination [sic] that he is someone else is induced in the child. This flagrant inducing of hallucinations in a child by adults merely to gain an advantage for themselves or for the child is, to my mind, an unconscionable and criminal violation of the child's human dignity....[54]

Contrary to this allegation, it is abundantly clear that in a number of cases, the parents were completely surprised at the memories of their child. Some had no knowledge themselves of the facts which the child was relating, and allowed the investigation only reluctantly.[55] Ironically, the alleged motives of "gaining an advantage for themselves or for the child," are contradicted by Reyna herself in a following paragraph, where she says that parents believed that the investigation of their child's retrocognitive memories hurt rather than helped his performance at school.[56]

True parent-child telepathy may indeed be a common phenomenon.[57] It does not apply to the cases we are considering here. For that, we should need a model of telepathy from many obscure and different minds to a child or subject whom many of them did not even know. Alternatively, we should have to grant that the child had the power to telepathically acquire information, but only information which correctly pertained to only one person whom he did not know and who was now dead. We must suppose that he gathered such information, telepathically, bit by bit, from all the various unknown people who were presently alive and shared the memories of the deceased in their subconsciousnesses. This clearly stretches the telepathy model to the breaking point.

A last-ditch effort to save the telepathy model might argue that the child or subject were telepathically receiving memories from a single source--the surviving consciousness of the deceased--rather than being the embodiment of the deceased's consciousness. First of all, this move substantially concedes the survival question, admitting that only the continuation of a single human consciousness would enable telepathy to explain such phenomena. (As we saw above, telepathy might well account for some information gleaned from mediumistic seances, where the apparent possession or communication is only temporary and fragmentary.) The crucial difference between telepathy from a surviving spirit, and the rebirth of that spirit into a new body, is the question of perspective. When people receive messages or ideas by telepathy, they report seeing pictures, hearing counds, or having other impressions, more or less clearly, which correspond to those in the mind of another person. But they do not say that the images are "mine," that they remember them, nor that they feel any intuitive familiarity with nor affection for those images. By contrast, the subjects in our study feel that the images they "see" are really their memories, and they identify themselves with pictures and events of a former person, rather than seimply feeling that they have had impressions of those pictures or events once before. Thus, even when the telepathy hypothesis is modified to admit discarnate survival, it is still not as appropriate to the evidence as is the straightforward hypothesis of rebirth.

c) Precognition

Precognition is the ability to accurately foresee events in the future. It is one of the least understood of paranormal abilities, as it seems either to violate common-sense notions of the unidirectonal passage of time, or else to suggest a large measure of predeterminism in the universe. Applied to the cases of our inquiry, the "super-precognition" theory would assert that the subjects obtained knowledge of other people's previous lives, abilities in foreign languages, etc., by precognition of the very facts which the investigator was later to reveal. Thus, for example, it would suggest that Guirdham's subject did not really remember that Cathar priests' robes were blue (a fact not public until some time later), but rather that she precognized that her psychiatrist would someday uncover the fact that Cathar priests' robes were blue, and that she misinterpreted the precognition as a memory.[58]

The appalling circularity of this argument renders it difficult to discuss and impossible to falsify. As long as a case is uninvestigated, believers in this theory can also claim that the subject's memories have not been shown to be correct, and therefore that the subject does not remember any past life. As soon as the case is investigated, and the subject's statements shown to be in accord with historic fact, the super-precognition theorists can claim that the subject does not remember any past life, because it is a case of precognition of the findings of the investigation. This is analogous to saying that I answered as I

did on the examination, not because I recalled the answers from previous study, but because I foresaw the way I would answer, through precognition of my completed test in the future. If the *prima facie* absurdity of this suggestion does not immediately rule the theory out of court, then certainly the logical illegitimacy of switching interpretations (as above) to fit the particular case should rule it out: Thousands of children make true but uninvestigated statements. According to the super-precognition theory, all such statements are groundless and perhaps false. But then a curious thing happens: as soon as someone demonstrates a correspondence between previous events and the child's statements, the statement is reinterpreted. It becomes not only true (which it was not held to be before), but precognitive of the discovery of its truth, which it could not be if not investigated. In short, the precognition theoriest ascribes different logical status to the very same statement depending on its state of investigation. Moreover, it is strange that subjects should assert to be true from memory some items which they should foreknow would be proven false in the future, if they were truly precognitive.

Surely it is unnecessary to take this proposal seriously. Further differences may be shown between the nature of precognitive experiences, like fuzzy hunches or dreamy flashes, and the feeling of the subject that these are his memories, like any other memories. If psychic at all, these are less likely to be examples of precognition than of a special case of retrocognition.

d) Retrocognition

Retrocognition is knowledge of the past. Parapsychologists occasionally find cases where people have clairvoyant visions of things which have happened before their time. Such reports are particularly common from psychically sensitive people visiting old battlefields, the pyramids, Versailles, or other historic spots. On this model, the claim is made that the subjects of our study are not really remembering events in their own lives, but are glimpsing someone else's life through retrocognitive clairvoyance.[59]

In a sense, all memory is retrocognitive. The crucial question to be posed is: how are memory-type retrocognitions different from non-memory retrocognition, necessary to the Super-ESP theory? The answer again is simple. People who are capable of clairvoyant retrocognition generally catch glimpses of scenes in the past, but they are unable to identify, date, or place themselves within them. The memories of our subjects, by contrast, include the subject as the central actor and perceiver of the scene, which he can identify, date, and place. They "feel like" other normal memories too, and may frequently be placed within a sequence of other memories in time and space by the subject. Thus, the title of genuine memory of a former life seems more appropriate than that of retrocognitive clairvoyance. There are still other considerations which militate for the rejection of not only these but of <u>all</u> possible Super-ESP hypotheses.

5) Objections to All Super-ESP Hypotheses

Even if the mechanisms of ESP were well enough understood to make ESP an aesthetically or scientifically preferable theory to that of reincarnation, fundamental dissimilarities between cases of ESP and the cases we have cited require either immense modification of our understanding of ESP, or the admission that these are not cases of ESP at all. Firstly, as we have illustrated throughout previous arguments, there is the testimony of the subject, even in the face of family opposition, that what he is describing is his experience, his old family, his past life, with all the natural emotion attendant thereupon.

Secondly, as Stevenson explains, the Super-ESP hypothesis

> ...does not adequately account for the fact that the subjects of cases ofthe reincarnation type show no evidence of having powers of ESP apart from the claimed memories of a previous life. It may reasonably be asked why a child with paranormal powers of this sort that would be required to obtain all the correct information that many of these children show would not manifest such powers in other situations or with regard to other persons besides the single deceased person whose life the subject claims to remember.[60]

His question is rhetorical, its implication clear: other theories cannot explain this focus of interest and memory on a single dead person otherwise unknown to the subject and his family.

Thirdly, psychiatrists such as Polanyi hold that even if memories were transferable or facts obtained clairvoyantly, habits, attitudes, dispositions, and skills (linguistic as well as physical) are not obtainable except by repeated practice. Above all, skills are essentially non-transferable and incommunicable.[61] Scriven,

among others, considers skills an essential element in the identification of persons--more fundamental than even appearance.[62] So when there emerge cases of people who not only claim to be the reincarnation of someone who died previously, but who also exhibit their same innate skills in swimming, mathematics, or languages from childhood and without training, there is some warrant to identify them with the former person, rather than stretching an already inadequate ESP theory.

We have already noted the important elements of birthmarks. Children frequently show warts, wounds, or scratches corresponding to the wounds by which the person with whom they identify was killed. There are many reasons to reject Reyna's far-fetched supposition that these may be superimposed on the foetus by a mother who desires to have her relative born again.[63] (i) There is no evidence that mothers' desires affect the birthmarks of babies. (ii) Many mothers were displeased by, rather than desirous of, the marks and deformities of their babies. (iii) Many mothers were unaware of the existence, much less the manner of death, of the people their children claimed to have been. (iv) Even if it were shown that mothers' desires could somehow influence foetus development, this would not rule out the possibility that the mind of the deceased deliberately chose that body in which to be reborn.

Taken together, the display (1) of memories which correspond to those we should expect if the deceased were still living, (2) of habits, preferences, and skills, linguistic and physical,

(3) of birthmarks like those of the deceased--makes up a stronger case for the identification of the mind of the subject with the mind of the deceased than for any of the so-called Super-ESP hypotheses proposed in the literature.

This is far from saying that reincarnation has been proven. As research continues, we are able to offer some generalizations about the ways in which people seem to be reborn. Already a few such rules have been suggested. Generalizing from Stevenson's examples, Story's Law suggests that people tend to reincarnate within several hundred miles of their old homes.[64] This may be due in part, however, to the difficulty in studying cases which are further removed--particularly if the parents ignore their children's coherent statements in foreign languages as mere "baby talk."

Cases of reincarnation seem more common in underdeveloped nations. These are often the countries which believe most in it also. It may someday be found that the pre-mortem beliefs of the individual actually influence the post-mortem fate of his consciousness. Certainly children remembering past lives are less likely to be discovered or reported in societies which consider such notions to be nonsense or heresy, for the parents will discourage and disbelieve their child in such a cultural context. On the other hand, children born into societies which accept reincarnation may find more receptive ears for their strange tales of past experiences.[65] Moreover, underdeveloped nations tend to have fewer stimuli (TV, films, electronic games) and obligations

(school, YMCA, scouts, juku) to occupy the time and mind of the child. Particularly in semiliterate areas, the memories of adults tend to be much better developed than those of literate industrial Europeans. It is just possible that all the stimuli and obligations of industrialized societies contribute towards clouding the memory and focussing on present rather than past experiences, which might also help to explain this variation. Even today, many exceptions have been found to the "underdeveloped/believers" rule of reincarnation, like the hundreds of rebirth cases reported from Catholic Brazil and Protestant England. If such research breaks down societal tabus, further studies might demonstrate approximately equal frequencies of rebirth cases in developed and less developed nations, irrespective of cultural expectations.

On the other hand, it may be the case that some people are reborn into human bodies and some people are not. If we take our subjects' accounts literally, some claim to remember equine or simian births between their human incarnations; others remember heavenly lands with nostalgia. Such language is anything but conclusive. At the same time, by simple calculations, we can reach some conclusions about the interval between the death of one person and the birth of another who claims to be the same person. The minimum period on record seems to be that of the Alexandrina case cited above, in which slightly less than nine months passed between the death and purported rebirth. The maximum period may be hundreds or even thousands of years, if we accept cases

like the "Rosemary" case as Ducasse does.[66] It is common for a period of several years to elapse between the death of one party and the birth of someone who remembers parts of their lives.

This time gap has important philosophical implications. It means, first of all, that rebirth is not an immediate experience simultaneous with death. If the early Buddhist theory were correct (in its pure form as construed above), we might expect an instantaneous transfer, a lightning-like flash rushing from a corpse to a foetus in a womb, with less than a year elapsing before rebirth. But the evidence seems to require a longer intermediate state. Whether we accept the testimonies about animal incarnations and heavenly realms, or look for more sophisticated theories, the evidence requires the postulation of some other form of continuity between embodiments. Thus, although the theory of reincarnation presupposes survival, it does not answer the question of what form consciousness takes, if any, immediately after the death of the physical body.

In overview, a growing body of data suggests that at least a small number of dying people are reborn later in other human bodies--but that such reincarnation is seldom if ever immediate upon death. We must seek other evidence concerning the nature of a disembodied state if there is one after the death of the material body--at least to provide continuity and identity between death and rebirth--and at best to make sense of survival, with or without a future rebirth on this earth.[67]

CHAPTER II: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE BEARING ON INVISIBLE BODIES

The previous chapter demonstrated that the reincarnation hypothesis is the most plausible of several alternative theories to explain certain phenomena of possession and claimed memories of former lives. Moreover, it concluded that even the reincarnation hypothesis requires some other invisible entity to maintain the identity and continuity of the person between incarnations.

This chapter will consider paranormal events which seem to point to the possibility of conscious personality outside of the normal physical body, which would in turn provide the continuity and identity required in the above arguments. In particular, the phenomena of most importance and interest to us are those known as (1) apparitions and (2) out-of-body experiences (abbreviated OBE's). Loosely speaking, these phenomena correspond to those popularly known as ghosts and wraiths (visible spirits of dead and living persons apart from their bodies), and as "astral projection" (the travel of the soul or center of consciouness and perception to another place while the body remains inactive). This chapter will reject both these popular names and the misconceptions that surround them. We shall deal instead with the verifiable experimental data, and then with the various possible interpretations of them, to most rigorously evaluate their relevance to survival.

A) Phenomena Not Considered

No matter how dispassionate, such discussions invariably call to mind certain similar terms, such as phantoms and haunts, or raise the accusations that all such phenomena are merely some type of subjective hallucination. To further clarify the nature of apparitions and OBE's, it is necessary from the outset to define narrowly our domain by excluding certain similar-sounding but radically different phenomena, particularly (1) hallucinations, (2) phantom limbs, (3) poltergeists, and (4) hauntings of place.

1) Hallucinations

The literature of psychiatry and parapsychology frequently confuses the terms hallucination and apparition. Clarity and logic demand that we distinguish between them, and use these terms in a more precise and technical manner. There are at least three crucial differences between hallucinations and apparitions (and OBE's) namely, intersubjectivity, causal conditions, and continuity.

a) Intersubjectivity

An apparition is someone or something temporarily perceived, which is found, then or later, not to have been physically present where it was perceived to be. Similarly, an OBE is an experience of feeling oneself absent from one's body and present in some other location apart from the body, including the perceptions appropriate to that other place. Of course it is possible that either of these experiences might be delusions, with no correspondence to reality.

In this study, we shall call appearances which are purely subjective, hallucinations, and those which possess intersubjectivity, can be independently verified, or possess other characteristics of physicality, apparitions (and OBE's). This is not to deny that there may be many cases where the subjectivity or objectivity of the perception is very difficult to establish. Later in this study, we shall review some of the experiments constructed to assist in doing just that. It does mean, at least, that the pink elephants of the drunk, the stars seen by a boy knocked out in a street fight, and the dreamer's common feeling that he is not in his bed but is awake in some other place, will not be treated as cases of apparitions or OBE's.

A skeptic who believes neither in veridical apparitions nor OBE's might incline to suggest *a priori* that all apparitions and OBE's are hallucinations. Conversely, a subjective idealist might incline to the view that all hallucinations are as real as any other phenomenal experience. However, these views both ignore certain stubborn facts. There is a knowable difference between hallucinating and perceiving an apparition or having an OBE. As a simple illustration, let us imagine a case in which I "see" a ghost walking through my parlour. If other people see it too, or if I can detect it on film, and if our accounts or tests yield completely compatible reports, then we have some reason to call it an apparition. If no one else can detect the images which I "see," however, then it is quite possible that I am hallucinating. Similarly, if I feel myself drifting out of my body into another room,

and can correctly describe all the details I would be expected to perceive if I were physically present in that room--or if my "presence" in that room can be observed by other men and machines, while my body lies dormant in bed--then this experience may indeed be an OBE. If, on the other hand, what I experience when I feel "outside my body," has no correlation to a real place or to real events, then we must classify the experience, however psychologically interesting, as another dream or hallucination. This study shall concern itself only with apparitions and OBE's which fit this description. Additional criteria may be useful to help distinguish between hallucinations and genuine apparitions or OBE's.

b) Causal conditions

Hallucinations, i.e. purely private visual imagery as defined above, are generally produced by mental diseases such as schizophrenia, or by high fever and delirium, or by alcohol, hypnotism, or hallucinogenic drugs.[68] These abnormal conditions produce physical or chemical changes in the brain which cause the person to vividly imagine that he is perceiving something which has no real external referent. Similarly, the vivid images produced by probing the brains of epileptic patients with electrodes should also be classified as hallucinations, since they sound or appear external only to the patient, but are inaccessible to anyone but himself.[69] Apparitions and OBE's, on the other hand, can take place when the perceivers are in perfect health and free from alcohol or hallucinogenic drugs. Of course, there are certain cases

in which the perceiver has been imbibing, or the OBE is triggered by drugs. It is not possible to say that all hallucinations are drug- and disease related, and that no apparitions or OBE's are. In such borderline cases, we must take double care to assure that other criteria such as intersubjectivity are met before accepting a case as genuine. For the purposes of this study, we shall restrict ourselves wherever possible to the experiences of people in normal health and free of drugs or alcohol, to reduce the likelihood of including hallucinations among apparitions and OBE's.

c) Continuity

Neither hallucinations nor apparitions and OBE's tend to last very long; both experiences usually last but a few minutes, followed by restoration of normal experiences and consciousness. On the whole, however, apparitions and OBE's seem to be shorter than hallucinations, which may recur or continue for hours. More diagnostically, hallucinations tend to persist regardless of whether the eyes are open or closed. Apparitions cannot be seen with the eyes closed, and OBE's tend to terminate when the eyes are opened.[70] Thus, I can test the objectivity of the ghost in my parlour in part by closing my eyes. If it continues to appear before me, I may be assured that it is an hallucination of my own brain, and not likely to be visible to anyone else. On the other hand, if it disappears along with my parlour, and reappears when I open my eyes, I have one indication that it may be an apparition. Here too, there may be cases whose precise status is difficult to

determine. While we cannot guarantee that all images seen with open eyes are apparitions, we can at least agree to restrict our discussion to those experienced perceptions which do not continue in spite of changes in the visual mechanism, and which do not recur or persist for many hours. Thus we may rule out another source of hallucinations.

2) Phantom Limbs

There is almost nothing in common between phantom limbs and "phantoms" of the sort which deserve to be called apparitions. But word-association and the mistaken belief that phantom limbs are "astral" limbs persisting after amputation sometimes give rise to this confusion. "Phantom limb" is the name applied to the sensation or impression that one still has a limb which has been amputated. Claims of itches or twinges in amputated arms or legs are almost universal among people whose amputations took place after the age of five (but are rare among younger children); cases of phantom breasts or genitals are also not uncommon.[71]

The phantom limb is primarily a tactile hallucination, unlike apparitions and OBE's which are primarily visual images. The tactile impressions generally do not correspond to any external condition other than the state of the limb stump. Feelings of phantom limbs may be intensified or decreased by stimulating or anaesthetizing the stump; they are sometimes also eliminable by cranial or spinal operations.[72] The evidence thus seems to point to the conclusion that phantom limbs are a purely neurophysiological event,

the result of excitation of nerves which the brain had formerly learned to associate with a particular body part. The fact that young children with amputated limbs do not experience phantom limbs also points to the fact that their brains had not yet formed strong or indelible connections between specific nerves and brain areas and their bodily self-image.[73] Since phantom limbs are (a) tactile and not visual, (b) illusory in the sense of not providing true information, and (c) completely explainable on a neurophysiological model, they need not be treated further in this chapter on paranormal apparitions and OBE's.

3) Poltergeists

Poltergeists, literally, "noisy spirits," are technically known as RSPK: recurrent spontaneous psycho-kinesis. Poltergeists include rappings, spontaneous breakage or movement of objects, and spontaneous fires not attributable to any known agent. They are particularly common in homes at the moment of someone's death, as in the oft-cited cases where "the clock stopped still when the old man died."[74] The reason for not including poltergeists on this study is not that, like hallucinations and phantom limbs, they are amenable to other physiological explanations. Rather, it is that they are so difficult to categorize and study at all that they do not provide fruitful insights on the survival question.

The best available modern studies of poltergeists indicate that they are generally associated with living human (often teenage) agents with severe psychological disturbances. This is not to say

that the youths deliberately rap walls or throw furniture, but rather that noises and movements of objects can often be associated with para-epileptic brain-states of such people in the same room at the same time.[75] The argument may then be put forward that poltergeists are the result of the exercise of psychokinetic powers, and that in cases where no living agent is present, poltergesists may demonstrate the psychokinetic powers of the discarnate mind of a deceased person. While the hypothesis is quite intriguing, it obviously embodies too many presuppositions to accept at face value.

Whether these para-epileptic brain states are actually the causes, or merely concomitants, of the RSPK remains in question. Postulation of "spirit agencies" by no means clarifies most poltergeist cases. There are obvious problems in interpreting or attributing intelligibility to non-verbal noises. It is unclear why a particular discarnate agency would go about moving furniture or throwing dishes. Further, this theory (of discarnate agency) would attribute more powers to discarnate people than it does to the same people before their deaths--powers like moving objects against the laws of gravity, friction, and trajectory without physical contact! In sum, we know too little about the way RSPK works, and it is too uncommon and uncontrollable for careful study. Moreover, its implications for survival are too tenuous at this stage to make this a fruitful avenue of inquiry.

4) Hauntings of Place

Hauntings of place constitute a subset of genuine apparitions. They are frequently intersubjective in the overt sense; i.e. their images are seen by more than one person at a time, or by many different visitors to the same place at different times. They differ from other apparitions in being apparently purposeless, recurrent, and obsessed with a particular place rather than a person or idea. Most of the "ghosts" in so-called "haunted houses" presumably fall into this category.

Hauntings of place are particularly open to psychometric explanations, of the sort we found inappropriate to explaining possession or memories in the previous chapter. Rauscher asks:

> Now, keeping in mind this notion of memories adhering to an object, such as a watch, a pen, or a wedding ring, can you see how they might adhere to a house? Such place memories...could manifest to the occupants of the house as visions, sounds, or in the Collinses' case, smells.... Memories of anguish are most commonly associated with sinister or malevolent hauntings. In such cases, the house is pervaded by the distilled terror of every tragedy that transpired in it.[76]

Professor H.H. Price, who personally inspected the Borley Rectory and a number of other haunted houses in England,[77] also concluded that there was a significant difference between hauntings of place and other apparitions. The former seemed to exhibit no consciousness; the latter often expressed conscious purpose![78] Hart cites the "Six Theories of Apparitions" study, which found that

> apparitions of persons dead twelve hours or longer differ significantly from other apparitions, in that they much oftener are reported as having an emotional bond with the location and as being seen repeatedly, [and not] as having an emotional bond with the percipient or as being recognized.[79]

The further implications of these differences will become clearer as the nature of non-haunting apparitions is detailed below. We must continue to bear in mind these differences, lest it be prematurely concluded that the psychometric explanations which work quite well for hauntings of place apply equally well to all manner of apparitions (which is not the case).

We shall not ignore the evidence to be gleaned from hauntings of place altogether. In fact, they are particularly amenable to scientific inquiry precisely because they do stay in one place and are reasonably predictable. Moreover, they share certain similarities with other apparitions, such as their manner of appearing and disappearing, passing through physical objects, etc. Thus, their careful study may eventually shed light on the physical or para-physical composition of such phenomena. In this context alone, we may have occasion to refer to them again below.

With these qualifications in mind, we are now ready to examine the phenomena of apparitions and OBE's. These phenomena are like two sides of the same coin: in the one, people see someone who is not there; in the other, someone who is not really there sees things as if he were. Further inverse correspondences will be noted during the course of this chapter. For the time being, however, we shall treat them as two separate phenomena, briefly reviewing the history, characteristics, and experimental findings relevant to apparitions and OBE's respectively.

B) Phenomena Considered

1) Apparitions

a) History

Ancient mythologies and early literature from almost every major culture contain references to apparitions of the dead, which appear as if alive and relate to their living descendants. It seems that the earliest methodical attempt to collect, document, and discuss apparitions was a Latin treatise published in 1573, entitled Ghostes and Spirits Walking by Night.[80] Although publishing in George III's England was less common than today, David Simpson of Macclesfield unveiled his "Discourse on Dreams and Night Visions" in 1791--this time reporting 77 cases of apparitions believed authentic.[81] A century later, this number had more than doubled, and Gurney, Myers, and Podmore brought forth their ground-breaking tome, Phantoms of the Living--still a standard reference work today.[82] In 1889, the young Society for Psychical Research sent out a survey to nearly 17,000 people on the subject. Of those that returned, 353 reported having seen apparitions of living people, and another 163 of dead people. In the Society's "Report on Census of Hallucinations," Sidgwick observed several important correlations borne out by subsequent studies: that most apparitions of the dead are seen within an hour of death, and most apparitions of the living are seen at the time and place when the living person was dreaming about being there.[83]

The voluntary creations of apparitions has been practiced by Tibetan lamas, and claimed by A. David-Neel in the 1930's.[84] The Second World War brought another flood of stories relating that apparitions of dying soldiers were perceived at the moments of their deaths by their loved ones.[85] Stimulated by discussions at the First International Conference of Parapsychological Studies (Utrecht, 1953), a team of 48 collaborators from 12 countries compiled a report called "Six Theories About Apparitions."[86] Almost simultaneously, D.J. West's Psychical Research Today devoted substantial space to apparition research, and G.N.M. Tyrrell's study of Apparitions re-emerged into public prominence.[88] The "Six Theories" study concluded strongly in favor of survival:

> Since full-fledged ESP projections [apparitions] have been shown to be genuine occurrences, and since these conscious projections of living persons are in most respects essentially indistinguishable from most types of apparitions of the dead, it follows that some of the most frequent types of apparitions of the dead presumably carry with them the memories and purposes of the personalities which they represent, and that they thus constitute evidence of survival of personality beyond bodily death.[89]

It is the presumption as well as the evidence of this assertion that we shall have to re-examine before concurring with the verdict of the international commission.

Since the 1950's, apparition research has continued at a less sensational pace. Teams from UCLA visited haunted houses to collect features of apparitions of place,[90] while Duke University quietly collected a data bank of 8,000 cases of apparitions. In dozens of such cases, only the simultaneous presence of the person perceived as an apparition in another place (sometimes a grave!)

allowed the perceivers to distinguish between the apparition and the real person.[81] The British Medical Journal reported that 14% of Welsh widows and widowers had "distinct visual hallucinations" of their departed spouses,[92] but corroborative studies are needed.

b) Objectivity

An essential feature of apparitions is their objectivity. That is, they appear three-dimensional, follow the laws of perspective and parallax which we would expect of solid bodies in space, and they are intersubjectively visible, that is, they may be seen by many people from their respective perspectives. In colonial times, nearly 100 people saw, spoke to, and marched around with the apparition of Lydia Blaisdell.[93] Countering the claim that ghosts are usually perceived only when the perceiver is alone, Prince's studies concluded that "the percipient at the moment of the apparition was with one or more persons in slightly more than 30% of them."[94] Hart diagrams a case in which an apparition was correctly perceived in a mirror while another person saw it directly.[95] Tyrrell claimed to have collected as many as 130 collectively perceived cases by 1953,[96] and the "Six Theories" study indicated that of 46 cases where more than one person was in the room when the apparition was perceived, 26 (56%) were perceived simultaneously by more than one person.[97] Such considerations lead philosopher C.E.M. Joad to assert that those who see ghosts

> ...have actually seen something....By using the word "seen," I mean to imply that the retina of their eyes and their optical nerves were stimulated by events which were independent of the seer...in a word, what they saw was an objective occurrence and not a subjective projection.[98]

Joad also mentions that animals often respond to apparitions even before they are noticed by humans--a fact to which we shall have future reference.

There remains the awkward fact that some people do not see apparitions when others do. This seems to be related to the degree of belief and "psychic receptivity" of the perceivers.[99] Studies of other psychic abilities have frequently observed this coincidence; in fact, it has been so common as to be generalized into the law of "Sheep-Goats" Effect.[100] This law suggests that, all other things being equal, people who believe in psychic abilities are more likely to manifest them than those who are skeptical of them. This rule has been experimentally checked in numerous instances, and has been found to hold true in far greater measure than would be expected merely by experimental error or bias. For whatever reasons, if the "Sheep-Goats" effect is granted to be a true generalization about paranormal phenomena, then perceptions of apparitions also seem to follow this rule.[101] It has been hypothesized that the skepticism of our culture has led to a reduction in the collective annual number of apparition sightings.[102] But among the sighters of apparitions are a number of military officers, M.D.'s, and clergymen--so it is not the case that apparitions are sighted only by superstitious rustics.[103]

For all their intersubjectivity, however, apparitions appear to pass through solid objects, to appear and disappear in closed rooms. So we must distinguish apparitions from the materializations of mediums, which occupy space, can be felt, and of which wax molds

can be made before they dematerialize.[104] This might also account for their silence; if the "stuff" of which apparitions consist meets no resistance from physical objects, it is unable to create the vibrations of the air which we hear as sound. (Less than one in ten apparitions makes any sound at all, although some seem to try to speak.)[105]

In temporal distribution, it has been calculated that over 40% of apparitions appear in daylight hours, and another 10-20% in good artifical illumination. Thus darkness does not seem to be a prerequisite for apparitions, despite popular superstitions.[106]

c) Content

As for content and appearance, apparitions tend to be colored rather than the sheeted white of the traditional ghost story, and their coloring resembles that of living persons.[107] Apparitions are almost invariably clothed, and may carry hats, canes, swords, watches, books, or other such paraphernalia.[108] These possessions and clothes tend to correspond to those last worn or best loved by the person appearing--but not necessarily to those which the percipient would have expected. Thus, there are numerous cases of apparitions wearing the clothes in which the people to whom they correspond had died. In one famous case, the apparition even bore a scar on her cheek corresponding to one the mother had accidentally caused while dressing the corpse, unknown to the percipient.[109] The fact that apparitions are clad and accoutred is of great importance because it indicates that they are not dependent upon the biological body as much as on a self-image or mental projection.

On other occasions, there have been apparitions of pets, with or without their masters, or of draft animals and their wagons.[110] There is inadequate evidence to establish whether apparitions of pets are, like clothing, a projection of some human mind, or whether they possess the same psychic capacities to manifest themselves volitionally as do humans--or both. Murphy went so far as to argue that animal apparitions weaken the case that apparitions demonstrate survival--because of the inherent improbability of survival of things which lack both souls and intellects.[111] One need not be an animal lover to remark on the gross assumptions implicit in this argument. Murphy is assuming that animals could not survive death, and arguing that since human and animal apparitions are essentially similar, then neither animal nor human apparitions indicate survival. However, this same evidence might be equally interpretable as an indication that both animals and humans do survive--and perhaps that animals share certain mental abilities which Murphy had been unable to concede to them.

Hauntings of place agree with other apparitions in their intersubjectivity, appearance and disappearance. Moreover, they are far more accessible to study, since their location and even timing may be predicted, unlike those of apparitions. Apparatus set up in haunted houses to detect "ghosts," has produced such results as time-lapse photos of a "blob of light" crossing a hallway,[112] tape recordings of strange inexplicable sounds, and sudden drops of temperature in only certain parts of the room.[113]

It has become fairly standard practice to give floor-plans of "haunted houses" to psychic "sensitives," who are then asked to inspect the house individually, describing the apparition and marking its location as specifically as possible. Their descriptions and positions (often ± 1 foot) coincide so precisely with accounts given by the other percipients that these abilities can no longer be doubted.[114] It is precisely this ability which leads to explanations of such hauntings as place-centered psychometry; such methods are usually fruitless in spontaneous non-recurrent apparition cases. The evidence from haunting cases is valuable however, in showing that apparitions may be objectively perceived by recording devices and psychic sensitives and that they are not merely the projections of the perceivers.

d) Purpose

With the exception of hauntings of place, apparitions tend to demonstrate intention or purposefulness in manifesting themselves in the way, at the time, and to the person they do. One study found that as many as 90% of apparitions manifested "agent motivation" (attributable to the personality making the appearance) and only 10% of apparitions could be attributable to motivations on the parts of the percipients.[115] Gurney and Podmore also determined that apparitions are largely teleological in nature.[116] This purpose may consist in comforting or encouraging the perceiver, in revealing some "unfinished business," or in informing the percipient of some personal tragedy elsewhere.

Examples run into the hundreds, but it is worth noting a few of the better-studied "paradigm cases" to illustrate the point. One famous collectively perceived purposeful apparition was that of Mr. S.R. Wilmot, who sailed from Liverpool to New York on the City of Limerick on October 3, 1863. His wife was at home in Connecticut, but about 4 am. on Wednesday, Oct. 13,

> he saw his wife come to the door of his stateroom wearing her nightgown. At the door she hesitated. Above her husband's bed was an upper birth, set farther back, in which another man was lying. Mrs. Wilmot's apparition looked for a moment at this strange man. Then she advanced to her husband's side, stooped down, kissed him, and after caressing him for a few moments, quietly withdrew. In the morning it developed that Wilmot's fellow passenger in the upper birth...had seen a figure enter and act in a manner corresponding exactly.[117]

When he reached Connecticut, it emerged that Mrs. Wilmot had in fact been worried for his safety because another ship had run aground. About the same time they had seen her apparition, she had been imagining herself crossing the ocean to seek him. She described his ship and stateroom correctly in every particular, and also the man looking at her from the upper birth. Her motive, of expressing concern and affection for her husband, was unmistakeable in the actions of her apparition, which corresponded to what she "imagined" herself to be doing at just that time.

Apparitions often seem to want to announce their deaths to loved ones, particularly in war-time. One typical and well-corroborated case is that of Capt. Eldred Bowyer-Boyer, who was shot down over France early on March 19, 1917. At that same time, his sister-in-law (who did not know that he was in combat) saw his

apparition appreach her in her room at the Grand Hotel in Calcutta, India. At first he appeared so real that she thought he had come to visit. Then, when he suddenly disappeared, she felt "something must have happened to him, and a terrible fear came over me."[118] Shortly thereafter, his niece cam upstairs to her mother, his sister, who was still in bed at home in England. The niece announced that uncle Eldred was downstairs! Both sisters were so struck by the occurrence that they wrote to their mother of it, who confirmed the time and date of his fatal flight.

The Harford case demonstrates intention some years after the death of the agent. John Harford was a Wesleyan lay preacher; on his deathbed, he asked his good friend C. Happerfield to care for his wife. Happerfield readily agreed, and saw that Harford's widow was cared for, first by friends, and then by her grandson. After that, he lost touch with both of them for some time, until

> One night as I lay in bed wakeful, towards morning...I suddenly became conscious that someone was in the room. Then the curtain of my bed was drawn, and there stood my departed friend, gazing upon me with a sorrowful and troubled look. I felt no fear, but surprise and astonishment kept me silent. He spoke to me distinctly and audibly in his own familiar voice, and said, "Friend Happerfield, I have come to you because you have not kept your promise to see my wife. She is in trouble and in want." [119]

Happerfield promised to look into the matter, the ghost vanished, and he roused his wife. They learned that the grandson had lost his job, and the grandmother was about to be sent away. Promptly they sent them money, asked the widow to visit them, and provided her again with a comfortable home. This particular apparition is

noteworthy not only for its conveyance of information to which Happerfield had no normal access, but also for its drawing aside his bed curtain and speaking audibly. Similar cases of dead friends asking others to care for their widows or children are not uncommon; the apparition is particularly impressive when it coincides with or describes the time of death, which is unknown to the percipient through normal means.[120]

G.N.M. Tyrrell, in his landmark study, Apparitions, divided them into four types: (i) experiential (those of living people); (ii) crisis (including death and near-death); (iii) post-mortem purposeful contact; and (iv) hauntings of place.[120] The Wilmot, Bowyer-Boyer, and Harford cases just cited give examples of the first three types. If we exclude the psychometrically-explicable hauntings of place, we can see a wide agreement in the apparent "purposefulness" of apparitions of the living, dying, and long dead. These three categories also bear striking witness to one other phenomenon: their timing in relation to critical events.

e) Timing

All major studies of apparitions conducted in the past century have been impressed by certain correspondences in timing. As early as the 1894 "Census of Hallucinations," it was discovered that when a living person's apparition was perceived, that very person was thinking or dreaming of doing exactly what (and being where) his apparition was.[122] Later studies have supported this observation: the location and actions of apparitions correspond to the time, place, and action of a dream or day-dream of a living

agent.[123] The evidence is so clear in this connection that scholars suggest that vivid dreams may actually be the cause of apparitions of the living, although the mechanism is not yet understood.[124] Most apparitions, however, are not of the dreaming, but of those who are on the brink of death or have just died. Again there is a close correspondence in timing. Sidgwick found that in close to 200 cases where the apparition of a dead or dying person was seen, over 60% of these apparitions were confirmed as having been within an hour of the actual death somewhere else.[125] In another study, Prince found that

> Out of 135 cases of death coincidence, where it was found that the ghost was clearly recognized at the moment, [there were] 107 where the percipient in some way expressed his or her conviction [that the apparition meant the death of the person] prior to knowledge of the actual death.[126]

Reports of such apparitions were particularly common during the World Wars, when an unusually large number of violent deaths was occurring every day.[127] In some cases, the apparition did or said exactly what the dying person was doing at the same time on his deathbed.[128] In others, the dying person had on the same garb or displayed the same symptoms and appearance as was seen of his apparition.[129]

Apparitions of the living tend to occur when the living person is thinking of the place where his apparition is perceived. Apparitions of the dying most often appear to those for whom the dying person has strong emotional attachments, often with the clothing or language of the dying person. Without speculating on

the ontological nature of apparitions, we may at least observe that there seems to be a sense in which they are produced by the dreamer or dying person, thinking of his loved ones, and not by the percipient. But what of apparitions of those long dead, whose physical brains could not possibly be producing anything? If apparitions of the long-dead are essentially similar to those of the living, does their occurrence point to a consciousness surviving somewhere, thinking of loved places or people and communicating about "unfinished business," as in the Harford case?

Hornell Hart carefully compared numerous apparitions of the dead with apparitions of the living, in respect to 45 different characteristic qualities and behaviors. Hart concluded:

> With respect to the 45 traits most frequently mentioned in 165 apparitional cases, apparitions of the dead and dying are so closely similar to the 25 conscious apparitions of the living persons that the two types must be regarded as belonging to the same basic kind of phenomena. ....A similarity as close as that thus demonstrated between apparitions of the living and apparitions of the dead would not occur by mere chance once in 10 to the 150th power.[130]

Hart goes on to qualify this statement, however, by adding that hauntings of place should not be included in these conclusions, for their characteristics vary from those of other apparitions, particularly in regard to the quality of purposefulness. (We have also observed above that hauntings may be amenable to psychometric explanations not appropriate to other apparitions, so there are several good grounds for their exclusion here.) Slightly simplified, then, the logic of the argument runs as follows:

(A) Apparitions of living (and dying) people correspond to conscious processes in the minds of those whose apparitions are perceived.

(B) There are no significant differences between apparitions of living (and dying) people, and apparitions of people already dead.

Therefore, by analogical inference

(C) Apparitions of those already dead correspond to conscious processes in the minds of those whose apparitions are perceived.

From which we may deduce

(D) The minds of some dead people still have conscious processes, and at least in that sense, survive bodily death.

Several cautions must be appended here in regard to each part of the above syllogism. The truth of the premises, however plausible from the evidence adduced above, needs to be carefully checked. In regard to premise (A), we use the word "correspond" rather than "are caused by," because there are many cases in which the person whose apparition is seen does not realize that he is "causing" such an appearance to others. In (B), it might be argued that there _is_ a substantial difference between apparitions of living and dead: in the former case, the person is still thinking with his brain; in the latter, he is dead and this is impossible. The possibility of thought apart from the body is the crucial issue here. The objector assumes that it is impossible, on neurophysiological grounds; the proponent of survival considers it an open question which needs further study. To critically evaluate this possibility is the burden of the following discussion, on the phenomenon of "out-of-body experiences" (OBE's).

2) Out-of-body Experiences (OBE's)

a) History

If apparitions are the forms of people perceived by another party where they are not, then OBE's are cases where people feel themselves to be where their bodies are not. Like apparitions, OBE's are reported in many cultures from ancient times. The Indo-Tibetan cultures, in which yoga and meditation have been practiced for millenia, are most profuse in these reports.[131] In the classical world, it seems that Plato may have believed in OBE's.[132] Further west, American Indian peyote cults and drug-based religious initiations were apparently designed to foster OBE's and incorporate them into legitimate religious experience.[133]

More recently, the OBE of Alfonso de Liguori is well-documented; while he was starving in a prison cell at Arezzo, his apparition was simultaneously seen by many at the bedside of the dying Pope Clement XIV (in 1774).[134] In the nineteenth century, spiritualists Stainton Moses and D.D. Home both reported OBE's.[135] Robert Dale Owen published the first collection of similar cases in 1860.[136] From November of 1881 to April of 1884, S.H. Beard conducted a series of OBE experiments in which he successfully projected himself into the bedroom cf his fiancée, observing the conditions of her room, while she simultaneously (and unexpectedly) reported seeing his apparition in her room.[137] F.W.H. Myers' 1906 survey cited several cases of OBE's,[138] and Theosophist C.W. Leadbeater devoted a whole book to the subject in 1912.[139]

An average American youth,[140] Sylvan Muldoon (b. 1902) had so many spontaneous OBE's that he began studying the subject and came across a book by the British psychical researcher Hereward Carrington. He wrote to Carrington, and their correspondence led to the publication of several books on the subject which are now considered classics in the field, describing Muldoon's first-hand experiences.[141] About the same time, Oliver Fox also published a lengthy description of his own OBE's.[142] The unlettered Muldoon's adoption of the peculiar term "Astral Projection" for his OBE's is philosophically unfortunate--for it conjures up irrelevant images and presuppositions--but it was applied to many later works by his publishers.[143] The name, of course, neither adds nor detracts from the veridicality of the experiences, but we shall avoid it in our discussion here.

Since the Second World War, English Geologist (!) Robert Crookall has published numerous books documenting close to 400 such OBE's and seeking their common features.[144] In India, even well-educated skeptics have recently reported the apparitions of religious leaders Dadaji and SaiBaba at the same times and places where these gurus claimed to have projected themselves.[145] Even more remarkable were European psychic Ingo Swann's attempted OBE's to Mercury and Jupiter. The scientific world was astounded when all of his observations were confirmed by subsequent NASA space probles to these planets.[146] With the increase of drug use and meditation among American youth in the 1970's, reports of

OBE's have proliferated. At the same time, laboratory tests for studying OBE's and scientific criteria for verifying them have been largely perfected.[147] In addition, rating scales for the reliability of OBE evidence have demonstrated it to be "statistically incredible" that all of such reports should be spurious.[148] Granting that such experiences may be real, however, there still remains the problem of interpreting their content and nature.

b) Separation of consciousness

The definitive characteristic of an OBE is that the person feels that his mind--specifically, a central locus of his visual, auditory, and mental activity--has separated from his body, and is in a position to observe things or events which his physical body is not in a position to do. Again, as in the case of apparitions, we must distinguish between true OBE's and hallucinations of "leaving the body." It is expected that events witnessed by a person in an OBE will be corroborated by independent witnesses. If the account of the OBE has no bearing on intersubjective reality and describes only subjective impressions, we may have an interesting hallucination, but we do not have an OBE.

Typically, the subject feels "himself" (again, this locus of perception and consciousness) drifting up and out of his reclining physical body.[149] To his surprise, he notes his body from a spatially detached standpoint, and sometimes observes a "cord of light" connecting his cataleptic physical body with the location of his consciousness.[150] He finds that by merely willing, he can travel

great distances or pass unimpeded through physical objects.[151] After a short period of such travel and observation, he feels drawn back to his body, in which he awakes with a start.[152] The "Six Theories" study itemized some of the major features found in OBE's in part as follows:

(1) seeing one's physical body from a point completely outside it
(2) having a projected body with parts like one's physical body
(5) directing one's attention towards persons of emotional ties
(6,7) travelling swiftly by the mere direction of one's attention
(8) observing physical objects in the location to which travelled
(9) observing the person to whom one's attention is directed.[153]

(Deleted numbers are infrequent or subsumed under other categories.) Of course, this is not to say that all OBE's have such features. Yet another commonly observed feeling is one of complete emotional detachment from the fate of the material body. For example, a woman having an OBE looking down at her body on the operating table felt herself unconcerned about the outcome, "which was absurd, for I was young, with a husband and two small children."[154] Or again, mountaineer F.S. Smythe had an OBE when his body fell from a precipice. His consciousness felt detached from his plummeting physical body, "and not in the least concerned with what was befalling it."[155]

Crookall's summaries emphasize that the "double" (conscious locus of the OBE) seems to emerge from the head, hovering horizontally over the dormant physical body at a distance from one to six feet.[156] Crookall interprets such features, together with the

appearance of an "umbilical" cord, as showing an analogy between physical birth and the birth of a new body in death or OBE--but we need not debate that hypothesis here.

How frequent is this phenomenon of "exteriorization," as it is sometimes called? Conservative psychologists have estimated that one person in 100 may have had an OBE at least once.[157] Hart's surveys at Duke University showed almost 30% of the students claimed to have had OBE's.[158] Green's studies of Oxford and Southampton Universities discovered 34% and 19% respectively.[159] Of course it is difficult to confirm such memories of past experiences, and to confirm that they were indeed OBE's and not dreams (in which all people sometimes feel disembodied, subjectively). It is therefore essential to test the objectivity of claimed OBE's.

c) Third-party observation

OBE's are often occasioned by severe illness or accident, so it is not uncommon that friends, relatives, or medics are gathered around the body of the patient. Some observers have reported seeing a "mist," "haze," or "phosphorescence," emerging from the body of the patient while he himself is hvaing an OBE which he will describe upon waking.[160] Observers at deathbeds have frequently reported similar "violet mists," "shadowy forms," or "luminous clouds" hovering above the body of the dying person.[161] When Carl Jung had an OBE during a heart-attack, his nurse later told him that he had been surrounded "by a bright glow."[162] It is important not to <u>assume</u> that such accounts of dying people (whom we cannot

often interview afterwards) are the same as accounts of those having OBE's--but the observations are at least very similar. Moreover, the distances and positions of the "mists" observed correspond very closely to the distance and position described by OBE subjects in recalling their "detached bodies" (viz., horizontal, one to three feet above the body.)[163]

Photographs of such a haze rising from a corpse were first published by the Frech Dr. Baraduc in 1908, but later efforts failed to duplicate his results.[164] Similar localized mists have been photographed at seances,[165] and in haunted houses where "ghosts" have been seen.[166] Taken alone, these results might be explained as freaks of lighting or mechanical failures, but they correspond significantly to what has also been observed in locations were someone is having an OBE. In one case, a misty form of an OBE subject was recorded on a television monitoring the room to which he later claimed to have gone in his OBE.[167] In another, a ghostly haze was seen hovering over the sleeping body of a person having an OBE, and again over the medical recording apparatus which he later described as having hovered over in his OBE.[168] It has already been mentioned that animals seem sensitive to apparitions even before people in the same room perceive them. In a series of experiments in which talented OBE subjects "sent themselves" into other rooms, mammals seemed to respond to an invisible presence. Whenever the subject "visited" the animal in his OBE, the animal which had previously been actively roaming around suddenly quieted or cowered.[169]

Much remains to be done in the detection of OBE's. The unrepeatability of some of these experiments is a major source of skepticism. But the fact that some people or cameras see something and other people or cameras do not, does not in itself invalidate the perceptions of the first group--particularly when the accounts of those who perceive things independently at different times and places sound so similar. Rather, it should cause us to seek the variables or factors which might lead to these differences in personal perception (just as the element of confidence and belief has proven to be a significant variable in telepathy). The challenges then, are to prove (1) that OBE's produce verifiable information and are not simply hallucinations, and (2) that the subjects were genuinely "out-of-body" and not merely clairvoyant at the time that this informatin was gained. The accounts above strongly suggest that something is actually perceivable outside the patient's body when he is having an OBE. Further recent experiments bolster this claim.

d) Experimental reproducibility

Repeated experiments have helped to distinguish between genuinely out-of-body OBE's and hallucinations. Some of these have been conducted by individuals who had had OBE's and wanted to test their ability to reproduce them, and to check their nature by the confirmation of friends. The experiments of Beard (supra, n. 137) are an early example of this sort. William James also reported incidences where reputable professor acquaintances

of his had had similar experiences.[171] Like Beard, Fox and Landau both reported successful experimental projections into the presence of their fiancées under "evidential conditions."[172] In 1934, psychic Eileen Garrett projected herself to Reykjavik at a specified time, observed a complex set of operations performed by the Icelandic Chief of Mental Health, and reported correctly on them.[173] In 1954, Hart listed 47 experimental cases, some assisted by hypnosis, many of which reported verifiable details of the scenes to which they had "transported" themselves.[174] Ducasse cited yet further examples, attested to by highly educated people.[175]

Hindu yogins and Buddhist siddhas have long claimed the ability to travel at will outside of their bodies; certain talented subjects in America have also learned how to repeat and control their OBE's.[176] Subjects with many OBE's show the ability to distinguish between evidential OBE's on the one hand, and lucid dreams or false hallucinations on the other.[177] Early experiments to verify the ecsomaticity (lit., out-of-body-ness) of OBE's involved placing a number or figure on a shelf above the sleeping body of an experimental subject in a laboratory. Despite the subjects' difficulties in falling asleep while wearing numerous electrodes and monitoring equipment, correct reports of the shelved numbers accompanied the subjects' descriptions of their rising out of their bodies to the shelf where the figure was placed.[178]

These early experiments were faulted on several grounds: (1) that unconscious perceptions of subliminal reflections from windows, clocks, etc., might have aided the subject in perceiving the figures without being out of his body,[179] and (2) that the number may have been obtained telepathically from the experimenter, since it is known that sleeping people are particularly receptive to the thoughts of agents trying to influence them.[180]

To avoid these dangers, Osis designed various experiments using "displacement boxes" to measure the ecsomaticity of OBE's.[181] These boxes may be placed at great distances from the sleeping subjects, so the change for subliminal reflection is eliminated.[182] Some involve the use of lenses and mirrors so arranged as to distort the image to an external observer. If the image was seen correctly (undistortedly), it might indicate direct clairvoyance on the part of the subject, whereas if it appeared distorted as it would to a human eye at a certain location, then we have some indication that perception of light rays from a particular place (out-of-body) was involved.[183] Other boxes may have numbers projected into them by random number generators, to assure that no human being knows what the correct target is until after the OBE is finished.[184] Osis believes that healthy living people have "less complete" OBE's than those on the brink of death.[185] Palmer's failures to enable normal people to OBE by showing them white ganzfelds and playing white noise to them, may also support this claim that healthy people have more difficulty having OBE's.[186]

e) Physical Correlates

Physical and physiological correlates of OBE's are wide-ranging and experimenters have been unable to exclusively isolate the variables or conditions which make people susceptible to them. Some OBE's occur in normal healthy sleep or even in waking moments, while the body continues to sleep, walk, or write as it had been.[187] More common are cases where the locus of consciousness separates at the moment of a serious accident, explosion, or shock.[188] Ether anaesthesia, chloroform, and other narcotics such as peyote, LSD, and even marijuana may assist in dissociating the perceptual locus from the physical organism (and also in creating numerous false hallucinations).[189] Meditation, hypnosis, and other forms of consciousness-altering may also have a similar effect.[190] Walker covers the field as follows:

> Asceticism, bodily austerities, starvation, enforced solitude, sexual and sensory deprivation, shock, stress, have frequently been known to result in exteriorization of the double. Long periods of meditation, autohypnotic suggestion, religious rituals including such methods as the prolonged chanting of spells, and whirling dances, can have the same effect. Psychosis, insanity, and "possession" are believed to result from [this] pathological loosening.[191]

To say that OBE's are a form of "altered states of consciousness" is little more than a tautology, but it does not reduce the wide variety of conditions under which people have them.

Laboratory experiments have attempted to relate OBE's to specific brain activities through the use of EEG's. Tart reported

> OBE's were accompanied by a flattened EEG record which showed prominent alphoid activity but no REM's. This also appeared to represent a stage one sleep or drowsiness [hypnogogic] period.[192]

Mitchell's EEG observations showed relatively flat EEG's with alpha frequency but less amount of alpha.[193] Still other studies show slow alpha waves, reduced skin resistance, and a drowsy state on the edge of sleep,[195] or theta spikes amod a slow alpha state in sleep level II,[196] to be the commonest states of people having OBE's in laboratory conditions.

On the other hand, this is far from proving that these brain states are necessary to having OBE's. Some people continue their normal waking activity (as above) which would be impossible in alpha or sleep levels, while others are pronounced dead (with no detectable brain activity), only to revive and report having had an OBE.[197] EEG studies, then, are unsuccessful in correlating OBE's to any one particular brain state, although drowsy slow alpha occurs in the majority of laboratory cases.

These EEG reports are important in another way, however, because they indicate that people can have OBE's when they are neither dreaming nor perceiving anything in their normal bodies. They awake to report having perceived or experienced things for which we have been able to detect no parallel physiological functions. This may be corollary evidence to indicate that the consciousness is not "in" or associated with the body in the way that it is in normal waking or dreaming experience. More important than the physiological state of the body seems to be the psychological state of the experiencer.[198]

f) The aura

It has sometimes been suggested that research on the human aura might provide another criterion of the ecsomaticity of OBE's. If it were found that the aura indeed left the body during an OBE, or corresponded to that ethereal haze or light perceived by some observers and cameras, we might speculate that the aura were in some way associated with the locus of consciousness and perception. Auras were first studied seriously by Dr. Walter Kilner, of St. Thomas' Hospital, London, who observed the auras of his naked patients through screens of dicyanin dye. These auras appeared to surround the bodies of his patients to an extent of several inches, and varied according to the health of the patients.[199] Chicago physician O'Donnell claimed to have duplicated Kilner's findings some years later, but some others have had difficulty in replicating his experiments.[200] It is interesting that Kilner's findings correspond closely to the literature of the occult about auras, but neither his work nor such literature proves the truth of the other.[201]

More sophisticated procedures for viewing and photographing the aura were developed by Soviet scientists Inyushin and Kirlian (after whom the images are often named) at the University of Alma Ata.[202] UCLA professor Thelma Ross and student Ken Johnson developed and improved their techniques for taking photographs of objects within high-frequency electrical fields. These photos show haloes of varying size and color, depending primarily upon

the emotional state of the person, or the state of health of the plant, being photographed.[203] Their experiments have provoked heated controversy. Others have both succeeded and failed in reproducing their results. Phantom photos (of parts of organisms which had been amputated) proved hard to reproduce, whereas "false auras" around re-heated dead material were also proven possible.[204] The debate continues; while it has been shown that some kind of images are produced, whether these correspond to the auras perceived by psychics or by some normal people undergoing OBE's remains in question.[205] It would be extremely valuable to photograph the auras of the sleeping bodies of people having OBE's in laboratory conditions, and to photograph the targeted ecsomaticity boxes when subjects were attempting to OBE to that spot, using Kirlian methods. But such research remains yet to be conducted, and at present aura research yields no conclusive evidence as far as OBE's are concerned.

We concluded our discussion of apparitions with the question of whether consciousness could exist apart from the physical body. The phenomena discussed in this section lead us to conclude that there are cases, however rare, in which (i) the subject claims that his consciousness was not within his body; (ii) people, cameras, or animals observe something (a "mist") at a place outside of the subject's body, where the subject will later report having "been;" (iii) subjects report correctly on facts or events which they could not have known if they were not in that place, distant from their physical bodies; and (iv) although subjects

later report having had conscious perceptual experience, neither body nor brain exhibits the electroencephalographic evidence we should expect for waking or dreaming conscious perceptual experience. From such cases, we have strong prima facie evidence against the identity of mind and brain, much less mind and body. Indeed, C.D. Broad suggests that OBE's are among the strongest possible evidence for the non-identity of mind and body.[206]

Of course, even true OBE's would not prove survival in themselves (unless the body were dead at that time and later revived). Taken together with our information on apparitions, however, they indicate that we can at least make sense of the notion of a diaphanous, ethereal body, outside of the physical, which nonetheless can serve as a locus of consciousness at least temporarily. The projection of consciousness outside of the physical body, in apparitional form, gives further credibility to the hypothesis that apparitions of the dead may also be visible projections of disembodies consciousnesses, especially after the trauma of death (which, on this theory, leads to OBE).[207]

C) Objections to the Phenomena as Evidence of Survival

As seen in our discussion of the "reincarnation" evidence above, there are several avenues open to those who would like to reject either the evidence for apparitions and OBE's, or the conclusions favoring the survival hypothesis from such evidence. Here too, we shall examine each of four possible objections to

the evidence and its survivalist interpretations, viz., (1) refusal to accept the existence of such evidence; (2) theoretical objections to consequences of the theory; (3) attempts to explain the phenomena through normal means, and (4) the "Super-ESP" theory applied to apparitions and OBE's. Responses to some of these objections have already been suggested in the text above, but for the sake of organizational clarity and thoroughness, we shall review them in order.

1) Refusal to Accept the Existence of the Evidence

Refusal to credit the evidence for OBE's is virtually impossible now that they have been demonstrably repeated and measured in laboratory settings by independent investigators. A few voices have still been raised against the veridicality of spontaneous apparitions, for which the evidence is largely from surveys, censi, and collected anecdotes. D.J. West, famous anti-survivalist, has suggested that the most striking apparitions are those which occurred long ago, embellished by legend and elaboration:

> It amounts to almost invariable law in spontaneous cases that the more remarkable the alleged coincidence, the worse the supporting evidence, and conversely, the better the evidence, the weaker is the coincidence. There can be only one conclusion....Most cases are spurious.[208]

Along the same lines are the arguments that "ghosts" are seen only by the feeble-minded, the sick and dying, or the rustic, conforming to the superstitious expectations or projections of those people, but in short, that nothing at all was seen.[209] Strong as these objections may sound, they are based on ignorance of the facts.

a) Evidence not outdated

It is true that some of the more striking cases of apparitions were collected in the late 1800's by the S.P.R. Census. However, the passage of time since that census neither invalidates nor embellishes the signed affidavits of its contributors. On the contrary, it has subjected them to repeated scrutiny, and has led to the discard of cases whose evidentiality is open to question. On the other hand, if a similarly sweeping survey of thousands of Englishmen were made today, it is entirely possible that an equally large and impressive collection of recent apparition-sightings might emerge. The absence of such a recent census does not in itself prove the absence of such cases. Moreover, it is peculiar that West should have leveled his criticisms in 1954, for large numbers of apparition cases corresponding in time and appearance to war casualties had just been reported within the previous decade. Reports of apparitions continue to be collected today by an office at Duke University. So the claim that old stories are most distorted and new sightings do not occur is simply mistaken.

b) Witnesses not incompetent

The contention that ghosts are sighted primarily by men who are senile, rustic, superstitious, or "poor observers" imagining things is refuted in tiresome detail by Prince, who devoted 35 pages of fine print and footnotes to laying to rest traditional ghost theories in his chapter "Old Dogma and Later Statistics." In particular, he illustrates the responsibility, modern critical

attitudes, and calm states of mind of apparition-perceivers in dozens of cases.[210] He cites the following facts as indicative of the veracity of the reports: (i) there is widespread agreement among many OBE subjects about the nature of their experiences, although they had not communicated with each other; (ii) most persons had their first OBE's before they were aware of the possibility of such an experience, much less had read anything about it; (iii) OBE's are producible experimentally and have been confirmed by independent testing agencies.[211] As yet another indication of the quality of the apparitional evidence, 165 cases were rated on "scales of evidentiality," to test their consistency, clear-headedness, and tendencies to report unsubstantiated claims, concluding:

> When modern statistical checks were applied to determine whether the low-evidentiality cases show any tendency whatever to report more of the marvellous, the impressive, and the striking traits than did the high-evidentiality cases, the conclusion was clear-cut:...The differences in characteristics between the two groups are practically negligible.[212]

To reiterate, there is no proof that reports of the more remarkable cases are less well-authorized than the less striking cases. It is inappropriate, therefore, to throw out all the information-bearing cases as trumped-up illusions (as West would do), and retain the less evidential cases as mere hallucinations.

2) Theoretical Objections

We have already considered Gardner Murphy's arguments related to apparitions of animals and clothing. Simplified, it reasons:

(i) Neither animals nor clothes have minds nor souls.

(ii) Yet apparitions of animals and clothes are perceived.

(iii) Therefore apparitions are not produced by minds or souls.[213]

(and, by implication)

(iv) Apparitions are not evidence of surviving consciousnesses.

a) Animal souls and apparitions

The first flaw in this argument above is that it may well be the case that animals do have minds or souls like ours. Even if they do not, this still does not mean that apparitions of horses and carriages must be produced by the minds of horses and carriages. It is admitted that apparitions are perceived, and therefore that they may be at least "hallucinated" by one human mind at the same time--the mind of the percipient. Similarly, then, they may be projected by the single mind of the dreamer or dead man, accustomed to clothes and animals around him, and using them to help him convey his presence and message. The apparition of clothing, carriages, and animals may be just as much an objective projection of the mind of the deceased as any subjective hallucination. Nothing inherent in the shape or soul-lessness of a hat or shoe makes its apparition less real. And we know that even apparitions of the living are clad, sometimes accompanied by animals, etc., when their apparitions correspond to their own conscious mental projection. So the appearances of inanimate objects and animals cannot constitute an argument against the survivalist interpretation of apparitions, if considered as a purposeful projection of the conscious mind doing the "appearing."

b) Doppelgangers

Murphy also argued that doppelgangers and hauntings show the survival interpretation to be invalid, as follows. Doppelgangers are cases in which someone perceives his own body as an apparition, in a place where it is not (as opposed to OBE's, in which he perceives his body correctly from a locus outside it). Doppelgangers are often taken to be indications of coming death, although not always so; Murphy cites the famous example in which Goethe saw himself riding on horseback in the opposite direction, just as he was actually to do many years later.[214] Doppelgangers appear to be apparitions which are not the product of any conscious projection on the part of the person who appears. Similarly, hauntings (as we have noted) seem to be merely obsessive repetitions of small actions, and not the embodiment of anything like a full, human, conscious projection. These apparitions are not projections of consciousness, but in other respects they seem similar to other apparitions, he argues. Therefore other apparitions of the dead need not be projections of surviving consciousnesses either.

In the first place, not enough research has been done on doppelgangers to show whether they are indeed apparitions or should more properly be classed with hallucinations--in other words, whether they are perceived by all present, or only to the hallucinator. A few well-known examples seem to classify better in the category of hallucinations.[215] Even if doppelgangers were of the status of hauntings, and demonstrated objective apparitional

characteristics without consciousness, this would not disprove that some apparitions are still the "embodiments" or "projections" of individuals' locus of conscious perception to someone else. They remain two distinct classes of phenomena: those which show conscious purpose and correspond to conscious processess, and those which do not. The problem is, into which category should we group apparitions of the dead which seem to exhibit purpose and reveal information unknown except through the apparition? We must recall the distinction made between purpose (seen in most apparitons except for doppelgangers and haunts) and purposelessness (characteristic of haunts and doppelgangers). And as Hart has said,

> Apparitions of the dead and dying are so closely similar to the conscious apparitions of living persons that the two types must be regarded as belonging to the same basic kind of phenomena.[216]

In short, it were better to group apparitions of the dead with those of the living, rather than with doppelgangers and haunts. Although there remains ample room for further study, if this line of reasoning holds, then the fact that doppelgangers are not consciously produced has no direct relevance to the question of whether apparitions of the dead are consciously produced. At least, it cannot serve as an argument against conscious survival that some hallucinations of the living are unconsciously produced.

3 Normal or Physiological Explanations

Anti-survivalists among both parapsychologists and physiologists have attempted to explain away all apparitions and OBE's as varieties of hallucinations. They suggest that nothing objective

has really been perceived, but that all these experiences were taking place within the mind of the (clinically abnormal) perceiver. Louisa Rhine, for example, argued that her studies showed

> the percipient, often if not always producing his experience according to his own interpretation....The percipient generates the hallucination, agent and all, and the nature of his projection depends on his knowledge of the expectation of the agent [the person seen as an apparition] at the time.[217]

In regard to heautoscopy, or the seeing of oneself during an OBE, prominent medical doctors make pronouncements that

> The autistic reduplication of himself "out there" may support the schizophrenic in his attempts to find some proof that he is not about to lose body-identity.[218]

> Archaic modes of thinking are released in the process of the accompanying dissolution of the personality [at death]. As a result, bizarre hallucinatory delusional themes invade consciousness. Visual hallucinations originating in this way may assume any form, but man's ancient preoccupation with his reflection and shadow particularly favours the appearance of his autoscopic double.[219]

The arguments are straightforward; let us approach each in order.

a) Hallucination

Louisa Rhine's objections are that all apparitions are mere perceiver-generated hallucinations. She came to this conclusion after experiments in telepathy in which she had been forced to revise her earlier "sender-receiver" model to one which attributed more power to clairvoyance on the part of the perceiver, reducing the importance of the "sender" in these tests. Indeed this may be an important discovery in the mechanism of knowledge of Zener cards or dice faces. However, in her zeal to apply this reversal of traditional theory to all aspects of the paranormal, including

survival evidence, Mrs. Rhine shows regrettable ignorance and unfamiliarity with the facts. For in many of the cases which have been shown to be of the highest standards of evidentiality, (i) the percipient had neither knowledge nor expectation of the apparition whatsoever at the time (as in the Harford case); (ii) the percipient's attention was abosorbed in unrelated activity; (iii) the apparition provided knowledge at a time when the percipient could not have anticipated it (e.g. a death or dire need); (iv) the apparition was seen by several percipients at the same time in appropriate parallax and perspective; and (v) the percipients were in good health, lacking any history of hallucinations or the symptoms usually productive of hallucinations. Certainly, many more people have hallucinations than experience apparitions. But the presence of hallucinations in other cases does not in any way invalidate the perceptions of apparitions treated here. Mrs. Rhine's theory, however appropriate to card-guessing experiments, simply fails to fit the characteristics of apparitions as studied.

b) Autoscopy

The seeing of oneself somewhere else is called autoscopy or heautoscopy. It is an hallucination, like doppelgangers, common to autistic schizophrenics. In fact, perception of one's double autoscopically may be produced by other measures such as sensory deprivation and LSD.[220] But such an account of apparitions is inappropriate because (i) none of the subjects whose OBE's have been studied and verified have been found to be either autistic

or schizophrenic, despite thorough psychological examinations in some cases. (ii) Many subjects have OBE's when there is no great threat at all to their body-identity, real or imagined, so this motivation is not present. (iii) If neurological and psychiatric causes are to blame, we should expect a higher incidence of autoscopy among brain lesion patients, but while other hallucinations are common, autoscopy is almost never found in this class of patients.[221] (iv) Finally, even if it were the case that false OBE's or autoscopy were triggered by such mental problems, this would not indicate that our other evidence of genuine OBE's were any less valid.

c) Preoccupations

There are also many responses to Dewhurst's claims that hallucinations of oneself at death are due to preoccupation with the shadow or double. (i) It has not been shown that OBE's or autoscopic hallucinations are any more common at death than at any other time. Studies cited above indicated that OBE's may occur at many times not specifically related to death, such as during sleep or even relaxed waking moments. (ii) Nor has it been shown that OBE or autoscopy is the most common form of vision at death. On the contrary, true OBE's occur in only a small percentage of all observed deathbeds, as we shall document below. (iii) Even if it were the case that OBE's were distinctly linked with death, this should not be an argument against survival. On the contrary, it might lend credence to the claim that post-mortem

experience is an OBE. (iv) Another problem is that Dewhurst is treating reversion to archetypes and "preoccupation with reflections and shadows" as if they were confirmed facts by which he might confirm his findings. In fact, however, they are nothing more than ad hoc conjectures and hypotheses. There is no more inherent reason a man should be more preoccupied with his shadow than with his mother, or food, or phallic symbols, or anything else on his deathbed. So if autoscopic doubles are genuinely commoner than visions of other things, we should like more evidence on this point. Regardless of their frequency, their causal relation to archaic modes of thinking is far from demonstrated.

Although he favors a materialistic interpretation, Dewhurst himself eventually concedes this issue. He begins by admitting that nearly all who see their doubles on account of disease seem to know that the vision is an hallucination, an unreal aspect of their illness. This is in marked contrast, however, to the case of OBE subjects, who almost universally insist on the reality of their experience, even before it can be verified. Ultimately Dewhurst concludes:

> Strictly neurological hypotheses fail to explain fully individual variations in the degree of complexity of hallucinations in general, and the occurrence of autoscopy in particular.[222]

OBE's are not the same as autoscopy nor should the two be grouped together. Yet even if they were, medical testimony admits itself incapable of explaining the occurrence of perceptions of oneself from an objective perspective.

(v) Finally, even if OBE's were connected to neurophysiological correlates, or OBE's could be predicted by observing a certain series of systoms, this would in no way deny the fact that OBE's do occur, nor the evidence that they are genuinely ecsomatic. Nor would the regular correlation of certain brain states with OBE's, if dicsovered, deny the possibility that OBE's might occur without physical bodies present.

All of the above objections fail in the attempt to explain how apparitions or OBE's could be any more than random hallucinations. Yet in hundreds of cases studied, the apparition or OBE yields true information unavailable through normal means. The only other avenue to explain such coincidences is through further extension of the "Super-ESP" theory.

4) Super-ESP Theories

As noted in the previous chapter on interpreting claimed memories of former lives, the Super-ESP theory is not a major theoretical improvement; it does not really replace an unknown theory with a better-known theory, for we still know extremely little about the mechanisms of non-OBE ESP. And it concedes that there are powers in man which violate a simple mechanical three-dimensional Newtonian world-view.

Admittedly, the super-psychometry theory might explain certain incidences of hauntings, in which particular memories seem attached to a particular place--but we have already excluded such hauntings from our consideration in this chapter. Otherwise,

neither super-psychometry nor super-retrocognition have any direct applicability to most apparition and OBE cases, in which no past time or object association is involved. The super-precognition theory might be applicable in some way to doppelgangers, if it were found that they predicted one's own death. But the evidence on doppelgangers is still to scanty to warrant this conclusion, and they too seem to lack conscious purpose, so we have excluded them also from our consideration of veridical apparitions and OBE's. Outside of such doppelganger cases, the super-precognition theory falls subject to the same logical circularity which led to its rejection in the previous chapter (C, 4c).

Thus, the only real candidate that remains is the "Super-telepathy/clairvoyance theory," which would suggest that apparitions and OBE's are hallucinations of the percipients in which the veridical material is supplied by subconscious clairvoyance or telepathy.

a) Formulation of the Super telepathy/clairvoyance theory

This theory admits the existence of apparitions and OBE's which produce verifiable information through no normal human means. What it denies, however, is that apparitions are real and external, and that OBE's might continue after bodily death. It suggests that both are particular types of hallucinations, completely within the minds of the perceivers, which supply veridical information through ESP. This theory was espoused by many leaders in the field of ESP and apparition research in the 1920's to 1950's. Richet was among

the first to formulate the hypothesis, emphatically embellished in E.R. Dodds' famous article, "Why I do Not Believe in Survival" in 1934.[223] Myers had called his studies of apparitions "Census of Hallucinations," and this terminology continued to be used in the 1950's by scholars like Carrington, who referred to apparitions as veridical hallucinations.[224] Their arguments were very similar: the dramatizing powers of the unconscious, so often observed in action in seance rooms, were responsible for creating apparitions of the dead, in the cases of apparitions as well. In Hart's words:

> Telepathy, clairvoyance, retrocognition, and even precognition operate in ways which can gather pertinent information from anywhere in the world. And they have come to believe that the information thus comprehensively gathered is organized into plausible form by the dramatizing capacity of the....mind.[225]

Such faculties are invoked to explain apparitions without recourse to a survival hypothesis.

The earliest and most often-heard objection to this theory is that the perceiver could not possibly have known how or where to search through the whole world for the particular bits of information necessary to compile such a model and dramatize it. Anti-survivalist Gardner Murphy turned this objection on its head: he proposed that apparitions proved mind's special capacities.

> Space is utterly irrelevant to the issue. The mind makes contact with that which is relevant to its purpose. If a cluster of ideas relevant to a given central theme exists, ...ideas which are related tend to function as a unit.... It must again be stressed, lest the point be regarded as sheerly hypothetical, that we have <u>direct</u> <u>evidence</u> that this process of filching and sifting among the minds of the living does actually occur.[226]

Murphy's point is quite appropriate to the interpretation of the evidence provided by certain seance mediums--particularly when sitters already knew the evidence or characteristics which were to be looked for. It is less clear that apparitions are "direct evidence of filching and sifting" in the minds of the perceivers, who are certainly unaware of the process, if it occurs at all.

As of 1950, the evidence seemed to say merely that some people experienced apparitions or hallucinations with information provided by telepathic assistance. Survivalists felt that this was explainable in terms of the projection of disembodied minds. Anti-survivalists held that the "searchlight and assembler" capacities of the human mind provided a better hypothesis. Neither had other examples of the existence of the phenomena they took as paradigmatic--except for a few scattered references to OBE's on the side of the survivalists, and a few indications of "searchlight" abilities of seance mediums on the materialists' side. The question then became: to which phenomenon was the seeing of apparitions more closely related: to OBE's, or to mediumistic information acquisition? Rhine, impressed by the growing range of ESP powers in his labs, agreed with Murphy that survival were less probable; both deprecated the OBE data.[227] With the increases in the use of hallucinogens and reporting of OBE's in the late 1960's, and with laboratory studies of OBE's in the 1970's, the picture has changed substantially, and there remain arguments favoring the survivalist theory which the anti-survivalists seem unable to counter.

b) The failure of Super-telepathy

(i) With regard to apparitions, there is not only the question of how the percipient received the information provided, which might be equally accessible through telepathy or clairvoyance. There are also the issues of timing, purpose, and multiple perceivers. We have seen that in many apparition cases, the perceiver was not expecting the apparition, had never seen one before or since. Why should he perceive one at that particular time? In most cases, the purpose of the apparition is explicable only in terms of the projector, or the person whose apparition was seen. There are many cases in which more than one person beheld the apparition, and instances where the "projector" (person seen) did not want to be seen by others but was (cf. the Wilmot case). This sheds serious doubt on the claim that apparitions are merely telepathically-implanted hallucinations in the minds of the people who "receive" them.

(ii) Secondly, the defender of Super-telepathy faces a dilemma in explaining purposeful apparitions of the dead. He has already said that we can understand the purposefulness and information communicated in apparitions of the living on the basis of the super-telepathy by which their "projectors" influenced the hallucinations of the percipients. But if he retains the same model for apparitions of the dead, he ends up admitting that there exist telepathic projectors among the dead, who influence correctly the hallucinations of those who perceive his apparition. He has saved

his horse but lost the battle, by preserving the notion that apparitions are really subjective hallucinations at the cost of conceding the survival issue. His other option is to suggest that not telepathy, but some form of clairvoyance is involved (since clairvoyance does not require a communicator or sender). But surely we do not want a model in which telepathy is used before death and clairvoyance after death to explain what is clearly the same phenomenon. And if clairvoyance is adopted as the universal explanation for all apparitions, in place of telepathy, then the purposefulness of unexpected apparitions is even more baffling and incongruous.

(iii) Neither the telepathic nor the clairvoyant models do justice to the cases in which an apparition is perceived in the same place, garb, and activity as the projector feels himself to be in his OBE. Even if super-telepathy were able to account for some of the cases which are presently mistakenly classified as apparitions or OBE's, these accounts where projector's description agrees with perceiver's cannot be written off so smugly (cf. Beard and Garrett cases, supra). They testify, beyond doubt, to the identity of apparitions and OBE's, at least when the subject is living. The remaining question is whether this mutual OBE/apparition is something objective or a mutual subjective hallucination. Recent studies of OBE's in the laboratory have helped us to answer this question. They tend to indicate that apparitions and OBE's are no more subjective than cameras and recording devices.

c) The failure of Super-clairvoyance

Some features of OBE's are similar to clairvoyance, in that the person is aware of things happenning somewhere else. But there the similarity ends, and the differences are important in analysing the super-clairvoyance theory of OBE's.

(i) First of all, we have the first-hand reports of the OBE subjects themselves to compare with those of clairvoyants. When Swedenborg told his friends and the governor at a party that there had been a fire in Stockholm, he may have perceived the scene clearly and correctly from a distance--clairvoyantly. (See Kant's Visions of a Spirit-Seer, II, 1, 93-95.) But Swedenborg never imagined that his consciousness had left his physical body, flown to Stockholm, apprised the scene, and then flown back to arouse his body. In genuine OBE cases, however, we have the testimony of the subjects that they felt themselves to be leaving their physical bodies and moving (through walls and against gravity) to other places. This alone, of course, would not prove that OBE's are not a species of clairvoyance, but coupled with other factors, it helps us make important distinctions.

(ii) We also have the testimony of witnesses, cameras, and animal experiments, that something was happenning at the place where the OBE subject claimed to be having his OBE, coupled to the sounds and temperature changes detected in some apparitions cases. Surely it is easier to suggest that something, however unusual, is "out there" (in the sense that any matter is phenomenally "out there") affecting all these instruments and people in similar ways.

The alternative would be to argue that the perceiver were simultaneously hallucinating a veridical presence or scene which was not there and psychokinetically affecting photographic film, magnetic tape, or thermocouples--a far more complex and improbable construct![228]

(iii) If this evidence were not enough, we have the results of experiments using Osis and Mitchell's ecsomaticity boxes. These boxes preclude telepathic transmission of the knowledge obtained because no human knows it until the OBE subject perceives it. They also preclude clairvoyance in its traditional sense, because in clairvoyance, objects or scenes are "seen" directly, and not through a series of mirrors and lenses in a process of optical distortions. It is possible that some OBE's are mere hallucinations in which the subject imagines himself somewhere but no other evidence is obtained. But in some of our studies we have cases where: (a) the subject feels himself to be outside of his body; (b) other witnesses or equipment detect something in the place where he claims to have been, and (c) he returns with information which he only could have obtained by optical perception from a particular point in space. In these conditions, real ecsomaticity seems a far more straightforward theory than one of telepathy and clairvyoance with psychokinetic assists. [It may be the case, of course, that the model of clairvoyance will have to be modified in the future along more spatial and out-of-body lines, but that will help rather than hurt our arguments here, and in any case is tangential to the present discussion.]

5) Conclusions

We may conclude, then, that the Super-ESP theory cannot explain the facts of apparition/OBE's as adequately as the theory that a genuine exteriorization of the locus of perceptual consciousness occasionally takes place. In some cases, this locus of consciousness may be completely invisible; in others, like a haze or localized mist. In yet other cases, it may appear to either the person himself or his perceivers (or both) like a double of his physical body, and then disappear as the mind drifts elsewhere. We know very little about this diaphanous body outside of the physical body, and when it appears or disappears, and to whom. This ethereal body corresponds to concepts common to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Theosophy. It provides evidence of a possible vehicle for memory and consciousness between incarnations, if reincarnation occurs. And it gives flesh to the suggestions of philosophers like Wheatley that life after death might be conceptualized as a continuing OBE.[229]

CHAPTER III: EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

Possession, memories of past lives, apparitions and OBE's are apparently confined to a small segment of the population--enough to compare various accounts and propose tests for verifiability, but not enough for large-scale statistical comparisons. By contrast, the study of people's deathbed experiences provides a broad base for understanding the nature of death and possibly of what comes thereafter. The notion that some people can "see to the other side" (into the next world) on their deathbeds is widespread in primitive cultures. Many cultures' descriptions of life after death appear to be based upon reports of the dying or those revived from death. The scientific study of near-death experiences (NDE's), however, is by far the most recent of the attempts to approach an answer to the question of survival. With recent advances in technology, the number of cases in which people are resuscitated from clinical death is increasing every year. Moreover, the availability of modern computerized information storage and comparison enables the study of thousands of such cases in ways previously thought impossible. With a few exceptions, it is only in the past decade that westerners have begun to publish their studies of NDE's, and public receptivity is gradually following such publicity. NDE's may be categorized into any of several states: waking, sleeping, delirious, coma, or dead.

In cases where people previously pronounced dead revive to report having had various experiences while clinically dead, we have prima facie evidence that some men survive death. However, such cases need careful scrutiny and should not necessarily be accepted at face value. The determination of death constitutes one of several sticky issues here which we shall discuss anon. In the majority of cases, however, the patient has not yet died, but is simply on the brink of death, when he has the experience of a sort which he has never encountered before. There is a very wide range in the experiences reported by the dying and resuscitated--although not as wide as the range of their personalities, beliefs, and manners of death. The leading "survivalist" scholars have classified these phenomena into as many as ten discrete categories, from which they have attempted to construct a single model of which any dying person may experience some part. Thus, Moody discusses phases of ineffability and peace, "the tunnel," OBE's, meeting others, "the being of light," and reaching a heavenly border.[230] Ring similarly constructs a model with euphoric, OBE, darkness, light, and other-worldly phases.[231] Unfortunately, however, many investigators have tried to treat this description as a unified package, to confirm or deny the entire package at one fell swoop. Such assertions are patently premature, as it is rare that anyone experiences more than one or two of these phenomena. We have far too little evidence to place these in any sort of "continuum." Rather, at this stage it is far more prudent to treat each individual phenomenon for its own worth.

A) Phenomena Not Considered

Rather than accepting or rejecting a whole theory as to the nature of death, we shall examine each discrete type of experience in turn, to see what its evidential value is. Moreover, some of the experiences classified above are clearly not unique to dying situations but have perfectly good neurophysiological explanations. Therefore, we shall first delimit the range of evidence by a review of the phenomena we shall NOT disucss in detail, and the reasons for this discrimination. Most important of these items are (1) OBE's; (2) "the life review;" and (3) sound effects and visualizations, as of a tunnel, the void, or geometric patterns, which have good physiological origins and explanations.

1) OBE's

OBE's are indeed important phenomena at death, particularly common as products of violent accidents. Many subjects do report their experiences on the battlefield, in automobile accidents, or during surgery, describing veridical OBE's during such events. This tends to reinforce the suggestion of some scholars that life after death may be conceived of as a continuing OBE. It is important to remember that OBE's are often reported by those resuscitated from death or coma; these people report having OBE's when their bodies are, to all examination, dormant or even dead.[232] However, we have already discussed OBE's thoroughly in the previous section, so it is not necessary to discuss them further here--nor are they unique to deathbed situations alone.

2) The Life-Review

Many NDE's include the loss of consciousness of surroundings by the dying person, followed by a mental "review of one's life," in which the memories of previous experiences recur vividly in the mind of the subject. Some people feel surprised or nostalgic at this unexpected jarring of memory. Others interpret it as a substitute for a religious judgment, in which their review of their own lives is designed to teach them the moral value of life.[233] There are several reasons, however, why this life review phenomenon does not deserve consideration in our study.

(i) The life review is a rather rare phenomenon. Moddy describes 6 out of 150 cases reporting a life-review; Osis found it in 7-9% of his sample.[234] Ring found it in 24% of his sample; Noyes and Kletti in 29%, but this is because their studies had high incidence of violent and unexpected deaths, with which life-review is most commonly associated.[235]

(ii) Within this narrow segment of people who experience a life-review, there is little agreement about its nature. Some people see their lives from their own perspectives, as they remembered it happenning from their own eyes. Others see themselves from a detached, OBE-like perspective, as if watching a movie of their younger selves from a distance.[236] Some describe it as moving like a motion picture in fast motion; others call it a series of still images, like slides.[237] Some see only the highlights of their earlier years, whereas others claim to see "everything" or

"every single episode in my entire life."[238] Presumably, this is made possible by a psychological distortion of the patients' subjective sense of time, so that what is in fact a few minutes seems to the patient like many years. Finally, whereas most patients report memories only of their present lifetimes, some report previous lifetimes, with or without verifiable evidence.[239] Naturally, reincarnationists may seize upon such evidence as further fuel for their arguments that man will not only continue to live after death, but has already lived in other bodies already. However, the small size of the available sample, combined with the wide variations of types within the sample, casts doubt upon the universality of the life-review and its causes.

(iii) Moreover, neurophysiological explanations of the life-review are readily available. Experiments by Penfield, Jasper, Baldwin, and others have demonstrated that remarkably vivid replay of prior memories could be brought about by probing the temporal cortex and stimulating it with a mild electrical shock of short duration.[240] Noyes and Kletti trace the life-review to seizure-like firings of neurons in the temporal lobes of the brain.[241] The condensation of felt time also points to disturbances of the temporal lobes as the locus of this phenomenon. Minor seizures of the temporal lobes may be caused by a gradual depletion of oxygen, which we might expect near death; its side-effects might include the regurgitation of numerous memories thought forgotten by the subject. Variations in the life-review experience might be due to variations either in the seizures or in memory-storage mechanisms. This is all quite

speculative at this time, but the availability of such neuro-physiological explanations for these experiences tends to depreciate their evidentiality as indications of a future life. Nor is there any proof that such life-reviews may continue more than a few minutes in any case. Thus, they do not seem to be a particularly fruitful line of research for an inquiry primarily concerned with life after death.

3) Physiologically Explicable Sounds and Lights

Another feeling common to those who are dying is the impression of being drawn through a long dark tunnel or into a black void; of hearing an annoying buzzing or whooshing sound, or of being in a domed or vaulted empty space. Geometric nets of flashing light is also a dominant image. However, each of these states may be explained as purely physiological repercussions of the lack of oxygen and/or minor seizure of the temporal lobe.[242] Of course, the simple fact that there are physiological correlates to these states does not rule out the fact that the patient may experience them as if they were objective and external--nor does it preclude the fact that they might continue unpleasantly after death. On the other hand, research has failed to uncover many cases in which such phenomena were reported by people already pronounced dead. Most of the people who experience the tunnel or buzzing phenomena agree that it is but a short-lived phase. Therefore it seems of little importance to the issue of survival of human personality after death.

B) Phenomena Considered

In this chapter, we shall confine our attention to three types of NDE which all fall within the description of "deathbed visions:" (1) visions of one's departed friends or relatives; (2) visions of a "spiritual guide" or "religious saint;" and (3) visions of another world, with heavenly or other-worldly images. Although it might be thought that the nature of the person's disease or illness, or the fact of his revival or decease, might have an influence on the content of such visions (as it does on the life-review), the evidence indicates that these three types of visions are widespread among dying people and those thought dead in a wide variety of circumstances.

Accounts of "returning from the dead" are perhaps the most impressive, and convincing in the popular mind. But such cases are relatively infrequent and the exact status of such patients is open to question (as we shall detail below), so these cases alone do not provide an adequate basis for study. But if it is found that the visions of those approaching death are similar to those temporarily pronounced dead, then we have a broader base for observation and comparison. In this chapter we shall refer to both accounts of those resuscitated from death and of those in their last moments. We cannot simply assume that these visions prove afterlife or depict a future world. First, we must review the evidence about the nature of these NDE's, and subsequently consider the alternative interpretations available.

1) History

Tales of those who have returned from the dead come from many ages and cultures. Er's trip to the Plain of Oblivion and River of Forgetfulness in Plato may well be an allegory, but stories of resuscitation in the Bible more likely contain some truth. In the Old Testament, there is the report of Elisha resuscitating the Shunamite widow's son.[243] Jesus' raising of Jairus' daughter is reported by two synoptic gospels,[244] while John says that the raising of Lazarus after four days was one of the direct causes of the priests' plan to do away with Jesus.[245] Peter brought the weaver Dorcas back to life, and Paul revived Eutychus, who had fallen from the loft.[246] Unfortunately, Jairus, Lazarus, Dorcas, and Eutychus failed to record their experiences for posterity, if indeed they experienced anything while they were dead.

In 731 A.D., the Venerable Bede recounted the "noteworthy miracle" of the revival of a Northumbrian named Cunningham, who thereupon entered the monastery of Melrose.[247] We have already observed that Chinese and Japanese Buddhist saints of the first millenium had life-changing NDE's, or that their disciples described figures of light and heavenly scenery at their demise. Outside the pale of the major religions, E.B. Tylor recounts the case of a Maori (New Zealander's) death, burial, and revival, surprisingly similar to western accounts which could hardly have influenced it. Resuscitation of plague victims (even in their coffins) was so common that it led to the invention of caskets

with life-support systems and bells operable from the inside--and to embalming laws which would surely prevent revival![249]

As biographies of famous people came into wider circulation in recent centuries, testimonies of NDE's could be better preserved. Numerous biographies record Schiller's deathbed vision, in which he exclaimed, "Is this your Heaven? Is this your Hell?" (May 8, 1805)[250] His close friend Goethe was paranormally aware of Schiller's state, for he was heard crying in his room that night, and the following morning he asked, "Schiller is very ill, is he not?" Goethe himself recalled Schiller on his deathbed, although there is some debate about whether this was a vision or merely a memory. Thomas de Quincey described an NDE (of his mother or aunt) in his Suspiria de Profundis;[251] Laurence Oliphant's celebrated "Christ touched me, He held me!" followed an NDE two days before his death on December 23, 1888.

Among NDE's in which the dying person sees a dead relative appear at his deathbed, Wordsworth's vision of his wife Dora (April 23, 1850), and actress Rachel Felix's greeting of her deceased sister Rebecca one day before her death (Jan. 2, 1858) are well-documented cases. Perhaps because they are most in the news, cases of actors and singers having NDE's continue to be common even today. Singers Charles Aznavour and Serge Lama, actors Daniel Gelin and Curt Jurgens, dancer Janine Charrat, and even King Paul of Greece (d. 3/4/64) reported other-worldly visions while on the brink of death.[252] Cases of less-known individuals may be less widely reported, but emerge in surveys like

those made by Sir William Barrett, who was prompted to publish a study of death-bed visions by a striking NDE which his wife (a nurse) had observed.[253] Recent studies have been much broader in scale, funded by sources ranging from Arizona prospector James Kidd[254] to Xerox inventor Chester Carlson.[255]

The first major recent studies were conducted independently by two doctors with little knowledge of each others' projects: Elisabeth Kubler-Ross at the University of Chicago, and Raymond Moody, Jr., at the University of North Carolina, who published their studies of death-bed experiences in 1975.[256] Their methods were to solicit information from doctors who had witnessed NDE's and from patients who themselves volunteered such information. More statistical approaches were employed by Osis and Haraldsson, who collected hundreds of such cases in both India and America, and by Ken Ring, who applied computer analyses to numerous variables in his New England survey.[257] Since 1977, books and articles reporting NDE research have multiplied logarithmically.

There is still little agreement on the percentage of people who have significant NDE's while approaching death--nor is it always clear just what kind of NDE's the percentages should reflect. Kastenbaum conservatively suggests that the vast majority of patients near death simply black out, with no memory nor experience during that period.[258] Hackett and Carlson also pin the figure at a low 5%, but the same article suggests figures of 40% in Sabom's survey and 60% in Schoonmaker's.[259] These figures are modified by others who cite Sabom's ratio at 20% and Schoonmaker's

at 70%[260] Garfield attributes a low 21% ratio (of those having NDE's out of people close to death) to their reluctance to report such experiences for fear of being considered strange.[261] Rees' study tends to bear out these findings, in discovering that 72% of the population would fear ridicule if they reported such experiences.[262] Perhaps the clearest figures are again provided by Ring's study: Ring found as many as 48% had some part of a "core NDE," (which might include elements we are not considering in our study), but only 10% reported the most significant types of visionary/heavenly experiences.[263] There may be many reasons for these discrepancies, but we are at least safe in concluding that some small portion of dying people do really have impressive NDE's--and that some people experience nothing.

2) Visions of Departed Relatives or Friends

a) Description

It is quite common for people having deathbed visions to "see" the face or figure of departed friends and relatives in their NDE. Visions of mothers and spouses are apparently commonest, comprising about half of the cases in which non-religious figures are "seen."[264] These are followed by visions of siblings, children, and in American studies (but not Indian!), friends.

> The doctor gave me up, and told my relatives that I was dying. However, I was quite alert through the whole thing, and even as I heard him saying this, I felt myself coming to. As I did, I realized that all these people were there...who had passed on before. I recognized my grandmother and a girl I had known when I was in school, and many other relatives and friends. It seems that I mainly saw their faces and felt their presence. They all seemed pleased. It was happy....[265]

Such appearances sometimes lead to dramatic changes in the character of the percipient, as in the case of a seven-year-old boy dying of mastoid infection. He had been rebellious, refusing medicine and fighting the nurses. Then he had an NDE, in which

> The boy insisted that Uncle Charlie [a doctor[came, sat beside him, and told him to take his medicine. He also told the boy that he would get well. The boy was very sure that Uncle Charlie had sat in the chair and told him these things. After this experience, the patient was co-operative. He was not excited, and he took the deceased doctor's "visit" as a matter of course. The next morning, the boy was much better--a dramatic change had occurred in his condition.[266]

Aside from the conviction on the part of the perceiver that the person seen was "really there" and the fact that apparitions of dead relatives drastically outnumber those of living relatives,[267] there is nothing in these NDE's which would in itself indicate survival. It would be very easy to suggest that the dying man simply thought about other people who had died as he himself lay dying, and this concentration on dead friends led to their visualization.

There is an immediate answer to this skeptical hypothesis. It is clear in many cases that the dying patient had not been thinking about nor expecting to see such friends or relatives. Even more important, however, are the many instances in which the dying person "sees" deceased relatives whom he had not known to be dead (sometimes called "Peak in Darien" cases). An early, well-documented example is the case of Doris Clark B_____, who saw her sister Vida as she was dying on January 12, 1924. Vida had died the previous Christmas day, but the fact had been carefully kept

from her sister Doris, so as not to affect her condition.[268] In other cases, the dying person provided information which was unknown to any of the people present of the death of a brother in India, Italy, Paris, or other distant locations.[269] Indeed, such declarations that the dying persons saw dead friends and knew that they were dead, were often taken as indications that the patients were hallucinating[270]--until later information confirmed that he had at least been correct about the fact of the prior death of his friend or relative.[271]

b) Purpose

Another curious commonality of the figures seen, aside from the fact that they are deceased, is that they generally exhibit an interest in "guiding" or "taking away" the patient.[272] Typical of this phenomenon are instances like those of David and Harry:

> Harry died at Abbot's Langley on November 2, fourteen miles from my vicarage at Aspley, David the following day at Aspley. About one hour before the death of the latter child, he sat up in bed, and pointing to the bottom of the bed, said distinctly, "There is little Harry calling to me."[273]

or again, the dying words of tenor James Moore,

> "There is Mother. Why, Mother, have you come to see me? No, no, I'm coming to see you. Just wait, Mother, I am almost over. I can jump it. Wait, Mother."[274]

The apparent purposefulness of these bedside visions reminds us of the apparent purposefulness observed in other apparitions of the dead, and is an important difference from other hallucinations which tend to lack this characteristic quality.

c) Intersubjectivity

Most impressive of the NDE's, however, are the cases in which other people present in the room are also able to witness the presence of the departed relative(s) with his "take-away purpose." Nurse Joy Snell described her friend Laura Stirman's NDE:

> A short time before she expired, I became aware that two spirit forms were standing by the bedside, one on either side of it. I did not see them enter the room....I recognized their faces as those of two girls who had been the closest friends of the girl who was dying. They had passed away a year before and were then about her own age. Just before they appeared, the dying girl exclaimed, "It has grown suddenly dark; I cannot see anything!" But she recognized them immediately. A smile, beautiful to see, lit up her face. She stretched forth her hands and in joyous tones exclaimed, "Oh, you have come to take me away! I am glad, for I am very tired." As she stretched forth her hands, the two "angels" each extended a hand.[275]

Laubscher relates that in his medical practice, he has met many nurses who have

> ...actually seen the joyous faces of the relatives of the deceased who were dead, as if they gathered round with happy welcome to receive him.[276]

Florence Marryat attests that she has seen the spirits of a patient's father and grandmother at a girl's passing.[277] In yet another instance, Col. Cosgrave reported that he had seen an apparition of Walt Whitman (d. 1892) hovering over the bed of his dying friend Horace Traubel (d. 1919), who stared at the apparition of his long gone friend and said, "There is Walt!"[278] Dr. Crookall also cites a number of such cases,[279] which add yet another note of verification to the idea that these NDE's are closer to the apparitions of our previous chapter (objective) than to the subjective hallucinations of someone in delirium.

3) Visions of Religious Figures

a) Description

Next in frequency to visions of departed loved ones are visions of religious figures, sometimes called "beings of light." Preliminary cross-cultural studies comparing Indian and American deathbed visions indicate that religious figures are "seen" far more commonly on Indian deathbeds than American. In the West, religious figures are usually identified as "God," "Jesus," "Mary," or "Saint _____," while in India, "Yama" [God of death] is most commonly reported, followed by Rama, Krishna, and other such mythological figures.[280] Since no man has actually met God, Jesus, or Krishna as a fellow human in the 20th century, the identification of these figures is usually a superimposition of the perceiver. One girl had a throat implant and had been told that she would not be able to receive holy communion.

> I can see that form now: It had blond-gold hair and it had a beard, a very light beard and a moustache. It had a white garment on. And from this white garment there was all this gold shining. There was a red spot here [she points to her chest], on his gown, there was a chalice in his hand, and it said to me, "You will receive my body within the week." And he went. And I thought to myself, "Well that's funny."[281]

The identification of the figure of light with Christ or God is often explicit, as in the now-famous case of Private George Ritchie, who died (temporarily) on December 20, 1943, later testifying:

> The light which entered that room was Christ: I know because the thought was put deep within me, "You are in the presence of the Son of God." I have called Him "light," but I could also have said "love," for that room was flooded, illuminated, pierced, by the most total compassion I have ever felt.[282]

On the other hand, there are many less religious people who have very similar experiences, but feel no need to label the apparitions with any particular name, referring merely to "a bearded man against a golden light."[283]

It might be argued that these too are merely the final projections of the minds of the dying persons, which expect such religious comfort at death. If there were any such expectations, however, they must be on very subliminal levels, for there is no correlation between the religiosity of the percipients and the content of their visions or the frequency of this type of religious vision--except that religious patients more often give specific religious names to the "being of light." Moody relates

> In quite a few instances, reports have come from persons who had no religious beliefs or training at all prior to their experiences, and their descriptions do not seem to differ in content from [those of] people who had quite strong religious beliefs.[284]

Even more surprisingly, Ring's detailed statistical surveys found that those most familiar with the literature of NDE's had the <u>fewest</u> visions, and those least expecting them had the most![285] Moreover, even in cases where the patient was highly religious, the percipient sometimes hesitated to identify the figure with a religious character,[286] or was completely surprised by the appearance--as in the case of a woman who thought she saw her patron saint Gerard, dressed like a monk with sandals, when she had always imagined him to be dressed in velvet finery.[287] So visions are not merely dependent on the desires of the perceivers.

b) Purpose

These religious "figures of light" seem to exhibit a purpose of guiding or conducting the dying person, as do apparitions of friends and relatives discussed above. While this comforted the majority of dying people, a large minority of the Indian subjects identified the apparitional figure as the god of death and were reluctant to "go with him." An Indian college graduate, for example, about to be discharged from the hospital suddenly shouted, "Someone is here dressed in white....I will not go with you!" He died ten minutes later.[288] But such cases seem rather the exception than the rule. In most cases there is a distinct mood elevation, a serenity or even joy gained by the patient through his vision. And the purposefulness of the apparitions seems clear whether the percipient is pleased or afraid of the apparent intention.[289]

c) Intersubjectivity

As in the cases of visions of deceased relatives, there are some instances in which third-person observers in the sick-chamber also witness the alleged visitor. In 1918, the Society for Psychical Research published the case of one Mr. G_____, who saw, "standing at the head of my dying wife, a woman's figure, seeming to express a welcome." A famous doctor of nervous and mental disease who was present did not witness the figure, but attested that there was no natural explanation for G_____'s vision, and that it could not be attributed to temporary hallucination.[290] Others

have reported observing "two white figures,"[291] or "white-robed figures, a man and a woman, wrapped their robes around her.... They floated away."[292] In an earlier section we noted that animals in laboratory experiments sometimes are able to sense the presence of one having an OBE when humans cannot. A recent case where animals seemed to sense something was reported by an experienced male nurse:

> The patient, a Hindu policeman in his forties, was suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis....Suddenly he said, "Yamdoot is coming to take me away. Take me down from the bed so that Yamdoot does not find me." He pointed upwards and outwards. "There he is!"...There was a large tree with a great number of crows sitting on its branches. Just as the patient had his vision, all the crows suddenly flew away from the tree with much noise, as if someone had fired a gun. We were very surprised by this and ran outside through an open door in the room, but we saw nothing that might have disturbed the crows....It was as if they, too, had become aware of something terrible. As this happened, the patient fell into a coma, and expired a few minutes later.[293]

While such cases are not conclusive, they seem to be further evidence that NDE's share certain characteristics with OBE's; they are occasionally perceived by animals, psychics, and observers. Could it be that people become more psychically sensitive to such apparitions at death?

4) <u>Visions of Another World</u>

a) Description

Last we shall consider NDE's in which dead or dying people report seeing, or "travelling in" heavenly "other worlds." Some patients explicitly identify the place as "heaven;" a majority, who find the experience pleasant enough, simply say, "So that's

what it will be like," or "Now I know there is life after death."[294] Such subjective experiences by no means prove the truth of their impressions by themselves, but these NDE's do deserve to be analysed for their major features and conditions before we can go on to generalize upon them.

The commonest imagery among visions of "other realms" is description of fields of flowers, gardens, or hills.[295] Commander A.B. Campbell saw "a wide moor, with a well-worn track...to the brow of a hill," while temporarily left for dead.[296] Dr. Wiltse, whose case of temporary death was published in the St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journal also saw scenes of trees and sky, and a path leading to a barrier of rocks.[297] Such visions of paths or roads and barriers seem almost as frequent as those of fields and flower gardens. Some people feel themselves to be on a vessel on a large body of water, recognizing relatives on the far shore.[298] Many see colorful sunrises or sunsets,[299] or hear music during their NDE's of other worlds.[300] Gates, some of rough-hewn stone, others of golden palaces or castles, are also very commonly reported,[301] reminding us of the visions so widespread in ancient Chinese and Japanese literature of those who had been to heaven and back. Intellectuals and students sometimes have visions of a realm of "sculptors and philosophers, composers and inventors."[302] In almost all cases, the imagery seen is imbued with a radiance of its own, glowing or emitting a warm, intense light.[303]

b) Content similarity

There appears to be some "archetypical" similarity in the content of these visions, which is not significantly affected by the religious hopes or expectations of the dying patients. After detailed statistical analyses, Osis and Haraldsson concluded that

> Belief in life after death doubled the frequency of visions symbolizing death as a gratifying transition (p=.003), and responses with religious emotions (p=.006). Belief did NOT significantly change the frequency of experiences of beauty and peace and the frequency of images of another world. Apparently the belief in life after death changes very little of the afterlife images themselves, but rules the religious emotions and sharply increases positive valuation of death.[304]

Moreover, the frequency and content of these visions seemed closely similar among reports from both Indians and Americans, Hindus, Christians, and Jews.[305]

c) Paranormal insights

In some cases, these visions of other worlds also include paranormal knowledge which can later be verified. Sometimes it is simply the sighting of relatives, not known to be dead, in this realm where many other dead (and no living) people are perceived.[306] Janine Charrat, thought dead on December 18, 1961, saw visions of future events in her life, extremely contrary to both the laws of probability and to her own waking thoughts, but her life indeed evolved as she had foreseen in these visions.[307] Serge Lama, by contrast, had visions of past lives, from which he apparently gained correct information about buildings and events which he could not have known normally.[308] Many people dead or on the brink of death have visions in which they are told exactly

when they will die, and their deaths follow these predictions even though their doctors have very different expectations.[309] In one case, a girl who thought that she was bound by messengers of Yama actually exhibited rope marks on her legs after the experience.[310] Of course this may remind us of hypnotic phenomena in which the patient exhibits symptoms for which no physical cause is present. Therefore the question is not, "were there invisible ropes actually binding her legs," but rather, "what so altered her mind as to make her believe that she was bound by ropes, to the extent that they affected her body psychosomatically?" Apparently the unexpected vision of heaven and its messengers had an intense, hypnotic-like effect on the subject's mind and body. Deathbed visions of other worlds are not only interesting but important indications of survival to the extent that (i) they are intersubjective, not in being perceived by many people in the same room, but in their similarities which cut across cultural and religious boundaries; (ii) they produce information paranormally which is not otherwise known to the subject and can be verified; and (iii) they frequently occur after the patient has been pronounced dead, after which the patient again revives. The subjects' feelings that they still have unfinished business to do on earth seems important for their revival in such conditions.[311] There are exceptions to the above general picture. Some people hallucinate; others have visions of monsters, hell, or blackness.[312] The point is less <u>what</u> other worlds they experience than <u>that</u> they experience other realms at death. Now we must critically analyze these claims.

C) Objections to the Phenomena as Evidence of Survival

In the face of the thousands of cases amassed and studied in the past two decades by doctors and scholars, not even the most skeptical of readers can deny that NDE's happen as described, or can assert that they have been produced by collusion and fraud between subjects and doctors. If anything, the medical profession itself has tended to downplay the importance of such experiences, but outright rejection of NDE's as nonexistent or fraudulent simply does not occur.[313] The counter-survivalist argument to "explain away" NDE's must include at least the following three claims: (1) that the subjects were not really dead when they had NDE's; (2) that the subjects were hallucinating and not "seeing" anything at all; and (3) that information gained during NDE's and later verified may be ascribed to ESP knowledge—acquisition, but that all other parts of the vision are again hallucination. If any one of these antisurvivalists' objections fails, then the survivalists' case is left in a strong position for it may assert (1) that people really return from death, and thus sometimes survive death, at least for a short time; (2) that people really see into "the next world," something objective and not hallucinatory; or (3) information was indeed gained through contact with the dead or with religious figures at the moment of death. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to evaluating the relative strengths and weaknesses of the arguments surrounding these three important objections.

1) Patients pronounced dead were not really dead

a) Naive materialism

One frequent argument against the data of resuscitation cases claims that the person pronounced dead and resuscitated could not have really been dead. There are several ways of approaching this question. Some naive materialists say that the fact that the person revived in itself proves that he could not have been dead. But this is specious question-begging, because it assumes as a fact the premise that no one ever revives if they are truly dead, which is precisely the issue in question. Whenever a case of resuscitation from death is adduced, it is simply attributed to a mistaken pronouncement, for "the person could not have been dead if he revived." This very circularity renders meaningless the concept and definition of medical and physical death. We now have a broad spectrum of medical criteria, ranging from pulse and breath to reflex checks, pupil dilation, body temperature and stiffness, and EEG. While no single test adequately defines death, taken together they exhaust the functions we should expect in a living human body. If these tests are called inadequate to determine when a body has died (because people pronounced dead by these criteria sometimes are still really alive and will revive), then we are left with no way of distinguishing living from dead people, which is as absurd as it is inconvenient. We might await putrefaction or demand embalming to guarantee death, but these alternatives are yet further undesirable consequences of inherently fallacious logic and assumptions.

b) Parabiosis

On a somewhat more logical and scientific line, it might be seriously argued that the people who were pronounced dead were not really dead, because life lingers on even in a human corpse, in the sense that parts of the body die at different rates. Not surprisingly, this is the line taken by Soviet doctors who are ideologically committed to explaining everything on purely materialistic grounds.[314] By this analysis, mere cessation of breath and heartbeat--which the Soviets consider the primary indicators of death--by no means imply that the organism cannot be revived and regain consciousness. In fact, the Soviets have performed numerous experiments in which decapitated animal heads have shown every sign of life when reinfused with oxygenated blood some minutes after severance.[315] To deny that patients who later revive were ever completely dead, while admitting that they showed no signs of life, requires the Soviet invention of a new term for a state which is neither life nor death.

> In the corpse, protected from the processes of decay, the life of its separate cells, tissues, and organs continues to glimmer for a long time. True death comes to the body's cells only after their inherent physiological functions have ceased finally and irreversibly. Prior to the arrival of this moment, every dying cell passes through a unique state, which cannot be characterized as life [since its vital functions have stopped] nor recognized as death [since, under certain conditions, its lost functions may be restored]. The noted physiologist N.E. Vvedensky named this transitional, intermediate state between life and death <u>parabiosis</u>.[316]

There are several points to notice among these fancy phrases.

In the first place, Vasiliev qualifies his statement with the phrase "protected from the processes of decay," and then goes on to speak of refrigerated corpses of the sort he had been working with. But the vast majority of corpses are not refrigerated at death--least of all those of the people reporting the NDE's discussed here.

Secondly, Vasiliev's grouping of cells with organs is inappropriate. It may be true that certain cells (e.g. hair follicles) continue to function for several days after brain and heart functions cease. But it would be absurd to suggest that a human being should be identified with his hair follicles, or that he were not dead because his follicles were continuing to live for a while. Even Vasiliev admits that the critical elements to determine human life or death are the heart, lungs, and brain. He continues:

> If the organ of the psyche ceases to function immediately after the stoppage of the heart and breathing, this means that the soul, which is tied to cerebral activity...cannot in any way exist after the death of the body. On the contrary, success has been achieved in demonstrating the possibility of temporary bodily vital activity with complete exclusion of the brain.[317]

Here again, however, we find more a circular development of Vasiliev's own assumptions than persuasive logical argument. He assumes that the psyche has an organ (the brain), and that the soul is "tied to cerebral activity. He then deduces that when the brain stops, the soul must stop existing. It is hard to see, however, what this soul might be, except another name for brain functions. If Vasiliev uses "soul" to mean brain functions, then

he is trivially correct that when the brain stops functioning, the soul ceases to exist. On the other hand, if he means something like "the conscious locus of thought and perception," then he is premature in asserting that it is tied to cerebral activity, and his "conclusion" that it cannot survive bodily death does no more than reiterate his a priori convictions.

It is also curious that he asserts the independence of the body and the brain. He uses his findings to document the idea that bodily activity can continue without mental activity, but is completely opaque to the notion that mental activity might continue without bodily activity. It may or may not be the case that mental activity can continue independently--this is a question which we are in the process of answering based on empirical studies. But Vasiliev's Marxist-materialist assumptions do not get us very far towards an impartial answer

Vvedensky's notion of "parabiosis' was modeled on the concept of "anabiosis," the suspended animation seen in some seeds, eggs, and even insects, which possess the potential for full life but cannot really be called living while yet undeveloped. His suggestion is essentially that just as seeds or eggs may exist for years before exhibiting life, so humans near death may exist (for minutes) before again exhibiting life. Although they appear dead, Vvedensky would say that such humans should be called "parabiotic." In facing this claim, we must first ascertain that it is not circular in the sense of the arguments used above; that other criteria

than the fact that the person later revived are used to determine whether he is parabiotic. But by the admission of Russian as well as American scientists,[318] this parabiotic state, if it exists at all, can endure for at most 10-20 minutes without artificial resuscitory measures. By contrast, among the cases of NDE's of people revived from the dead are a number of cases dead for several hours.[319] Other cases involved deep coma and tetany (rigor mortis) for a number of days,[320] comas of several weeks,[321] in short, they simply do not fit the parabiosis model. In the testimony of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross:

> I have investigated similar cases from Australia to California, involving patients from age 2 to 96--I have hundreds of very clear-cut cases from all over the world, both religious and non-religious people. One had been dead 12½ hours. All experienced the same thing.[322]

In short, these parabiotic stages, if we chose to call them such, lasted longer than medical science should expect to be possible. So we return to the original dilemma: either we must admit that science does not know how to define death (and parabiosis!) because there are many exceptions to these definitions, and then the only way to know whether someone is dead is to wait and see whether he revives. Or we may admit that certain people in fact die and are revived to report about having had experiences prior to their revivials. The Soviet arguments have not been very successful in this regard. But many western neurophysiologists in the west also incline to materialism, and it is to the best of their arguments, and not the worst, which we must now turn.

c) Brain death

An improved version of the anti-survivalist interpretation might run as follows. We need to define death unambiguously, and according to medical criteria rather than post facto declarations. There is no question that man's physical body survives its death. The crucial question is rather whether consciousness survives bodily death. The brain is the part of the body to which consciousness is most closely related. Therefore, the brain should be more important than the condition of the heart, lungs, pulse, etc., in determining death in relation to consciousness. We know that it is possible for the heart and lungs to function without brain functions (with artificial support systems). We have less knowledge about the ability of a brain to continue to act (think) after a body has ceased to function. Cessation of breathing is normally taken as an indication that the brain has ceased to control the autonomic functions of the lungs, but even this does not guarantee that consciousness is absent. What we need, therefore, is clear determination that brain activity has ceased by electroencephalographic measurements--so-called "brain death" criteria.[323] Except in rare cases of hypothermia or drug overdose, it is impossible for the body to revive after brain death occurs. For our (materialistic) purposes, if the brain is dead, we expect no continuation of consciousness. We predict, therefore, that the people who report visions of relatives, saints, or other worlds are not brain dead at the time they have such visions. The key empirical question is not whether people have been pronounced

dead and later revived--we accept the data on such cases--but rather whether anyone has had mental activity, hallucinatory or otherwise, when his brain was inactive electrically.

Survivalists agree to the importance of this question. It is a question capable of empirical verification and one deserving of more study. If there are clear-cut cases where there is no brain activity but patients report having had experiences, this is an outstanding refutation of the mind-brain identity theory. If we define death in terms of brain activity, and someone has no brain activity, but later reports experiences during that period, we have proof that conscious experience is possible after death, at least temporarily. Preliminary investigations suggest that this is indeed possible.

> Flat EEG tracings have been obtained in persons who were later resuscitated. Overdoses of drugs which are depressants of the CNS [central nervous system] as well as hypothermia [overcooling] have both resulted in this phenomenon.[324]

One fruitful line of inquiry might be to study victims of drug overdose and hypothermia, to try to identify their NDE's during brain death. But Ring, who has studied this relationship, found an inverse correspondence between drugs and NDE's; the more drugs a person had had, the less likely he was to have a true NDE![325] So the fact that drugged or hypothermic people may be revived after hours of no brain activity does not prove particularly helpful in NDE research, although it means that these conditions must be carefully watched for in determining whether the brain death is irreversible.[326]

There are some reports, however, of people having NDE's when they were "brain dead," but not drugged or hypothermic. Kubler-Ross has reported a case in which brain activity ceased and the heart stopped, but afterwards, the patient was able to correctly describe the resuscitation procedures used on his own body, from the perspective in which he had observed them in an OBE.[327] Similarly, Tom Clack, killed in battle in Vietnam, had an OBE in which he felt he met and conversed with his other dead comrades while surrounded by light. The doctors told him after he was resuscitated that he had had neither heartbeat nor brain waves.[328] Denver cardiologist Fred Schoonmaker has encountered cases in which brain waves were nonexistent for several hours, after which his patients revived and reported having had realistic experiences during that time.[329] Further study of such cases is essential, for if people indeed have NDE's while brain-dead, then it will be established fact that consciousness can temporarily survive the brain!

2) Patients' Visions were Hallucinations

Revival of brain-dead people is a truly rare phenomenon. But visions of relatives, saints, or other worlds by people on their deathbeds are not uncommon, and are therefore much easier to study quantitatively. The anti-survivalist argues that such visions are neither perceptions nor do they have any real referents, but are rather the fantasies of diseased or dying brains.

Before we look at the specific attempts of anti-survivalists to explain away the NDE evidence, however, a few observations on the logic involved are in order here. The arguments we shall confront below are either reductionistic or non-reductionist. Reductionists claim that NDE's are reducible to and nothing more than certain states which we already understand in other terms. Non-reductionists claim that NDE's resemble certain other conditions, but are not necessarily exhaustively described by them. Thus, the reductionist may say that NDE's are exhaustively explained as brain malfunctions, and there is nothing more to concern ourselves with. Non-reductionists might say, in the same circumstances, that brain malfunctions may give rise to certain abilities or experiences--but this does not itself deny the reality of the images perceived nor invalidate the need for further study. Thus, the non-reductionist position does not negate the validity of NDE's as potential materials for the study of survival, and it need not trouble us any further at this point.

Reductionists, on the other hand, must demonstrate at least two sub-claims: First, they must claim that NDE's are a legitimate sub-class of phenomena whose explanation is already understood. Secondly, they must show that these phenomena are hallucinatory or delusory, giving us no information about reality, but only (perhaps) about mental malfunctions. For example, it will be argued that: (1) NDE's are like mental disease. (2) Such mental disease gives us no understanding of reality. (3) Therefore NDE's give us no understanding of reality.

The first claim, that "NDE's are like (or are a subclass of) X" is a crucial one, and it is this claim which most of the arguments will depend upon. Even if this were admitted as a first presmise, however, the second premise would not yet be demonstrated and the conclusion would still be unreachable. For it might still be the case that although NDE's are like experiences of diseases, drugs, or OBE's, both sets of similar experiences tell us something about another level of reality, rather than both being delusory. This is precisely what meditating yogins and drug-tripping American Indians would say: that there are essential similarities between meditation or drug trips and death. They would add that both sets of experiences have important external referents, and both tell us important truths to which we are blind in our normal mundane consciousness. In fact, it is hard to imagine how we could ever tell that the visions of meditators were totally delusory with certainty, although popular opinion believes them so.[330] Thus, even if NDE's were reducible to a subclass of some other phenomena, it would not follow that their content were non-referential or that survival were invalidated. Since this is the less approachable of our two reductionist premises, however, we shall concentrate rather on understanding the arguments that all NDE's are reducible to (1) chemical changes in the brain; (2) psychological defense mechanisms or schizophrenia; or (3) a mental replay of the birth experience. After examining each of these arguments in turn, we shall conclude with (4) more counterarguments relevant to all three of these classes en bloc.

a) The argument

The argument that NDE's are mere hallucinations with a chemical or neurophysiological base is among the commonest tacks which reductionists may take. The four major proponents of this view have each proposed slightly different theories to "explain away" NDE's, each based however on physico-chemical changes in the brain. British psychiatrist James McHarg has suggested that NDE's are due to anoxia--lack of oxygen--in the dying brain, and are analogous to seizures of the temporal lobe, which are also presumably inducible by anoxia.[331] Detroit physician Ernst Rodin, by contrast, has proposed that NDE's may be produced either by anoxia or hypoxia (an overabundance of oxygen!) which he says leads to feelings of well-being and the acceptance of false judgments as true, particularly where persons' hopes, fears, or preoccupations are involved.[332] R.S. Blacker, among others, has noted the similarities of NDE's to experiences of ether anaesthesia--especially seeing lights and having OBE's--but he regards "hearing pronouncement of one's own death" to be analytically impossible.[333] Finally, UCLA psychiatrist Ron Siegel has emphasized the similarities between NDE's and drug hallucinations, especially with respect to four features: (1) tunnels, (2) cities, (3) lights, and (4) memory images.[334] Let us examine the applicability of any of these arguments to our NDE evidence and the conclusions drawn from it.

b) NDE's are not hallucinations

(i) Most people undergoing NDE's are not demonstrably anoxic, hypoxic, nor drugged. Rodin's article in particular brought forth a stream of responses to this effect. Ring has cited evidence that NDE's may occur in the absence of cerebral anoxia (also cited by O'Roark).[335] Ring also adduces much evidence to demonstrate ether reduces the frequency of NDE's, and that the NDE's reported to him were not of anaesthetized patients.[336] Ian Stevenson too concludes that NDE's are clearly NOT toxic psychoses.[337] The most thoroughgoing studies of the physical conditions of the patients was that conducted by Osis and Haraldsson, who specifically looked for factors which might have led their subjects to hallucinate. They found that the vast majority of their subjects were dying from diseases or operations unrelated to the brain, and with no history of mental problems. The majority had body temperatures of less than 100°F., so their visions could not be ascribed to delirium or fever. The large majority of subjects had little or no medication of a sort which would influence their minds, were rated as being "clear-headed" at the time of the vision, and were not diagnosed as having any other hallucinogenic conditions by their physicians. They concluded:

> Hallucinogenic medical factors could not explain the phenomena in a majority of cases....Drugs that might have caused hallucinations neither significantly affected the main phenomena nor the clarity of consciousness....We analysed the interactions of medication and the seven main characteristics of the visions. There was no relationship whatsoever between medication and experiential characteristics suggestive of an afterlife.[338]

From these studies and responses, it should be clear that in many cases, neither anoxia, anaesthesia, nor hallucinogenic drug effects were causally involved in producing NDE's.

(ii) Yet another important point can be noticed from Osis' results: a number of his subjects who seemed to "see into another world" were not yet in coma. Although they were to die in a matter of minutes (and sometimes despite contrary predictions by their physicians), they were generally calm, clear-headed, and interacting normally with those attending them, with the exception that they also had visions of relatives, saints, or heaven at that time.[339] On the other hand, there are also cases in which these same sorts of visions are reported after revival by people who had been temporarily pronounced dead, or who were clearly unconscious of their surroundings. The conclusions are fairly clear. If NDE's share the same sorts of contents regardless of whether the patient is asleep or awake, non-anoxic or even anoxic, already dead or still on the brink of death, then oxygen supply and hallucinogenic drugs alone are inadequate to explain them all fully. Rather, it would be more logical to seek a cause for these visions which is present in all cases and not merely an isolated few. The single outstanding factor which is present in all cases is simply the proximity of death. It is more appropriate to attribute NDE's to the nearness of death itself, than to force them into physicochemical categories which demonstrably fail to account for a large portion of the samples studied.

b) NDE's are not like hallucinations

Nor is it the case that NDE's are essentially like the experiences of anoxia, hypoxia, anaesthesia, or drug hallucinations. Here we must make some careful distinctions. Reductionists would want to claim that, even if anoxia, drugs, etc., are not themselves present, at least the visions are due to some analogous chemical process (perhaps toxins or endorphins secreted by the brain itself) so that the underlying mechanism is still a physico-chemical one. There is no evidence for this claim, but if it were shown that the content of visions experienced under these other known conditions (anoxia, ether, drugs) were very similar to the content of NDE's, then there would be at least an ad hoc credibility to this idea.[340] But there is no such similarity between the content of the cases suggested by critics and the NDE visions which we are studying.

(i) Let us first look at the effects which each of the critics we have ctied would expect his mechanistic model to produce. Anoxia should be expected to produce anxiety, disorientation, and perceptual distortions.[341] But there is no anxiety, disorientation nor perceptual distortion in the majority of the NDE visions studied. On the contrary, there is a feeling of peace, a feeling of knowing exactly how one is oriented, but also a feeling of knowing some things which are not obvious to humans in normal states.

(ii) Hypoxia, by contrast, leads to feelings of well-being and "the projection of one's own hopes, fears, or preoccupations." But it has been demonstrated that deathbed visions did not correlate

with the hopes and fears of their experiencers. Many visions were distinctly contrary to the religious or a-religious expectations of their percipients.[342] Moreover, Ring found that there was an inverse relationship between knowing about NDE's and having them; those who had studied NDE material seemed less likely to experience them themselves, and those who had never heard of NDE's more likely to have such visionary experiences![343] This might be due in part to a difference in critical or intellectual levels. But the important point is that NDE's are not merely the projections of the hopes or preoccupations of their experiencers!

(iii) Ether anaesthesia, next in line, is expected to produce "lights and OBE's." Here again, we are not considering the mere vision of light to be significant or indicative of the nature of the next realm. And while OBE's coupled with apparitions have evidential values discussed in the previous chapter, the mere fact of OBE's during the NDE is not our concern in this chapter. Moreover, if it is admitted that ether produces genuine OBE's, this is not a denial, but a confirmation of some form of mind-body dualism. In sum, none of the above causes produces anything like the visions of departed relatives, saints, or heavenly realms which are central to this chapter on NDE's.

C) Siegel's similarities

The critic closest to our concerns is Siegel, who cites numerous "similarities" between NDE's and drug hallucinations in parallel quotations from NDE subjects and hallucinators. Therefore his analysis desrves more careful scrutiny. In essence, he

compares four objects of visions: tunnels, cities, lights, and memories.[344] From the outset, we have recognized that tunnels and life-review memories may be triggered by brain mechanisms, and we have not even considered them seriously as evidence of survival. Siegel argues that "similarities between tunnels and memories in drug-experiences and tunnels and memories in NDE's shows that neither is survival-oriented." Of course, the opposite might be true: it might be the case that both NDE subjects and drug-trippers are dangerously close to death, and both are catching glimpses of the afterlife. But even if Siegel's syllogism proves correct, he is simply refuting a straw man, for no one has seriously claimed that tunnels or memories prove survival.

(i) This leaves the questions of cities and lights. Siegel's assertion is that these too are similar in drug and NDE cases. But here the comparisons he cites are stretched and rather tenuous. The NDE subject whom he cites actually describes a "city of light," whereas the drug-hallucinators simply see geometric forms. Even if it were granted that "geometric architecture" appears in both NDE's and hallucinations, or that "nets of great luminosity and brilliance" appear in both cases, our argument is still unaffected, for these cases too are not considered as good evidence for survival. By showing that geometric visions are not good evidence for survival, Siegel has not shown that visions of relatives, saints, or heavenly nature-imagery are not good evidence. These, after all, are the visions upon which we have based our contention.

(iii) When it comes to the question of visions of saints, relatives, or heavenly fields, Siegel can do nothing more than assert that these are all "retrieved memory images." Here he is simply wrong, because some of the figures seen at deathbeds and recognized as dead relatives or saints are seen in different clothing or appearance than the percipient had ever remembered seeing them. Siegel's silence when it comes to comparing visions of saints and heavens in NDE's to visions of saints and heavens in drug hallucinations speaks louder than his arguments that he was unable to draw such comparisons at all, or he would have tried, since these are the types of visions of most importance to survivalists. When we deal with the important issues of relatives and holy figures (as opposed to the red herrings of which Siegel is fond), we immediately find striking discrepancies. While more than 80% of dying subjects with NDE's had visions of dead friends or relatives, only 20-30% of drug hallucinators saw dead people in their "trips." Only a tiny fraction of these, in turn, had any sort of "purpose" at all, in striking contrast to the well-documented "take-away purpose" expressed by 80% of the departed friends or relatives perceived at deathbeds.[345] While terminal patients saw religious figures frequently--as much as 50% of the time--living hallucinators saw religious figures almost never (2-4%).[346] NDE subjects who anticipated grim reapers or a judgment seat often witnessed scenery of flowery fields surpassing any they had seen in life. This not only violated their expectations and religious teaching, but is unlike the geometric imagery common to drugged hallucina-

tions.[347] In summary, then, it is not the case that these NDE's are produced by hallucinogenic drugs. Nor is it the case that the important contents of NDE's (friends, saints, heavens) are similar to the sorts of things perceived by drug hallucinators. The analogies just fail to hold.

(iv) Finally, to recapitulate a previous argument, even if there were analogies between NDE's and drug hallucinations, it need not follow that neither are non-referential. Even critic McHarg must ultimately admit that "A paranormal basis for the content of deathbed visions is not invalidated, however, by a mere medical reason for their mere occurrence." In other words, it is conceivable that even chemically-induced "trips" could occasionally give veridical insights into another world. Further study is needed on both NDE's and hallucinations. But the verdict at this point still stands: NDE's of the sorts we consider signifcant are NOT analogous nor reducible to physico-chemically induced malfunctions of the brain.

3) NDE's are Defense Mechanisms or Mental Disease

Another attempt to reduce NDE's to non-referential hallucinations is the claim that they are merely psychological mechanisms or temporary schizophrenia. As in the previous section, we shall (a) present the arguments, (b) see whether NDE's actually are psychological problems, or (c) see how closely they are like defense mechanisms or mental disease. First, however, we must be aware of some curious ambiguities in this behaviourist line.

In the beginning, we must distinguish psychological conditions from physico-chemical states, or else this whole argument collapses into the previous argument (2). If this section (3) is to contain genuinely new and interesting arguments, and not simply a rehash of the above (2), then we should expect evidence about mental states which is not reduced to chemical processes. Thus, behaviourists wishing to reduce NDE's to psychological phenomena will have to say either (i) that psychological problems are ultimately non-reducible to physico-chemical states, or (ii) that psychological problems will someday be reducible to physico-chemical states, but we just don't know enough to make the reductions yet, so for the time being we must deal only with the behavioural states. (i) is distasteful to the behaviourist because it tends to admit that there are non-physical aspects of reality, but (ii) is a highly speculative assumption at this time. Although the clinician may act pragmatically without having a well-reasoned understanding of mind or survival behind his practice, these questions are real and important to the philosophical psychologist.

For the purposes of this section, we shall assume that there are some mental states or diseases whose physical correlates are incompletely known and unimportant for the purposes of argument. Of course, to the extent that such mechanisms are not known, so-called "explanations" of NDE's on the basis of other inadequately understood phenomena is a very shaky business. It might even be argued that a survivalist interpretation of NDE's gives us a

better model for certain mental diseases than a reductionist interpretation of mental diseases gives us of NDE's. In short, we do not gain much explanatory power or value by reducing NDE's to instances of mental disease. But as long as such classifications are comforting to those who brook no violations of their already-finalized world-views, we shall continue to face the charges that NDE's are either reducible or analogous to defense mechanisms or mental diseases.

a) The argument

Ehrenwald and Noyes have been the major proponents of the defense-mechanisms view. Ehrenwald propounds that NDE's

> exhibit an assorted set of defenses and rationalizations aimed at warding off anxiety originating from the breakdown of the body image,...in the last analysis, from the fear of death as a universal experience.[348]

Noyes reiterates the theme of "depersonalization" as an escape from "life-threatening danger,"[349] in a dozen articles with the same interpretations of the same body of data in different periodicals. Others have suggested that diseases of the temporal lobe may lead to hallucinations of bright lights,[350] or to cases where schizophrenics have occasionally hallucinated relatives, ghosts, priests, stars, mountains, and even "God."[351] If NDE's are simply another case of such mental disease, they tell us nothing about the nature or possibility of survival.

(b) NDE's are not mental diseases

It is simply not true that most NDE subjects are exhibiting mental diseases or defense mechanisms. Some of the patients, as

indicated above, were clear-headed and in apparently good mental health. Some of them neither expected to die nor feared death before their NDE's. There is neither motive nor precedent for "psychological escapism" or defense mechanisms in the majority of these cases. Moreover, in studying the nature of hallucinations due to psychological causes, it has been established that "Patients who hallucinate are generally those with a history of hallucinations."[352] However, very few of the NDE subjects had such histories of hallucinating.[353] Thus, the probability that they were hallucinating on their deathbeds is rather low. Nor have many of the patients in these studies been psychiatrically or medically diagnosed as having either brain diseases or schizophrenia.[354] Thus it is inappropriate to reduce all NDE cases into charges of mental disease. But there is admittedly a small minority of crisis cases, to which Noyes untiringly refers, in which a sort of "depersonalization" occurs. This leads us to the more important question of the content of NDE's, their similarities and differences from other defence mechanisms and mental diseases.

c) NDE's are not <u>like</u> defense mechanisms or mental disease.

(i) Most NDE's are not only not <u>caused</u> by depersonalization or mental diseases; they are not even <u>like</u> them. First let us look at Noyes' claims of depersonalization. Noyes has surveyed a number of accident victims, finding that 40-60% of them felt detached from their bodies, felt joy and "great understanding,"

and had subjective impressions that time was drastically slowed down (or in some cases, sped up).[355] But Noyes does not carefully classify experiences of saints, dead relatives, or heavenly realms, relegating them all to the category of "visions, images, or revelations."[356] There is no conflict, then, between Noyes' findings and those of other researchers, insofar as they are talking about two separate sorts of phenomena. Noyes is talking about depersonalization and time distortion, while survivalists are more interested in the visionary content, especially when providing intersubjective material. It is interesting that people experience OBE's and time distortion during accidents, but this fact by no means contradicts the fact that they may also have visions of people or heavens.

(ii) Even if it were found that none of Noyes' accident victims had NDE's of the sort we are studying, this finding would have no negative bearing on the issue of survival. Noyes' feeling that man does not survive bodily death, or that OBE's are temporary psychological phenomena which help men avoid "facing the facts" of the emergency, is clearly a bias which pre-dates his research, and is not a finding based on his data. On the contrary, the finding of large numbers of OBE's among his subjects might even lend support to the survival thesis--but these arguments have already been covered in a previous chapter. The point to be made here is that (1) Noyes' evidence does not refute other NDE evidence; (2) his label of "depersonalization" does not help us understand OBE's; and (3) his findings tell us nothing about whether man survives.

(iii) Whereas the Freudian critic of survival may allege that "matrices in the unconscious could result in experiences of life-review, divine judgment, hell, purgatory, etc...."[357] we should reiterate that the existence and structure of these matrices remains a questionable hypothesis and not a fact. Moreover, if the critic is correct that hellish images are as ubiquitous as heavenly ones in our unconsciousnesses, then there is a rather poor match between those unidentified structures and the experiences themselves, which lean heavily on the side of heavenly imagery, and only rarely to the unpleasant.[358]

(iv) As far as mental diseases are concerned, we may again observe a striking contast between the contents and behaviours produced by such diseases, and the contents and behaviours produced by NDE's. Whereas schizophrenic patients tend to have long drawn-out periods of hallucination, often in monochrome, NDE patients tend to see their visions in full color, but only for a few brief moments.[359] The mentally ill tend to see an irrational assortment of images, ranging from people with turkeys' heads to clouds, shadows, or dirt specks where there is nothing.[360] Temporal lobe seizures also lead to "bright flashes"--but not to clear images of religious figures clad in light.[361] It is also common that the seizure victim completely loses his awareness of what he is doing, and either continues to do what he had planned to do without consciousness of it, or commits utterly irrational acts.[362] But none of these problems are characteristic of the NDE's which we are considering.

Of course, there remains a small minority of mentally ill and schizophrenics whose mental imagery superficially resembles that of our NDE subjects.[363] What may be deduced from this? These visions of religious figures or "God" are a-typical of mental disease and typical of NDE's. Therefore we cannot conclude that all NDE's are like mental diseases. On the contrary, the opposite suggestion might be in order. It is quite possible that in certain cases of mental disease, patients experience NDE-like images precisely because they are having NDE's; they may in fact be very close to death, with or without their doctor's realization of it. While it is possible that a few NDE's are pathological and a few schizophrenics have NDE's, for the most part they are two distinct phenomena. In any case, it is inappropriate to reduce all NDE's to psychological and mental diseases, or even to try to explain them on those inadequate models. Survival may be calumniated for occasionally resembling pathology, but it cannot be logically dismissed on such grounds.

4) <u>NDE's are a "Re-play" of the Birth Experience</u>

The earliest of the attacks against the veridicality of NDE's was the allegation that NDE's simply reflect the religious beliefs of the people who experience them. Empirical studies have refuted this claim from several standpoints. Agnostics and atheists have had visions of "heaven" or religious figures, while devout churchgoers expecting judgment or purgatory found none.[364] The cultural expectations that (a) there is no life after death, or (b) pain is

as likely as pleasure in the next world (especially for sinners or non-believers) were simply not reflected in NDE's either.[365] So NDE's cannot be written off as mere projections of one's beliefs, desires, or cultural training. The cross-cultural uniformity among Christians, Jews, and Hindus also seems to indicate that more than a cultural image is being seen here; there are elements of broad similarity--dare we say universality?!--among many NDE experiencers.[366] Moreover, there is sufficient difference between NDE's and pathological or psychological mechanisms that they cannot be reduced or explained away on such models.

a) The argument for "Re-play"

Astronomer Carl Sagan, famous for his studies of Venus, believes that he has the solution to this universality of NDE's. He asserts that the death experience is likely to produce common images of light and tunnels because we have all been through tunnels into light before--at birth. This leaves an indelible imprint on our brains which is replayed during the traumatic moments when we face death. In Sagan's own words:

> The only alternative, so far as I can see, is that every human being, without exception, has already shared an experience like that of those travellers who return from the land of death: the sensation of flight; the emergence from darkness into light; an experience in which, at least sometimes, a heroic figure can be dimly perceived, bathed in radiance and glory. There is only one common experience that matches this description. It is called birth.[367]

Sagan goes on to reduce all religion and speculative science to an analogue of the birth experience. He sees the satori or nirvana of Eastern religions as no more than a desire for a return

to the warm selfless non-distinction of the womb state. He calls "Western fascination with punishment and redemption a poignant attempt to make sense of Stage 2 [uterine contractions around the foetus!]." In Sagan's summary:

> If religions are fundamentally silly, why is it that so many people believe in them?...The common thread is birth. Religion is fundamentally mystical, the gods inscrutable, the tenets appealing but unsound because, I suggest, blurred perceptions and vague premonitions are the best that the newborn infant can manage. It is rather a courageous if flawed attempt to make contact with the earliest and most profound experience of our lives. [368]

Finally Sagan goes on to analogize scientific theories about the universe to the birth experience: steady state theories are analogous to the womb state; oscillating universe theories are analogous to the uterine contraction state; and Big Bang theories are analogous to birth into an ever-widening world. He concludes that our "perinatal" experiences may determine not only our NDE's but our psychiatric predispositions to scientific cosmologies! [369]

(i) A number of things need to be said about Sagan's theory, since it appears superficially seductive and is couched in striking language in a best-selling book. Sagan is simply out of his depth. He knows a lot about the surface temperature of Venus, but he knows precious little about philosophy or psychiatry, and his dilettantism in these fields has been repeatedly castigated by scientists in other fields.[370] It is trivially true that everything is either in a steady state, shrinking, or growing; thus everything can be analogized to uterine states, contractions, and birth. But this does not mean that there is any <u>real</u> connection

between uterine states and whatever is analogized to them! Sagan shows gross naivete in equating cosmological and psychological models, and then attempting to reduce them both to analogies of the birth experience. Apparently the only source for his flights of analogistic imagination is the work of Stanislav Grof, who found some analogies between mystic, drug, and NDE consciousnesses, particularly in their "visions of light."[371] Grof, however, while seelomg causal explanations for NDE's within brain functions, is careful not to reduce NDE's into non-referential hallucinations. On the contrary, he leaves open the possibility that changes in brain chemistry set up altered states of consciousness which give access to alternate realities not recognized in our ordinary waking states of mind.[372] Grof allows that NDE's and other altered states of consciousness may show us something about other realities, but Sagan crudely reduces all such visions to foggy-headed attempts to remember our own births. This wild speculation is unsupported by even the most sympathetic of researchers in the field.

(ii) There is a further consequence of Sagan's theory, however, which even he would reject if he had the objectivity to recognize it amid his rapture with the uterus. Sagan wants to say that since NDE's are analogous to the birth experience, they can be reduced to memories of birth, and therefore have no independent [ontologically real] referents. He also says that the universe which is studied by astronomers is analogous to the birth experience, and the Big Bang theory which he accepts may be a superimposition of our birth memories on our views of the universe.

But if such analogies make NDE's non-referential, they should also render his pet Big Bang theories equally non-referential. If they make NDE's into meaningless delusions, then they should also make the Big Bang theory a meaningless delusion. By Sagan's own line of reasoning, science is not the finding of the truth about the universe, nor do laws of science refer to anything but projections of the birth experiences of the leading scientists. Sagan almost admits this himself, when he says:

> I suppose it is too much to hope that the originators of the Steady State hypothesis were all born by Caesarean section, but the analogies are very close....[373]

He tries to find delusory psychological origins for all of his opponents' theories, without realizing that the same criticisms must apply to himself, if true. If his theory is true, all the highly-touted objectivity of science and scientists is a myth, reducible to the manner of their births and the predilections born thereof. The "scientific knowledge" which Sagan pompously opposes to the "foolishness of religion" is equally reduced to neurophysiology, and scientific theories have no better status than the survival theory which he hopes to destroy by them. But Sagan is blind to these consequences in his zeal to attack the religious.

b) The inadequacy of the infant-perception model

More scientifically, infants simply cannot perceive anything well enough for Sagan's thesis to hold true. The key point in Sagan's analogy between birth and NDE's is that both include the vision of "some godlike figure surrounded by a halo of light--

the Midwife or the Obstetrician or the Father."[374] But if newborn infants do not perceive such figures of light, then it is impossible to ascribe NDE's to such infantile perceptions. To examine this claim, we need to turn to the results of extensive studies of infant perception and memory, of which Sagan is obviously ignorant. The limitations on infant perception are indeed substantial, for at birth, many nerons are not in their proper layers, and there are no Nissl bodies or neurofibrils, little chromophil or myelin, and macula are still underdeveloped.[375] Studies have demonstrated visual limitations in numerous areas:

(i) Newborns cannot see in the sense of distinguishing figures in any significant degree.[376] Even infants a month old show no response to a difference of less than a 70% contrast between dark and light.[377] They cannot focus nor fixate, and when they attempt to do so, they take in only a very small fragment of a total image for only a very short time.[378] They cannot distinguish patterns from backgrounds,[379] nor can they recognize features or figures at all.[380] Half of all newborns cannot coordinate their vision at all on objects an arm's length away; no infants as much as a month old could fully coordinate their vision at five feet of distance.[381]

(ii) There is no stability to the images which infants perceive. Infants cannot make sense of images which do not hold perfectly still with respect to their eyes for at least two or three seconds.[382] When it is almost impossible for a trained adult to hold

a camera still for even a second, the difficulty of holding an object still in relation to the infant's eyeballs for several seconds becomes apparent. The problem is intensified when it is found that infants' eye movements are "rapid and disorganized, especially when crying,"[383] as most infants are doing when they are born. Only half of such infants can track even a slow-moving object for even a few seconds.[384] Thus infant visual perception is not only blurry but it is fragmentary.

(iii) Another problem with infant perception is that of alertness. The infant's eyes are generally blurred by tears. They are often closed, either from relaxation, napping, blinking, or from diseases, such as rubella or Down's syndrome. Even if their eyes are open and free from tears, they are often completely devoid of attention, like the adult who may be momentarily oblivious to his physical surroundings even when his eyes are open.[385] Due to these low alertness levels, even infants with the physical capabilities of perceiving blurry patches of light and dark for several seconds at a stretch may completely fail to do so, due to neurological immaturity.[386]

(iv) Newborns have no conceptual framework into which to fit their scattered visual images. In medical terms, the newborn "has little capacity for encoding," and can only learn perceptually through laborious investigation, primarily by feeling and tasting objects.[387] The adult's reliance on sight over taste and touch is a skill developed only after time and discipline. Adults may conceptually piece together a unified vision of a

room, despite blind spots and distractions, but the infant has no idea at all of what he is "looking at," nor of how it fits together, even in the rare moments when he has managed to fixate and focus on a nearby, stable, and contrasting object. Moreover, infants cannot take in wide scenes all at once, or even focus on figures as broad as a human figure.[388] Young babies use only what is known as corner-scan focussing. That is, when they focus at all, it is not on a face or body, but usually only on one extremely close corner of a highly contrasting object--often the mother's chin or hair. Full-face recognition is usually not perfected for several months, and is certainly impossible at birth.[389]

(v) Infants have little visual memory of either shape or pattern, as confirmed by experiments.[390] This helps to explain why we do not remember our early days--or even years--in visual imagery. Our brains were not yet coordinated and disciplined in such a way to commit visual data to memory, while they were still working on sucking, teething, and coordinating bodily movements. Even if there were some sort of hidden memory ability in newborn infants, (which experiments deny), we should expect that such memories would be almost inconceivably carried and not uniform as Sagan suggests.[391] Some babies would have their eyes open, others, eyes closed. Some would fixate momentarily on contrasting stationery objects at close range, like a nipple or forceps; others might never have a stable attentive moment, and all would be a chaotic blur. Some are born in even light, some under spotlights, and

some in virtual darkness. Some might begin to sense light-dark contrasts, while others would fail to recognize even this distinction. Some might have some feeling for color or motion, others would be relatively color-blind and unable to track moving objects at all. The possible combinations are so endless that even if infants all stored their birth experiences in memory, their "playbacks" should hardly be expected to resemble each other at all except in rare coincidences. Since Sagan's thesis assumes that infants can discern whole figures, with relative integrity and stability, in a certain part of their visual field, the evidence above is alone adequate to show that his theory is unfounded.

c) Other dissimilarities

Even IF infants were able to perceive their surroundings with any kind of completeness or uniformity at birth, the birth experience and death experiences which we are concerned with are not analogous enough to reduce NDE's to memories of birth. Let us review just a few of the more striking dissimilarities between NDE's and what an infant would perceive even if it were possible for him to register images stably and consistently (as he cannot).

(i) Sagan suggests that the birth canal would look like a long dark tunnel with a light at the end. This takes the word "canal" too literally. If he had ever witnessed a delivery, Sagan would know that the baby's head presses tight against the lips of the uterus, allowing no light into the womb. The birth is more anal-

ogous to breaking through a membrane from a dark room into a lighter room, or to surfacing from a muddy swimming-hole, than to peering down a long tunnel with a glowing light at the other end. Moreover, even if the opening did let light in, the baby is unable to tilt either his head or his eyes upwards to see it.[392] If the light registered at all on the untrained brains of the infants, it should be remembered as light streaming in from cracks at the top of their visual fields, and not to images in which the percipient is looking forwards down a long tunnel.

(ii) Sagan suggests that the figure of the midwife or doctor may be taken for the "figure of light;" heroic, loving, and surrounded by a halo of light. We have already seen that the baby could not possibly focus on such a figure as his doctor or midwife--but if he could, would the figure seem heroic and haloed? The figure would more likely seem a clinical torturer, holding him upside down by the feet, spanking him, cutting his connection with his womb and food supply, putting silver nitrate in his eyes, and strapping bands around his ankles! Nor is there any reason that the doctor or midwife should appear substantially brighter (glowing) or darker (haloed) than the surrounding room or background. On the contrary, many babies are born either by dim light, or into environments lacking in sharp black-and-white contrasts. Despite all these problems here identified, the greatest anomalies have yet to be exposed.

(iii) Sagan's analogies are predominantly concerned with three figures: the tunnel with light at the end, a sensation of flight, and a dimly-perceived "figure of light." None of these characterizations, however, corresponds to what we have considered as NDE's indicative of survival. In survival-related NDE's, we expect visions of either deceased friends and relatives, or religious figures, or heavenly imagery of flowers, fields, a path and/or a boundary. Even if Sagan's reconstruction of the birth experience were to explain visions of tunnels, lights, flying, and a "fuzzy-figured light," it manifestly fails to explain the sharp and detailed visions with which we are concerned. The features which Sagan has chosen to explain are not explicable on the simple model he chooses--but even if they were, they would not be features which confirm or refute survival in any case. Clear and distinct deathbed visions of dead relatives, of St. Jerome in friar's hood, or of Jesus with a bloodied chest, are neither explained nor refuted by Sagan's imagination.[393] Lest it seem that we have devoted undue attention to such an indefensible theory, it should be noted that this "amniotic universe" theory of Sagan's has wide popular appeal, both for its superficial understandability, its purported explanatory power, and for the charismatic character of its concoctor in the media.

We have seen that NDE's are neither similar to nor the products of drugged or diseased states of mind. No attempted explanations deal with the most important phenomena, much less explain their universality and paranormal knowledge-acquisition.

5) Super-ESP Accounts for True Information in NDE's

a) The argument

In addition to showing that the people who have NDE's were neither dead nor truly seeing into a "next world," the anti-survivalist must also find some way to account for the information gained during NDE's to which the patients had no normal access. The anti-survivalist must again fall back on the Super-ESP hypothesis, which has been found not only to lack explanatory power, but also to encounter difficulties in explaining "reincarnation" and OBE phenomena discussed above. The anti-survivalist arguments of this section are analogous to those of preceding sections, and can be summarized somewhat more briefly here. To account for visions of deceased people in heaven not known to be dead by anyone attending the deathbed, some sort of "super-clairvoyance" must be attributed to the dying persons having NDE's. Verifiable memories of former lives, or true predictions of future occurrences, while rare, still have to be explained by psychic retrocognition and precognition. The anti-survivalist skeptic must argue that NDE's are non-referential hallucinations, but that they occasionally seem to provide true information when dying people exercise their Super-ESP psychic faculties.

b) Inadequacy of this hypothesis

(i) The first problem with this hypothesis has been noted above: it is peculiar that almost all of the information gained through "Super-ESP" at deathbeds concerns deceased relatives. The ESP

theorist must assert that dying people, instead of glimpsing a realm of the dead, are suddenly possessed of clairvoyant powers to obtain true information about certain of their deceased friends or relatives, but about nothing else. This is the only theory which fits the data--but there is no other reason that such a theory should be plausible or desirable.

(ii) Even if it were conceded that for unknown reasons, the brain states of people on their deathbeds had some common factor which enabled the true envisioning of only deceased people, another problem may arise. If we admit that dying people often clairvoyantly gain true information about those who have died, may there not be clairvoyant truth in their visions of angels, saints, or golden gates? The materialist, of course, draws a sharp distinction between those cases where true information is revealed clairvoyantly, embroidered in religious imagery (e.g. "I see Jennie in heaven!") and those where no information is revealed clairvoyantly, (e.g. "I see Jesus in heaven!"). There is no materialistic medical or clinical basis for making such distinctions, but simply the conviction that visions which are later found to be true are clairvoyant, and those which are not confirmed are fantasy.

(iii) Although we have treated visions of relatives, saints, and heavens as three separate subject-headings, they often occur in the same vision, or in identical contexts in different people's visions. They share the characteristics of light, peace, and often soft music. The person or voice in the NDE seems to show

a single purpose: to guide away the dying man to another place. This purposefulness was an unexpected and stiking aspect of apparitions (studied above), corresponding sometimes to the purpose of a person having an OBE, or to the purpose which might be expected of the deceased person if he were still alive. The figures in NDE visions, whether they be friends, saints, or dead relatives, tend to show this same element of purposefulness. This leaves the skeptic with an even harder proposition to defend. He must contend that dying people hallucinate images of dead relatives, saints, or heavens of certain types, but that some people gain true information regarding deceased loved ones, while others gain no information about anything, although their mental conditions are otherwise analogous. He must also claim that this power of obtaining true information during hallucination is possible to most people only in the moments before death, and only when a relative seems to "guide away the dying person;" if non-relatives appear in visions to "guide them away," these are not veridical clairvoyance but delusion. Of course, such a theory is possible. It is the only one open to the skeptic. But it begins to stretch beyond credence. Its ad hoc contortions to fit the data deprive it of all simplicity and elegance. Lacking reasons and mechanisms for such phenomena, it has no explanatory merit. Its only value is in allowing a die-hard anti-survivalist to preserve his world-view. Such a dogma has no place in philosophy, when other theories explain the same data more straightforwardly and consistently.

c) Intersubjectivity

The death-blow to the Super-ESP theory comes again in the area of intersubjectivity. We have already noted that observers at deathbeds have occasionally witnessed the presence of deceased friends, relatives, or religious figures ("angels") in places and attitudes corresponding to those described by the dying persons. Such figures are seen in the same unlikely locations in each case, standing beside or hovering over the deathbed. They are seen with the same aura of light or benevolence, and with the same take-away purpose just noted. They cause sudden and otherwise inexplicable changes in the moods of those who witness them. In some cases, they are even seen to "reach out their hands" to the patient at the same time that the patient "puts his hands in theirs."

The Super-ESP theorist must claim that nothing objective or external is happening here, but simply an intersubjective illusion (presumably projected by the dying person). This involves attributing yet another unknown and previously unavailable power to the dying person: the ability to project his own hallucination into the minds of the people and animals who are watching him. But in our study of apparitions, we have already seen that apparitions are detectable by instruments or animals even when other people cannot see them. And it has been shown that the projector model of apparitions (that they are projected by the person they <u>resemble</u>) is a better model than the percipient-based model, which would hold that apparitions are generated by their perceivers.

These deathbed visions of relatives, friends, saints, or other worlds seem similar to apparitions in many respects: apparent purpose, provision of information paranormally, sudden appearance and disappearance, mental health of the percipients, etc. By analogy, then, it makes sense to theorize that these visions too may be produced at least in part by their projectors (the perceived) rather than by their percipients. If so, they have a kind of reality or objectivity of their own, although it is not material in the sense that we now understand matter. This is ultimately a far simpler and more unified theory than the array of ad hoc Super-ESP variations necessary to account for apparitions, OBE's, and NDE's independently.

The survivalist theory makes sense of all the phenomena covered in this section: claimed memories of past lives, apparitions and OBE's, and NDE's with paranormal visions. It says that each of these phenomena are indications that consciousness or mind can persist after the death of the physical body, and can manifest itself temporarily to communicate to the living or dying. This also accounts for the persistence of individual memory over time and space (apparently) between incarnations, in the cases of those who are reborn in human bodies. The nature of the ethereal body in which such consciousness is manifest is not yet adequately understood, but it sometimes affects laboratory thermocouples and TV monitors. With such good evidence for survival, why does the scientific community still reject survival so often? The next section of this book will help us to answer this question.

PART IV: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Introduction

In the previous section, we considered a wide range of evidence indicative of the possibility of survival in several forms. We showed that anti-survivalist interpretations are less adequate in interpreting the data than is the theory that at least some men survive bodily death. Still, some scientists and scholars refuse to treat such evidence, arguments, or conclusions seriously, because they seem to conflict with what is already accepted as "modern science." This is a serious charge, and not to be dismissed casually. For centuries now, great minds of Western philosophy and science have devoted themselves to understanding the world through experimentation and observation. The world-view at which they have arrived is a detailed account with significant predictive abilities. Their methodologies too have become widely standardized. If the methods or conclusions of modern science genuinely conflict with the arguments in this dissertation, we shall be well-advised to seek another interpretation of our information. Accordingly, this section will review the status of current scientific world-views, taking physics as the exemplar of the vanguard of scientific cosmology, to see whether it limits or conflicts with our conclusions. We shall examine the rationality and social foundations of scientific and emotional reactions against survival research. Finally, we shall examine the gradual process of transition of parapsychology towards the status of a science, to find what factors are important in its acceptance or rejection.

CHAPTER I: SCIENCE AND PARANORMAL PHENOMENA

A) The Ontology of Modern Physics

The world view of physics is undergoing constant metamorphosis. But it can be loosely characterized into several stages, as Nicholas Maxwell has proposed, each with a distinct theory as to the nature of all phenomena. (1) The Aristotelian model of physics was the earliest, governing physics for nearly 2000 years. It asserted that all things move teleologically, in order to fulfill their natural potentials and affinities. (2) The Cartesian model mechanistically described a world of solid corpuscles which interacted through physical contact. (3) The Newtonian model, elaborated by Helmholtz, suggested that interaction was rather between mass points in motion, interacting across distances by attractions and repulsions. (4) The Einsteinian model of relativity explained all phenomena in terms of fields, rather than particles, which are ultimately conceivable in terms of a unified single field. (5) The Quantum model of the post-World War II era asserts the existence of dozens of sub-atomic particles which cannot be objectively investigated, and the ultimate nondeterminism (and unknowability!) of the universe.[1] There is little need to debate Maxwell's description of scientific change; it serves adequately in pointing up the fundamental sorts of changes in philosophical assumptions which each succeding period underwent.

The more important point to notice is that, except for physicists themselves, the common man in other fields--even in science --often treats and thinks of his world in either a Cartesian or a Newtonian model. He imagines atoms in terms of basketballs and ping-pong balls bouncing off of each other in a rigidly rectilinear Cartesian space, following laws of motion which he would expect of visible-sized objects. In fact, however, this picture has been abandoned by serious physicists for nearly a century. To understand whether our conceptions of survival are compatible with those of science, then, we must first get a clearer conception of the world of science in the 1980's.

1) Views of Physical Entities

To begin with, the "entities" discussed in modern physics are so inconceivably tiny that they cannot be observed in any sensual sense whatsoever. The tools of the modern physicist are mile-long particle accelerators which exert invisible forces on invisible particles. "Observations" are made in terms of minute needle variations, magnified and computer-analysed before they are ever presented to the human eye. Even the presence of many subatomic particles is not observable in any sense at all; they are merely postulated to "explain" some of the otherwise even more mysterious fluctuations in the data now being analysed. Some have become widely accepted for their "explanatory value;" others are still debated, but we have abandoned the old idea that we can ultimately observe or even "convert into observable terms"

all the entities and processes in the world. Since the objects of inquiry themselves differ so far from the traditional objects of physics, it is not too surprising to find that the rules held to govern them are also drastically different from those which we might intuitively expect. As Burt says:

> The fundamental concepts of modern science are so remote from actual observation and from ordinary sense-perception that it becomes ludicrous to insist, or even to suggest, that they should be "limited" by the "basic principles" which were derived from the observable behaviour of what I have called man-sized operations and processes.[2]

Just as the objects and the principles supposed to govern them have become increasingly elusive, the fundamental assumptions about the nature of things have also begun to crumble in the eyes of many physicists. Heisenberg demonstrated that it is theoretically as well as practically impossible to investigate small particles without influencing them or distorting their motion by the process of investigation, and that it is impossible to determine both the location and mass of small particles with precision. The greater precision is demanded for determination of position, the less it will be possible to determine the particle's mass, and vice-versa. This uncertainty principle shook physics to its roots, and left Heisenberg himself believing that the "impossibility of invisible vital forces seems now less denied," due to the advances of theoretical physics.[3] Henry Margenau concludes:

> To put it bluntly, science no longer contains absolute truths. We have begun to doubt such fundamental propositions as the principle of the conservation of energy, the principle of causality, and many other commitments which were held to be unshakeable in the past....The old distinction between the natural and the supernatural has become spurious.[4]

2) Views of the "Nature of Things"

Let us recall some of the problems and discoveries in physics which have rendered the scientific world-view of the physicist so open-ended. Even as long ago as Newton, there was recognized the problem of action at a distance: of gravity and magnetism working without wave nor particle on other objects across empty space. More recently, a range of post-Einsteinian experiments have blown open the notion of the "nature of things" even further. Koestler's survey is readable and informative:

> Half a century ago, Einstein, De Broglie, and Schrödinger between them had dematerialized matter....Dirac populated the universe with holes; out of these holes pop, occasionally, particles of anti-matter, ghosts with negative mass and negative energy. Then there is Thompson's famous experiment in which an electron is apparently made to go through two slits at the same time. There is time reversal --Feynman's positrons traveling back into the past. There are Black Holes in astronomy into which matter is sucked. There, according to the equations of relativity, the laws of physics are suspended and matter disappears into the blue [sic] yonder....Quantum physics can perfectly well visualize a square that is a circle or two parallels that meet, because of the curvature of space.[5]

If there are so many anomalies in our conceptions of the universe, if laws like causality and principles of objective observation no longer work, if even the objects of research are unobservable, where does all this leave modern physics? It is humbler, at least, than its nineteenth century predecessors and its modern neighbors in behaviourist biology. Modern physicists are less certain of the nature of "truth," and closer to the limitations of human knowledge. The new physics is far less dogmatic, and more open to new theories than its predecessors had ever been. Physicists

now speak, not in terms of facts and figures alone, nor in terms of the "laws" of matter, but rather in terms of probabilities, and of the consistency of certain experimental results with certain other theories. There is in fact a close analogy between the statistical methods and probabilities used to document subatomic physics and those used in so-called ESP experiments.[6] Lawrence LeShan, in a now-famous paper, has shown that the statements of modern physicists about the nature of things are frequently indistinguishable from the statements of classical mystics.[7]

3) Compatibility of Physics and Parapsychology

Physicists and philosophers of science, therefore, have become increasingly open to parapsychological theories about aspects of reality. Notions of invisible bodies or fifth dimensions are no longer ridiculed by scientists most in touch with the study of the universe. As Kneller says:

> We probably do have faculties which science has yet to employ, such as the capacity for time travel with the "astral body."[8]

An even more widely-accepted proposition is that there may exist other spatio-temporal dimensions which we have hardly begun to detect--or which may be in principle impervious to detection--but which nevertheless exist and contain "universes" of their own. Physicist Ernst Mach debated the fourth dimension of space as a construct, holding that sudden appearance or disappearance of objects would constitute good evidence of such a spatial dimension.[9] In cases of apparitions discussed above, as well as in experiments

Using Esaki and Zener tunnel diodes, this is precisely what appears to happen.[10] Such phenomena have led some physicists to suggest that there exists a "hyperspace," which has explanatory value in both physics and parapsychology.[11] Parapsychologists have also taken up the suggestion, either as a literal or allegorical construct, to further demonstrate their compatibility with the world-views of leading physicists. The appropriateness of these explanatory models is debatable,[13] but this is ultimately a question for resolution by further empirical experimentation rather than by philosophical debate.

The important point here is that physical scientists of the highest calibre are open to the possibility of other forms of matter, or of other dimensions, and believe that such hypotheses would have explanatory value in their own fields as well as in parapsychology. While the subject matter of parapsychology and physics is significantly different, their fundamental insights thus coincide curiously in certain areas.

Furthermore, the "laws" and insights of physics have long been thought to provide the best model of the nature of the universe. They are the rules according to which scientists in other fields as well are supposedly trained to view the world. In brief, physics has become a paradigm of a "hard," mathematically modeled and empirically investigable field, which many other sciences would like to attain or emulate. But this is precisely the field in which many of the mechanistic materialist "laws" of Descartes and Newton have been most radically overthrown and rejected.

4) Unresolved Philosophical Questions

The above accounts all show cases in which parapsychologists play upon the openness and indeterminacy of modern physics to try to assimilate their own theories, such as survival, with what is known by present physics. At the same time, there is another band of school of parapsychologists whom we might label "metaphysical dualists" or "superphysicalists." They claim that the material studied in parapsychology, including OBE's and NDE's, are in principle not the sorts of things which may be studied by physicists and physical methods. Such phenomena are held to be "mind dependent," and mind is not on the same continuum as the things which physicists study, nor is it open to the same kinds of explanations. Thus, within parapsychology itself, there is some philosophical debate as to whether paranormal psychic phenomena will ultimately be explicable according to physical-like models, or whether they shall always be impenetrable to interpretation by behaviorist and empirical models.[14]

The issue in this case is not about the nature of the phenomena which will be reducible to a unified monism; it is the old philosophical debate between monism and dualism. Tart says:

> The monistic view of mind and matter, the psychoneural identity hypothesis, so widely accepted in science, is one result of the world-view that totally denies the existence of psi phenomena as we experimentally know them. The existence of psi phenomena is clearcut scientific demonstration, however, that our knowledge of the physical world is quite inadequate....[15]

Tart concludes that only a thoroughgoing dualist interactionism can resolve the problem. Murphy sees a functional dualism which does not attempt to contrast realms of matter and ideas of mind as a possible alternative, believing that physicists themselves are approaching a more Berkeleyan, idealistic view of reality.[16] Beloff agrees that a Berkeleyan approach would make many psychic phenomena far more intelligible on a theoretical level, but he rejects the suggestion that physicists are no longer materialistic or monistic in their ideology.[17] Philosophically, there are several options, each believed by serious philosophers of science. (a) There are out-and-out dualists, like Tart and Rhine, who believed in the irreconcilable dissimilarity of mind and matter. (b) There are would-be monistic idealists, like Murphy at times, who believe that ultimately everything will be explainable on the same continuum, and that that continuum must contain idealistic elements. (c) There are materialistic monists who believe that all will ultimately be explicable on physical terms, but that physics has yet to uncover many known features of reality.

Clearly, there is no readily available resolution to this classical problem. But the adherents of each of these views have recognized that (1) present science is unable to explain fully all of the phenomena it encounters, including experiences surrounding death, and (2) since the generalizations or laws of physics are about different domains than those of parapsychology, there need be no inherent conflict between the two, despite their differences.

In other words, whether the solution is ultimately dualistic or monistic, the generalization describing, say, OBE's and NDE's will have to be of a different sort than those generalizations now applied to objects falling in a vacuum. There will have to be some sort of revision in any theory which "prohibits" OBE's and NDE's from happenning, because it violates an obsolescent world view. The facts must be the basis for the theory, and not the theory the basis for the rejection of data. There is a mutual hope that at some point in the future, continued experiments will bring about a better understanding of the phenomena involved, with no loss in our understanding of present concerns. As Remy Chauvin has put it, we are not yet able to reconcile physics with psychic phenomena, but we cannot say that they contradict each other; their reconciliation may demand an entirely new re-conceptualization of the world.[18]

In summary, then, physics has advanced beyond Newton into indeterminacy, and physicists have come to expect anomalies in the universe. Some parapsychologists have hastened to draw analogies between the new physics and psychic phenomena; others emphasize the important and irreducible differences between the two fields. In their view, modern physics, however mind-opening, sheds no new light on OBE's, NDE's, (etc.), and the central problem remains a philosophical question of monism vs. dualism. But it is widely agreed that (a) charges of "nonobservability" or "acausality" do not impugn the scientific status of parapsychology, and (b) that there is no inherent conflict between physics and survival evidence.

B) Rational Objections to Paranormal Evidence

Despite the disclaimers of physicists that there need be no conflict between science and survival, biologists and behaviourist psychologists still level a number of philosophical and methodological objections to the sorts of survival research we have described.[19] In addition to the specific criticsms already addressed in the previous chapters, there are three logical objections to the use of so-called paranormal evidence in scientific contexts. For convenience, we may label them the arguments from (1) repeatability, (2) theory-requirement, and (3) inherent probabilities. We shall examine each of these in turn, and see how they are answered by scientists. Since these constitute important questions in the philosophy and methodology of science, it is appropriate that they be carefully addressed before any further conclusions are drawn.

1) Repeatability

a) The argument

The argument from repeatability holds, very simply, that

> Repeatability is essential to the idea of a natural science; the notions of repeatability and of a law of nature are inseparably linked, while the latter is essential to the idea of a natural science.[20]

We shall return to the question of "laws of nature" in the next argument (theory-requirement), but for the moment, the challenge is to the repeatability of parapsychological survival data. Flew defends the requirement of repeatability on linguistic grounds; others have done so on psychological or inductive grounds. The

claim is that if an experiment is repeated under the same conditions it should produce uniform results, regardless of who conducts it or where. Then it is further claimed that phenomena indicative of possible afterlife do not correspond to this model, and that such investigations produce conflicting results. Critics conclude that such research need not be taken seriously as scientific evidence for anything at all, much less for personal survival. Are these charges justified?

b) Repeatability not theoretically required

In the first place, it is not the case that identical repeatability is required in order for an experiment to be accepted as scientific or legitimate. LeShan declaims that such requirements of repeatability are "drawn from billiard-ball physics,"[21] which was abandoned a century ago in the physical sciences which originated the model. There are many reasons why the most scientific of experiments may be non-repeatable. Some, such as those of nuclear physics, deal only in probabilities, where values are never likely to be precisely identical to those in previous experiments. Other experiments, like those in pharmacology with which LeShan has worked, already recognize the intrinsic importance of mood, value, and belief as variables.[22] Medicine is considered to be a science, for example, but there are many experiments in medicine which are non-repeatable, and in which the influence of the beliefs and moods of the patients and practitioners are known to strongly affect the outcome of a given test.

c) Repeatability lacking in many sciences

Even today, there are a number of so-called "historical" sciences in which repeatability is not held to be a necessary or central issue. In "historical" sciences, the events under study happen only once, by their very nature. Scriven gives the example:

> It is important to stress that concern with repeatability is not the crucial matter. The Lisbon earthquake is not repeatable but its occurrence is extremely well established. IF we can get repeatability, so much the better; and eventually, it is highly desirable. But it is not a requirement of all scientific claims that they be subject to test by repetition.[23] [italics in original]

Astronomy is concerned, among other things, with cosmic events which happen only once, as is archaeology, geology, and psychiatry.[24] We may improve our tools to be better prepared to investigate cosmic, volcanic, or psychiatric disturbances when they arise, but it is often the case that we have only one chance to observe them when they do happen. Surely the nonrepeatability of our observations does not render either the event itself less real nor the scientific approach less valuable. Apparitions, possession cases, memories of past lives, OBE's and NDE's are equally unrepeatable in this sense. Just as all human history is unique, these experiences occur only once, and unpredictably if at all. Yet the claim that they are not repeatable no more indicts their study or value than it would the study of earthquakes. There is a continuing debate in the hard sciences about the merits of concrete cases in detail vs. broad samples with statistical techniques,[25] but neither holds a monopoly on the sciences.

d) Repeatability possible in some survival research

Finally, it is not true that there have been no confirmations of studies indicating past or future lives. These can occur in two ways: (i) when groups of scientists independently test the claims of a given subject, as in the Bridey Murphy or Shanti Devi cases; (ii) when scientists performing similar studies on different subjects arrive at similar results. In each of the three fields of our concern (former lives, OBE/apparitions, and NDE's) repeatability of these sorts has been shown. Independent researchers have confirmed the results of hypnotic regressions and claimed memories of former lives, the experiments on the nature of apparitions, and the observations of deathbeds. In fact, it is precisely this similarity of many deathbed visions which seems to remarkable despite the wide range of individual differences of the percipients. In short, the arguments from repeatability simply do not stand.

2) Theory-requirement

a) The argument

The argument from theory-requirement is the demand that there must be some explanatory network into which the data are integrated and by which they are explained in order for any facts to be "scientific," meaningful and acceptable. Conversely, this requirement justifies the rejection of data which fall outside the bounds of known theories.[26] This argument contends that the scientific method is a continuous process of hypothesis-confirmation (or as Popper would have it, falsification); therefore facts

must be set within an hypothesis before they acquire any real meaning. It also holds that the facts of psychic phenomena or NDE's lack such explanatory frameworks, and therefore are meaningless. Is this requirement justified? Does it apply here?

b) Facts must precede theories

It is not the case that the collection of facts, even of isolated and curious examples, is of no value before a unified hypothesis has been worked out to account for their existence. It has commonly been the case in the natural sciences, including biology, geology, and again, astronomy, that an important part of the enterprise has consisted of collecting specimens, data, photos, or radio wave patterns, which may at first be completely tangential or anomalous to any previous hypothesis. Only after the collection of such data could the scientists step back and hypothesize that, for example, coelocanths, or meteorites, or pulsars really exist. After that, they might try to confirm their data collection by other methods, and begin to construct hypotheses which would reconcile these new bits of knowledge with previous hypotheses. But it is often true that "collection of isolated facts <u>is</u> necessary before full-fledged theory building," as Murphy has stressed.[27] What makes the enterprise scientific is not that the theory <u>precedes</u> the data collection, but that the data are collected with all possible precision, objectivity, and care is taken to observe as many variables as possible which might affect the outcome or analysis of the data.[28]

c) On explanations and theories

It is not the case that "explanations" in science necessarily constitute any more than a well-accepted description of a given process. When we label something a quasar or a quark, or call a process evolutionary or gravitational, we have not necessarily increased our understanding of it in any way; we have merely labeled it, and in time, we may come to feel more comfortable with it since it is labeled. This is an important insight in the philosophy of science:

> Physics itself has come to accept the existence of inexplicable events...There comes a point at which sufficiently elaborate description, documented and worked with for years, gives us the feeling that we have an understanding of the phenomenon thus described. We have not reduced it to another phenomenon, but this only offends our sense of aesthetics, not our scientific sense.[29]

To take a more specific example, how shall we explain why material A contracts when it is put through process X? We may respond that A is one of a class of B's which always contract in process X. Or we may suggest that process X is a sepcial case of process Y, which always causes A's to contract. This will indeed serve as an explanation for some situations, but does it really explain why A contracts during X? Clearly not. Again, another type of "explanation" would say that the molecules of A fit together in one way when they have not undergone X, but in condition X, they come to fit together in another way, so that their total volume is smaller. This may be satisfying in some other contexts, but still, it is hardly a complete explanation. For we may yet again ask--how and why does X produce the re-fitting of molecules in A? Ultimately, the answer will come down to "that's just the way the world is."

Ultimately, the answer will come down to "that's just the way the world is." Even Newton's famous law of gravity—that "gravity is what made the apple fall"—is no more than a disguised way of saying that the world works in such a way that smaller objects always tend to fall towards bigger objects, and the apple/earth case is simply one instance of that generalization. If we ask why or how gravity works, no further answer is available.

It is certainly premature to say that we have an adequate explanation of possession, or crisis apparitions, or visions of relatives at deathbeds. It is necessary, as Scriven says, to "document and work with for years," the details of these phenomena, to attempt to better define the variables involved and to understand them in terms of other known mechanisms or analogies if possible. However, when we know much more about them, we may well come to ask, "Why did that happen?" and accept an answer like "Oh, that was a crisis apparition," or "That was another fully-conscious intersubjective religious NDE," as an explanation. It need not be assumed that any more elaborate "explanations" will be possible.[30]

d) Explanatory theories available

It is not the case that no explanatory theories have been offered for the data discussed above. It may be that these hypotheses do not coincide with other traditional theories about the way the world works, but then there is no need that all new theo-

ries always mesh harmoniously with all older theories. On the contrary, we have already observed how Stevenson has staked his professional reputation on defending the novel hypothesis that reincarnation best explains the particular phenomena he has researched. Similarly, the ideas that OBE's may produce apparitions --or equal them, from another perspective--or that the wide agreement on the content of NDE's is in fact due to an intersubjective view of a real post-mortem experience--these are precisely the kinds of explanatory hypotheses which the "theory-requirement" advocates demand. It is inappropriate, however, for them to demand additionally that these new data and hypotheses coincide with what is already thought to be known about the world. Nor need there be any conflict here. In Scriven's words:

> There is no clash between psi phenomena and other scientific discoveries--only between laws which are extrapolated too far from those prior discoveries. Evidence for present scientific laws cannot be appealed to refute ESP [OBE's, NDE's, etc.]. All it does is say, "Do not believe in ESP unless you have direct evidence for it," and of course, we do have direct evidence for it.[31]

So theory-requirement cannot be a valid objection to the use of data from carefully investigated paranormal sources.

3) Inherent probabilities

a) The argument

The argument from inherent probabilities looks innoccuous enough. It takes as its model the case where the physics student reports a different value for a wavelength of light or a coefficient of friction than his professor has expected. In such cases,

it asserts, it will always be prefereable to attribute the discrepancy to some error of method or observation on the part of the student, than to admit that there could be variation in nature. In more general terms, it says that "antecedent probability" is always on the side of the previously established rule, against the occasional anomalous facts which seem to throw it into question. In any instance where a few isolated and freaky facts appear to contradict a well-established "law," it is always more probable that the law will be correct than the facts. In terms of research on survival, this says that it is always preferable to reject survivalist interpretations of data for psychological or physiological ones. When such psychological or physiological explanations seem lacking, and survivalist interpretations are the only ones possible, the "inherent probabilities" are that the experimenter is either deluded or committing a fraud.

b) Analogy not appropriate

The first glaring flaw in this argument is that the analogy of the student in the physics class is not at all appropriate to the case of independent investigators finding new properties of a yet unstudied phenomenon like OBE's or NDE's. In the case of the physics class, we have at least three conditions which are not paralleled in the survival researchers' case. (i) The laws and variables governing the phenomenon are already well-established. (ii) Crucial variables are already well defined, and effects of other conditions minimized. (iii) The experiment in question is

known to fall within the purview of the law or hypothesis being demonstrated. In such cases, it would indeed be more reasonable to reject the student's data than to question the laws under which he is working. In survival research, it is clear that (i) NOT all the laws concerning survival have been established; (ii) the determination of which variables are important and which are incidental is NOT yet complete; and (iii) the experiments in question are NOT known to fall under any of the traditional laws of science.

A better analogy would be the case in which the "laws" stated that "Live birth is a defining characteristic of mammals." If students studying biology come up with evidence that platypi lay eggs and sharks bear live young, we have several options. We might choose to restrict the domain of our generalization (say, to mammals defined by some further critera), so that its truth is not affected. Or we might revise the definition of mammals to include platypi as exceptions, or even create new classifications for platypi and sharks. But we certainly need not reject the data because they were "inherently improbable," after independent researchers had confirmed the behaviours of platypi and sharks. Paranormal phenomena also seem to constitute exceptions to what many people assume to be universal generalizations, but the generalization can in no way deny that the phenomena occur. What is needed is either careful restriction of the domain of the former generalizations, or revision of them to include new facts.

c) Mechanistic assumptions

The "inherent improbability" of survival is based on a materialistic, monistic, billiard-ball-interaction view of the universe. In his criticisms of survival, George Price emphasized this point:

> The essence of science is mechanism....Suppose that some extraordinary new phenomena is [sic] reported: should we be narrow-minded or receptive? The test is to attempt to imagine a detailed mechanistic explanation.[32]

If a mechanistic theory is unavailable, Price contends, we should choose to be narrow-minded! But we should recall that physicists who were responsible for providing the world with mechanism, have largely abandoned it as an attempt to explain many sorts of phenomena. The obsolescence of mechanism and its inadequacy as a criterion of "inherent probability" is almost too glaring to repeat. Perhaps the best response to this sort of assertion was that of J.B. Rhine:

> As a universal law, [mechanism] has never had any truly experimental confirmation whatsoever. How in the nature of things could it have? Actually, this whole mechanistic business means only that in those areas of nature in which most of the scientists of the world have been working--the various physical sciences--physical theory <u>has</u> <u>been</u> adequate. Naturally. Consequently, mechanism grew just like Topsy and became a habit of mind, a way of looking at the universe....But to establish that this physicalistic interpretation applies to the whole of nature, and that there are no other kinds of principles in the universe, would call for a complete understanding of nature. Of course, we have nothing like that, as everyone well knows.[33]

In short, if the claim of "inherent improbability" is based on the assumption that everything is explicable in terms of mechanism, it is itself a metaphysical (and not empirically knowable) claim about the nature of things, and lacks scientific justification.

d) Hume's argument on miracles

"Inherent improbability" is sometimes phrased in another logico-linguistic guise. In Hume's words, "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature." Since the laws of nature are more consistent and absolute than any human being, in the case where there appears to be a miracle, it is always more probable that there is delusion or deception on the part of men, than that the laws of nature had been temporarily abrogated.[34]

(i) There are two ways to resolve this appearent rejection of new or "miraculous" evidence. If we accept Hume's dictum that "miracles never happen," because laws of nature are never violated, then we shall also have to say that faith-healing, OBE's, NDE's, etc., are not miracles, but also accord with the laws of nature, by definition. In this case, we must take exception to Hume's implied premise that the laws of nature are already known or even in principle knowable. It may in fact be the case that there are "laws" governing everything. We do not know that they will in any way resemble the "laws" which we presently believe. Nor will such laws be used to "rule out" OBE's or NDE's; they will necessarily include them. In this case, the problem is only a pseudo-problem, based on the false 18th century assumption that we already know all the laws of nature.

(ii) The other possibility is to assert that Hume was wrong about the "fact" that laws of nature can never be violated. According to the great majority of contemporary philosophers of science, "laws" are no more than descriptive generalizations of what is

already known. They are not only "violable" but are in fact violated every time an interesting new discovery is made, whether it be of platypi or quarks. Such discoveries indeed appear miraculous to people who believe them impossible. But their violation of known generalizations by no means demotes them to fraud or non-existence. The inappropriateness of this Humean view of miracles and laws of nature is well discussed in Feyerabend's "Inherent Unreasonability of the Consistency Condition," and "The Self-Deception Involved in All Uniformity."[35] Ducasse states succinctly:

> Assertions of impossibility are based on the metaphysical creeds of the scientists of the day....Incapacity to admit nonphysical action is an occupational disease [of material scientists].[36]

And Rhine hits close to the heart of the matter when he asserts:

> When anyone gives to such belief the almost dogmatic finality that Price apparently does, it suggests that the doctrine has taken the place of a security-giving theology, and is playing much more than a scientific role in his life.[37]

We shall examine the theological implications and problems of survival research shortly. For the moment, however, we should reiterate that arguments from "inherent probability" are all based on assumptions that we know more about the world than we do.

4) Survival Research an Empirical Science

The above arguments have refuted the claims that there are methodological or theoretical reasons why survival research is inherently unscientific. On a more positive note, let us look briefly at the important ways in which survival research is scientific. LeShan and Margenau emphasize the following principles:

(1) A domain of experience is selected for study.

(2) Observable variables are chosen [may be inferred or observed].

(3) Some terms are procedurally defined in terms of others.

(4) We ask not, "What is X?" but "How does X function or relate to Y?"

(5) We expect regularity of interaction [with sufficient control of variables].

(6) We find no internal contradiction, nor with other systems in the same domain.[38]

These features can demonstrably be applied to many fields of psychical and survival research. The point most open to question might seem to be the requirement of observable variables (2). But it is importantly not required that the variables be public, macroscopic, nor previously understood. Thus, death-bed visions could serve as the objects of such a science, just as sub-atomic particles or dream analysis can, without questioning their ontological status.

C) Non-Rational Objections to Paranormal Evidence

Despite the evidence of paranormal phenomena indicative of survival, and despite the empirical and scientific methods of collecting such data, many scientists still insist that such data must be illusory or nonexistent. The dogmatism of empirical scientists on this point seems to contradict our images of scientists as impartial objective observers of experience.[39] Truzzi[40] and McConnell[41] have made long catalogues of the objections often

leveled by scientists against evidence of paranormal phenomena. Most of these objections have already been answered, either immediately following the analysis of data in the previous chapters, or in our preceding discussion of "rational objections" to paranormal sciences. We already noted that J.B. Rhine detected a tinge of religious fanaticism in George Price's rejection of paranormal occurrences. Even scientists of the status of Helmholtz, considering the sorts of phenomena we have discussed, asserted:

> Neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society nor the evidence of my own senses...would lead me to believe in the transmission of thought from one person to another independently of the recognized channels of sense.[42]

Surely such a statement is as unscientific as it is philosophically untenable. What could lead such a competent scholar to such a blind and headstrong assertion? This chapter will examine the motivations behind scientists' non-rational objections to survival evidence. We may classify the types of resistance broadly as (1) psychological, (2) intellectual, (3) religious, (4) sociological. In each instance, we shall examine the origins of these beliefs, and their validity, if any. In so doing, we shall see whether survival evidence is vulnerable to such attacks, and at the same time, contribute a case study to the current literature in the history and philosophy of science.

1) <u>Psychological Resistance to Cognitive Dissonance</u>

In the early 1950's, Bruner and Postman conducted a number of famous experiments in which subjects were asked to identify playing cards which they saw flashed for a small fraction of a

second in a tachistoscope. Among the cards were "impossible" anomalies, such as red sixes of spades and black queens of hearts. Some subjects became very disturbed emotionally by the difference between these cards and their expectations. (This difference is known as cognitive dissonance.) The vast majority of subjects, however, identified all the cards as normal; for example, they would call a red spade either a heart or a spade, and not even recognize that these cards combined features of two incompatible suits. These remarkable experiments led their authors to conclude that humans instinctively dislike anomaly to the extent that they will unconsciously misperceive reality--forcing their perceptions to conform with their ordered expectations--rather than to accept incongruities within the system.[43] Kuhn cites these same tests in arguing that "data will be beaten into line" to conform with previous theories about the nature of things.[44] In Trotter's words, "the mind likes a new idea as little as the body likes a strange protein,"[45]--in other words, it subconsciously does everything possible to reject it.

This same concept of cognitive dissonance, which the mind intuitively shuns and seeks to eliminate from perceptions, can be found in the mind's treatment of memory and interpretation of experience. As one example, we may read William James' own account of a spiritualist session, conducted in bright light and good test conditions. After the description, he quite self-consciously adds:

> Now, after four days' interval, my mind seems strongly inclined not to "count" the observation, as if it were too exceptional to have been probable....I should be as one watching an incipient overflow of the Mississippi of the supernatural into the fields of orthodox culture. I find, however, that I look on nature with unaltered eyes today, and that my orthodox habits tend to exclude the would-be levee-breaker.[46]

James was at least intellectually honest enough to recognize the psychological repression which had taken place within himself--although not strong enough to resuscitate the memory and force it to take a place in his view of the universe! A more recent instance is given in the account of Ernst Rodin, a Detroit physician who had an NDE with an euphoric vision of heaven in 1953. At the time, he was convinced that he was going to heaven and begged to be allowed to die. A quarter of a century later, however, he has reinterpreted his experience in terms of his medical beliefs, and no longer believes that his experience has any inherent reality nor meaning.[47] Here again, we find a scientist suppressing cognitive dissonance--the disagreement between his experience and his conceptualizations--by denying his experience rather than changing his mind. This is indeed a vivid documentation of the strength of conceptual systems!

Preconceptions actually dictate the way that objects are perceived more strongly than do contradictory sense-impressions. Eminent psychologists and doctors can totally discount the importance of their own personal experiences, reinterpreting them in accord with their more comfortable and traditional world-veiws. How much more then, would people who had NOT personally experi-

enced such phenomena as OBE's or NDE's be inclined to discount such theoretically dissonant reports as delusion, nonsense, or fraud--anything to preserve their systems of thought. Scientists who are educated to be concerned with consistency, find the inconsistencies posed by some of the survival data intolerable, and therefore eliminate them from their world-views by vigorously denying their existence and even possibility.[48] We might call this the psychological reaction to dissonance. It does not really change the truth of the situation, but it provides a psychological mechanism whereby the organism can avoid being too upset.

2) Intellectual Resistance to Re-education and Paradigm Shift

In the course of their educations, philosophers are expected to learn a wide range of theories--some of them currently popular, some of them less so--and to perceive the important truths or fatal mistakes in each system. Scientists, by contrast, seldom study the history of their discipline--or if they study it at all, they only study those particular branches of science which directly contributed to and became accepted within their own particular traditions.[49] The contributions of alchemy and astrology to science, for example, are only mentioned in their rejections, but are not taken seriously as alternative world-views. Thus scientific education tends to be monolithic, mono-valent, and to emphasize the superiority and correctness of its own peculiar metaphysics. In the words of philosopher-of-science Thomas Kuhn:

> Scientific education inculcates what the scientific community had previously with difficulty gained--a deep commitment to a particular way of viewing the world and of practising science in it....Preconception and resistance seem to be the rule rather than the exception in mature scientific development....They are community characteristics with deep roots in the procedures through which scientists are trained for work in their profession.[50]

The scientist learns not just facts and experiments, but a whole world-view and approach to his world, which we may call a paradigm. Once this paradigm is learned, through textbooks and repetition of that one paradigm to the exclusion of all others, it becomes invested with strong emotional value, as the best, if not the only way of looking at the world.[51] Thus the chosen paradigm becomes an extremely emotional, rather than a rational, affair; it has never been viewed with philosophical objectivity, and the idea that it might be inferior to some other paradigm is rejected by the entire scientific community.[52] For changing paradigms does not simply involve "changing one's mind," rather it entails a conversion experience--a new way of looking at the world.[53] It is little wonder that scientists would rather ignore conflicting evidence than modify their long-reinforced pet world-views.

The responses of scientists themselves to such a breakdown of their world-view further documents this theory. One mathematician said of psychic or paranormal evidence, "If that were true, ...it would mean that I would have to scrap everything and start again from the beginning."[54] Of course, there is no inherent conflict between mathematics and paranormal evidence, but this shows how much some scientists connect their personal world-views with

their disciplines. As LeShan has observed:

> Ours is a culture that has made a tremendous investment in the mechanistic concept of the cosmos, in Descartes' "clockwork universe"--we are terribly threatened in our very being [if it is challenged].[55]

Whately Carington and others have connected the rejection of paranormal phenomena with the beliefs that they would break down our traditional notions of causality, thought to be the framework within which the sciences have grown up.[56]

We need to emphasize that these attitudes are not rational. There is nothing in paranormal research which demands either the sacrifice of mathematics, causality, or even of Descartes (except where he was pretty clearly mistaken, as about animals, billiard balls, or the pineal gland!). The fear expressed here is born of ignorance and reluctance to revise one's ideas. Moreover, many physicists have already abandoned or substantially revised both their commitments to Cartesian geometry and to traditional notions of causality in exploring the atom and the cosmos. Thus people like Heisenberg are no more threatened by survival research than by the inherent uncertainties of scientific empiricism. Survival could also prove to be compatible with special cases of dimension theory or energy fields. The majority of the resistance to survival studies, however, comes from the biological, psychological, and social sciences, themselves on weaker theoretical grounds than physics.[57] The violence with which they reject survival "may prove to be an index of its importance."[58] It is natural that neurophysiologists studying the human brain, for example, would

not want to believe that they were ignoring a huge range of yet ill-defined and perhaps uncontrollable variables. The mind-brain identity theory is a comfortable way of reassuring each other that nothing is being ignored, that all will ultimately be known by the tools at our disposal. Survival evidence gives the death-knell to that theory. But rather than admitting that other variables might affect their discipline than the ones they have already defined, most neurophysiologists would prefer to reject the evidence itself as anything but valid or relevant.

3) Religious Resistance to Heretical or Occult Forces

Paranormal phenomena ranging from spirit possession and "astral travel" to resuscitation of the dead have been known for thousands of years in Europe as well as Asia. They have been consistently banned and suppressed by the church, not because their reality was doubted, but because they were said to be dangerous--at least opening the gates to heterodoxies, and at worst the work of the devil himself. Scientists too have very human religious commitments and presuppositions. In some cases these involve rejecting survival as impossible or unimportant; in others, of limiting it to articles of faith, consciously segregated from the sorts of issues held to be open to scientific inquiry. In either case, the notion that empirical studies might yield evidence that man is more than material--and that life might survive the grave--is a mind-shaking proposition to many dogmatic people, who quickly anathematize it.[59]

McDougall suggested that men of science fear the admission of paranormal phenomena might open floodgates of public credulity:

> ...for they know that it is only through the faithful work of men of science through recent centuries that these distressing beliefs have been in large measure banished from a small part of the world.[60]

In his masterful survey of scientific attitudes towards the paranormal, Prince concludes that there is an "enchanted boundary," which deprives scientists of their objectivity and reason in dealing with such phenomena.[61] He documents in painful detail how great scientists such as Faraday, Tyndall, [Thomas] Huxley, and dozens of others simply refused to believe such evidence. Some stooped to name-calling and ad hominem attacks; others to deliberate distortion of the material they chose to ignore.[62] In another study, a questionnaire was sent to a large number of scientists asking them how they would interpret a hypothetical example of a psychic phenomenon IF it had occurred in such-and-such a manner. The majority of respondents were unable to even entertain the hypothesis in their imaginations, unable to answer the questions, and angry at the "waste of time."[63]

In survival research particularly, scientists now find themselves in good company with some orthodox churchmen who have other reasons for not wanting people to believe that afterlife could be proved. Churchmen fear that people may think that church membership and sacraments are not necessary to attaining heaven; others argue that proof of heaven might justify a rash of suicides or atrocities like Jim Jones' "Guiana massacre."[65] The men making

these statements are committed to objectivity and inquiry in other departments of their lives, but this does not seem to affect their religious fears. Nor is this resistance new:

> Consider the violent antagonism encountered by the theories of Copernicus and Galileo in astronomy, Buffon and Hutton in geology, Darwin and Huxley [!] in biology--most of them theories which are now almost unanimously accepted. In these cases, the resistance, as has so often been remarked, arose largely out of the time-honored metaphysical preconceptions or prejudices associated with religious beliefs.[66]

We cannot yet suggest that the field of survival research will at some point become an independent science rivaling biology or geology, for we cannot foresee the future. But the symptoms of metaphysical resistance are visible in full strength. Religious objections are neither logical nor scientific reasons for rejecting evidence of survival. However, we must recognize that they play an important role in shaping what is believed acceptable by the scientific community, and thereafter by the public.

4) Social Resistance and Fear of Ridicule

We have just seen that the real motives for rejecting the evidence of survival may be psychological and metaphysical rather than scientific. Thus the neglect of survival research may be more attributable to sociological reasons than to any inherent flaws in its methods.[67] As Heywood analyses the situation:

> Practically all scientifically educated persons found that fear of ridicule, plus their own very reasonable recoil from the seemingly irrational, was more powerful than alleged facts which did not fit into the scheme of things; so, humanly enough, like the man who refused to look through Galileo's telescope for fear that what he saw would not suit his views, they safeguard themselves by ignoring the evidence.[68]

Darwin postponed the publication of his Origin of Species for twenty years because he feared to challenge the Biblical account, and even more because he "hesitated to defy public opinion."[69] William James privately expressed the fear that his name might be discredited for his interests in psychical research.[70] Nor is such fear totally groundless. Sir John Eccles, Nobel laureate whose "trialistic" world-view has won much popular acclaim, has been blasted for his unorthodox attempts to reinstate mind-brain interactionism.[71] Wilhelm Reich was incarcerated and his books destroyed when his theories became too radical.[72] In survival research, Kubler-Ross and Moody have come under repeated attack for being popularizers or even "loonies," and we have already noted the courage required of Stevenson to publish articles on reincarnation in the face of attacks in the Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease.[73] In short, fear of ridicule may not be a logically legitimate reason for avoiding survival research (or for refusing to sail west across the Atlantic!) but it may be very effective in suppressing scientific interest in survival until the tide of public opinion slowly turns to accept the legitimacy of such investigations.

In summary, there are a number of non-rational origins of scientists' objections to research on survival and paranormal phenomena. Taken together, they amass a strong, sometimes almost impenetrable barrier between the world of real experience and the world recognized by science. Such attitudes of scientists in

fields outside of their own in no way refutes our evidence or conclusions. At most, it demonstrates the dogmatic conservatism and mechanism of many scientists. At the same time, we should do well to understand the methods and channels through which scientists manage to denigrate the importance and deny the legitimacy of survival research.

CHAPTER II: A MODEL OF RESISTANCE AND CHANGE IN THE SCIENCES

Science has traditionally been viewed as a process of growth and accretion, of accumulating ever more facts to fit into an ever more complete picture of the universe. Contemporary philosophers of science have thrown serious doubt on this pattern. Advocates of "fallibilist pluralism," such as Feyerabend, see scientific change as a matter of discarding whole world-views, sometimes including both the premises and questions which they had taken to be important. This process, however, as we have just observed, is fraught with psychological and social trauma. Moreover, the new paradigms which gradually replace the old are no more inherently superior than their predecessors. They may be slightly more economical, more efficient, more aesthetic--but ultimately they are seen as equally temporary and flawed. This view gives cultural and historical factors prominence over logic and reason in the growth of science, and it threatens the pedestal of "objectivity" upon which scientists are wont to stand.

We must be careful, however, to distinguish between replacement of paradigms and mere replacement of facts. Viewing the world as a sphere instead of as a plane was largely a correction of a matter of fact. The theory of gravity, or of heliocentricity, replaced other old theories with their own teleological explanations, and gave a new way of looking at everything, a new set of questions and answers, in short, a paradigm shift.

Our study of survival research contributes some important documentation and insights to this historic debate about the nature of scientific change. We can note several phases in its development; (A) rejection, (B) suppression, (C) independent growth, and (D) assimilation and acceptance. The following chapter will document just how far (or how little) survival research has come towards being recognized as a science or as a legitimate empirical study.

A) Rejection of the Evidence

1) Refusal to Consider

Rejection of the evidence of survival may take several forms. It may be the blunt and obstinate sort of rejection published in Science magazine that "not a thousand experiments with ten million trials and by a hundred separate investigators," could lead the individual to accept survival.[74] This particular scientist clearly prefers to put blind faith in his materialistic metaphysics over the objective empiricism which his scientific training would hopefully have imparted to him! Others, more sophisticated, may prefer to couch their objections in the logical-sounding language of analytic philosophy, such as Flew's discussion of the "insurmountable initial obstacles" in believing in survival.[75] This too is no more than a thinly-veiled way of saying that "I just can't bring myself to believe that a man's mind survives his body."

Others may choose the tack of screaming fraud. This, of course, was the accusation against the early spiritualists and table-rappers, with whom modern survivalists would part company. George Price uses the Humean argument that "it is more probable that a few people out of the world's billions would lie than that nature would change," to accuse some of the greater names in modern psychology of conspiracy and fraud.[76] Price withdrew his criticisms after honestly studying the subject himself, but they appear again in Hansel (1966) and Gibson (1979).[77] Whether the language is nasty or nice, the message is clear. But these accusations of fraud are not based on a knowledge or even on legitimate doubt that such conspiracy really happens. They are simply using

> ...the fraud hypothesis as a soothing addendum to some version of the a priori [impossibility] argument. Though ESP is seen as a priori impossible, the phenomena explained by the parapsychologists must still be explained away. The fraud hypothesis fills this lacuna.[78]

We remember how Reyna repudiated the reincarnation hypothesis by casting aspersions on the researchers of claimed memories of former lives. The independent collection and confirmation of hundreds of cases does not change her view. It emerges later in her work that she has already decided that reincarnation cannot happen, so any apparent evidence for it must be fraud or folly on the part of the investigators.[79] Thus the fraud hypothesis is here too just a cover for irrational justification of one's own presuppositions in the face of evidence which throws them open to doubt.

2) Discrediting by Association

Another tactic of impugning survival research is to associate with the more incredible sides of the "occult fringe," thus by implication casting doubt on the integrity and sanity of its researchers. This may be a more or less conscious ploy. McConnell argues that

> much of the reluctance of orthodox scientists to endorse extended support for ESP research arises from their failure to make a clear distinction between popular and scientific belief.[80]

Both believers and non-believers in survival tended to agree with a statement in a survey to the effect that increasing lay interest in parapsychology will damage its scientific reputation.[81] But scientists and critics of survival research are equally aware of this phenomenon, and may deliberately use it to their advantage where possible.[82] By associating survival research with the occult fringes, which lack respectability in the eyes of most Americans, Christians, and scientists, critics can insinuate that the evidence found by OBE or NDE research does not deserve further serious study.[83]

3) Criticism by Authority

Another manner of rejecting the evidence for survival has been alluded to in our discussion of claimed memories of past lives. Adults often criticise their children's statements which do not neatly coincide with the adults' world-view. This tends to suppress vocalization of such memories, and eventually stifle them

altogether, as being of no value in this world. Garrett describes a typical case in which she clairvoyantly "saw" the death of a relative, while a child, and described it to her guardian. The response was, "Don't ever speak of things that you see like that, for they might again come true!"--as if the child were somehow causally responsible for the tragedy because she had foreseen it.[84] The irrationality of this response is obvious, but hardly helpful to the child being criticised. The effect is simply to suppress discussion of death-related paranormal experiences altogether, as the child has neither the capacity nor the authority to reason with its elders.

Similar criticism takes place on a broader scale from intellectual authority-figures. A large public audience may hesitate to speak of parapsychology when an authority-figure like the ex-director of the U.S. Bureau of Standards may use the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists to pontificate in this way:

> There used to be spiritualism, there continues to be ESP.... Where corruption of children's minds is at stake, I do not believe in the freedom of the press or freedom of speech. In my view, publishers who publish or teachers who teach any of the pseudo-sciences as established truth should, on being found guilty, be publicly horsewhipped, and forever banned from further activity in these usually honorable professions.[85]

The Bureau of Standards did not like deviations from visible norms! "It availeth little" to protest that this writer knew almost nothing about the field he was condemning, much less of democratic political and penal theory. But the net effect of such statements in respectable publications is to suppress free expression of ex-

periences, ideas, and dialogue which might lead, if unrestricted, to a better understanding of what really does and does not happen. Such blatant rejection of survival evidence by authority figures constitutes an irrational but head-on repression of non-traditional information. Other methods of suppression may be more indirect.

B) Suppression

1) Limiting Opportunities for Publication

An even more effective method of suppressing "undesirable" evidence of survival consists of strict controls over the channels of legitimization. Most obvious, perhaps, is the policy of leading journals of science and medicine to avoid material which might question the paradigms under which the majority of their authors conduct research. Until recent inquiry on the social controls and sanctions of knowledge became of interest to philosophers, there had been no empirical studies of when and why scientific journals published what sorts of articles. Thus, their opposition to non-traditional sciences remained very covert, and other alibis could always be found for rejecting articles of "inappropriate subject matter."

Collins and Pinch cite cases in which papers submitted to leading publications like Science were rejected despite recommendations by a majority of readers and referees.[86] Allison suggests that the low number of articles in traditional journals "was not due to lack of submissions."[87] There can be little doubt that...

> The refereeing system frequently operates to suppress the publication of new and important material that happens to be personally distasteful to the referee to whom it is referred.[88]

Of course, this may well be the case in other fields such as philosophy. But unlike philosophy, where journals may specialize in positivism, monism, humanism, idealism, and other conflicting views about the nature of things, the scientific journals seldom represent opposing viewpoints or methodologies. Rather, the sciences are dominated by a few journals whose presuppositions uniformly preclude contrary or paradigm-shaking material--and there are few alternative publications open to investigators of survival.[89]

The other alternative of the journals is to grant publication to an occasional article on survival, and then dilute it by playing up the critical reactions to it.[90] This sometimes even takes the form of collusion between several journals, so that several critical articles appear simultaneously with one favorable article.[91] Or it may be the tacit policy of some editors to publish only those articles which demonstrate the limitations and inconclusiveness of paranormal research.[92]

By these unwritten and normally invisible policies, established scientists can go far to avoid the increasing evidence relating to the non-mechanistic asepcts of human being. Many who are interested in the field may get the impression either that nothing is being done, or that it lacks scientific respectability. Professionals in the sciences, who might be stimulated to think

about other approaches to their research, or upset to find their monolithic conceptions threatened, are spared the distractions and the challenges by the editors who screen out such material from their reading fare. Moreover, when material on survival fails to appear in leading scientific journals, it cannot be excerpted for a broader public audience by potential popularizers such as Scientific American, Psychology Today, or even Reader's Digest. It does not find its way into the printed and computerized indices of scientific and periodical literature, making literature reviews and bibliographic searches immensely more difficult. And the implication that survival research is either unscientific or for some reason not legitimate is quietly conveyed to the reader without the need for offerring reasons or risking strong counterarguments. At least through the 1960's, this means of rejecting survival evidence was widely practiced and apparently highly effective. It has only been in the late 1970's that Journals of Psychiatry, of the American Medical Association, or of Nervous and Mental Disease have begun to give space to the interpretations of survival research--and even here, with only the most circumspect and tentative of articles. This suppression of publishing channels is easy to quantify and document, however; other means of suppression may be even more subtle.

2) Suppression of Academic Fraternity, Opportunities and Funds

As much or more than other disciplines, science depends on a close-knit social structure, which Kneller calls "an invisible college." These may be small groups of fraternal scholars working together to solve a particular problem, trading their views and interacting with the larger scientific community through conferences, letters, summer sessions, and even camps.[93] Therefore "getting ahead" in science is due not only to good ideas and careful experimentation, but on personal connections with the right people and groups. Survival researchers have generally been excluded from this scientific community, or if admitted as somewhat off-beat members (like C.C. Tart), they may be restricted in the topics they are allowed to present at conferences of "straight" scientists.

Harder to document, but even more critical, is outright discrimination against parapsychologists. In his Master's thesis at Wisconsin, Allison surveyed members of the Parapsychology Association to find 183 instances of claimed discrimination because of interest in parapsychology.[94] Over half of these cases concerned hiring, promotions, or facilities, and they tended to come from those already within academic environments. This may also be an unintentional biproduct of the conservatism of funding sources. It is relatively difficult to win funds, grants, or positions to research or teach subjects which are outside of traditional departmental lines of demarcation. The problem becomes

even more complex in parapsychology, because it potentially bridges (or falls into the chasms between!) disciplines as disparate as neurophysiology, physics, electronics, psychology, and philosophy of religion. In this era of recession and cutbacks in academic funding, such radical departures from traditional structures are not likely to find sanction--and this in turn can result in the loss of funding to proposals researching the borders of present knowledge.[95]

3) Reinterpretation

Reinterpretation to "explain away" the data is yet another approach of scientists to rejecting survival research. It is hardly necessary to reiterate all the many tacks which have been taken by critics in the previous chapters, but a summary of some of their methods may be illustrative. The most traditional approach is to say that the phenomena in question are no more than manifestations of an already well-known condition, such as Dewhurst's attempts to explain OBE's as heautoscopy, or Siegel's reduction of near-death visions to hallucination. Such tactics are only made possible by ignoring some of the unique and crucial features of the OBE's or NDE's, but the impression given to the uncritical or uninformed reader is that "nothing significant is happening here." The situation becomes almost humorous, if not absurd, when opponents of a particular survivalist interpretation attempt to replace it with something apparently more scientifically reputable. We recall, for example, Vasiliev's attempts to

define a new condition called "parabiosis" between life and death to account for the fact that some people revive after all of their bodily functions had terminated. Then there are the attempts to define NDE's as projections of Jungian archetypes. And the "Super-ESP" hypothesis is widely used by Ayer and Flew.

But there is a double irony here. First, as we have mentioned earlier, parabiosis, archetypes, and even ESP are all in themselves but the grossest of hypotheses, whose functions and even existence are more in doubt than the phenomena being studied. But somehow the ascription of an authoritative or scientific-sounding name is felt adequate to have "explained away" the phenomena and demote them from further serious consideration. The existence of the data is not denied, and the "explanations" proferred are more uncertain and mysterious than that which they are to explain. Yet such subsuming of new evidence under traditional rubrics somehow absolves the need to study the issues further, and brushes them under the rug.

C) Independent Growth

1) Publications

When a community believes that the existing scientific paradigm is inadequate, among its first and most important counter-measures is the promulgation of its own non-traditional viewpoints in print. The survival topic represents an excellent example of this trend within the history of science. One decade

ago, there was only one serious scientist publishing material on reincarnation evidence, and only a couple (Grof, Kubler-Ross) working on NDE's. Moreover, their work was so guised in traditional forms that the revolutionary impact of their writings had not yet been felt, and they were completely unknown to others working in similar fields.[96] However, with the publication of Moody's Life After Life in 1976 and Osis' At the Hour of Death the following year, the floodgates were opened. It is not that the scientific community recognized the legitimacy of the research and conclusions. Rather, the individuals who had been previously interested in and working in related fields were at last emboldened to attempt publication of their own results. In the past four years alone, at least eight books centering on the near-death experience have emerged,[97] and several more are reported to be in press or preparation at present writing.[98] Extracts and interviews with their authors soon followed these early publications, in popular magazines such as Time, Newsweek, and McCall's.[99] Equally or more important, however, is the creation of periodicals specifically designed to deal with the survival problem. Of course, it was this issue which first inspired the creation of the Societies for Psychical Research in London and Boston. More recently, new journals on death and dying, such as Death Education, Theta, Omega, and Anabiosis have rapidly populated thanatologists' bookshelves, and a significant portion of each of these is concerned with issues of survival.

2) Professional Organizations

Behind many of these new publications are new associations of people interested in the evidence of survival, outside of the old framework of mechanistic materialism. These organizations are of several types. Some, like the recently formed International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS), have affiliation with and support from a recognized university department, and stress the scientific nature of the research being conducted, although accepting contributions from other sources.[100] Others, like Lumena and ERICALAL (European Research and Information Center About Life After Life) encourage participation from those who have had near-death experiences, and may be more or less committed to survivalist interpretations of the evidence. Thus, we can discern two stages in the development of counter-paradigm societies: first there are those which are simply devoted to the objective study of phenomena which have not yet been adequately studied under the old paradigm. And then there are those which advocate new and relatively well-defined platforms to replace the old paradigms.

Survivalist scientists may also join forces with existing anti-paradigm organizations, such as the Parapsychology Foundation. This foundation holds annual conferences, usually in Europe, of the leaders in parapsychology and a number of related fields, from physics and statistics to neurophysiology and psychokinesis. In recent years, an increasing participation and interest is observed by scientists studying NDE's and OBE's as well.

This approach says to the traditional scientific community: if you don't think our work is valuable or worthy of consideration, we shall congregate and organize with those who do. Thus, in addition to publishing books as individuals, these counter-paradigm scientists can publish conference papers and reports, and set up their own research groups, which over time can take on the forms of legitimate science.

3) Grants and Funding

In order to establish journals and hold conferences, substantial funding becomes necessary. Some of this may come from the pockets of the participants, particularly if they are strongly devoted to their particular survival-related organization. Even more important, however, is the legitimate funding which can be gained from government and private foundation grants, which not only enable research of a particular nature to be carried out, but also confer the appearance of respectability on the investigators. Collins and Pinch observe the trends towards legitimate funding in parapsychology:

> The strategy of the parapsychologists has been that of metamorphosis--of becoming scientists. Thus they have acquired university posts (at many American universities [also Freiburg, Utrecht, Andrha, Jaipur]), PhD. studentships (in three British universities), chairs (Surrey), and government funding for research.[101]

Similarly, in the area of survival research, a chair has been established at the University of Virginia specifically for such investigation; faculty of many universities are spending

part of their time studying and teaching about death and survival, and dissertations on survival are becoming acceptable today when a decade ago they would have been unthinkable.[102] One of the problems with funding in this area is that some of the sources have less than academic connections: old ladies who wish to have their faith confirmed by science; or the famous case in which Arizona prospector James Kidd left $300,000 to anyone who could prove the survival of the human soul with photographs![103] Would-be scientists among survivalists are concerned to "launder the funds;" to receive (or appear to receive) them from already respectable sources.[104] Thus the sociological process of scientific recognition takes into consideration both the funds and their sources in according prestige to new entrants.

D) Assimilation and Acceptance

In the course of becoming more "scientific," the anti-paradigmatic groups may slowly win increasing acceptance from organs and individuals within the traditional establishment. The process of "becoming scientific," as we have seen, is not primarily completed when the methods and thinking of the investigators has become scrupulous and objective. Rather, it is a matter of taking on the forms and trappings of an accepted science, of gaining social recognition within the limited community of those persons already considered scientists. Such acceptance of the members and findings of an "out-group" by "in-group" scientists may take any of several forms, including (1) recognition without conversion;

(2) paradigm conversion by personal persuasion; and (3) supercession of an old paradigm by a new one. Let us examine each of these cases, with specific reference to the growth of survival research as a scientific discipline. First, however, it is crucial to review the nature of paradigms briefly.

Kuhnian philosophers use the term paradigm to describe (a) a way of looking at and investigating the world, including both basic assumptions of how that world will fit together, and of the kinds of questions that need to be answered; and (b) the particular experiments which vindicate one such world-view over any other. We shall use the term here in the former sense exclusively. Anti-paradigmatic thus means an opposition to the prevailing traditional paradigm, and not to all paradigms whatsoever. By the same token, a paradigm shift is not from error into truth, nor is a battle between paradigms possible to paint in such black-and-white terms. Rather, a paradigm switch is more analogous to a religious conversion, or to changing jobs, for the new way of looking at the world may redefine terms and re-orient problems for the "converted" scientist. The new paradigm may answer some questions better than had the old one. But it may leave other questions, which had been purportedly understood under the old paradigm, unanswerable.

We have seen that each traditional paradigm is established and reinforced in the minds of the students of science by a narrow and repetitive process of science education, which does not

encourage the historical reappraisal of rival paradigms which attempted to deal with the subjects under study. It is thus a major step for some scientists even to admit that there might be important fields of knowledge whose investigation requires tools or methods utterly different from those now employed by modern science. It is even a more difficult step for a scientist to try to change his world-view mid-stream, and be "converted" to an utterly new methodology for investigating the world. As we have seen, there are many scientists who resist such paradigm shift adamantly throughout their lives. These various individual reactions can also be seen replicated in the reactions of the scientific community as a whole. Let us now return to those reactions common from the community of established scientists towards the infant field of survival research.

1) Recognition Without Paradigm Conversion

Parapsychologists have tried to gain recognition as scientists from the scientific community without success for decades. Douglas Dean documents some of the problems involved in this process. The first step was to form the professional Parapsychological Association (1957). Over the following decade, the PA repeatedly tried to win recognition from the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Finally, it was admitted in 1969, following an enthusiastic endorsement speech by Margaret Mead at a meeting of the AAAS membership. Dean reports on this approach:

> The [AAAS] came to the conclusion that it [the PA] is an association investigating controversial or non-existent phenomena; however it is open in membership to critics and agnostics; and they were satisfied that it uses scientific methods of inquiry; thus that investigation can be counted as scientific. Further information has come to us that the number of AAAS fellows who are also members of the PA is not four as on the agenda, but nine.

We may note several interesting factors in the legitimization process. First and perhaps most obvious is that the AAAS sanctioned not the findings nor conclusions or the new Association (which might become anti-paradigmatic), but simply their methodology and objectivity. Secondly, the role of Mead's appeal cannot be overestimated. Her personal stature and persuasion had a strong effect on the membership which had voted to keep out the PA for so long. Mead's comparison of the PA to anthropologists, who also claim to be scientists while not claiming to believe the myths of the people they study, was another card in the PA's favor. Furthermore, we can notice the appeal to loyalty to one's own membership. If "not four, but nine" members of the AAAS program were already PA members, this too could be taken to bespeak an acceptability and legitimacy nct previously admitted. Needless to say, the PA had worked hard to get nine of its members on the program, concealing the fact that it was seeding the group so heavily until it was already a _fait accompli_, when prejudices could no longer remove them!

It is all too clear that the AAAS admission did not accept or agree to the conclusions of the PA's research, but simply admitted the parapsychologists' use of scientific methods. This

admission to the AAAS, however, has made it substantially easier for later survivalist researchers to gain admission to other professional organizations and conferences. In particular, sections of recent national conferences on religion, psychology, and psychiatry have devoted themselves to discussions of the issues of survival, and it is expected that similar sections will appear in medical and philosophical conferences in the near future.[106] But again, the fact that such national organizations may admit the existence of interesting problems in the area of survival by no means implies that they agree with either the ultimate importance of such problems, the survivalist answer, or the necessity of revising their own paradigms.

Kuhn analogizes the interactions between traditional and paradigm-challenging scientists to a breakdown in communication. He proposes that gradual participation in the same community demands translation of problems which exist for both communities from one language game to another:

> Taking the differences between their own intra- and inter-group discourse itself as a subject for study, they can first attempt to discover the terms and locutions that, used unproblematically within each community, are nevertheless foci of trouble for inter-group discussion.... The availability of techniques like these does not, of course, guarantee persuasion. For most people, translation is a threatening process, and it is entirely foreign to normal science.[107]

The increasing use of compatible terminology--or at least learning to see the world through rival terminologies--is part of paradigm change in survival research as well as elsewhere. We

can see examples in the use of terms coined by Moody, such as "life-review," "figure of light;" Osis' "mood elevation," and the acronyms OBE and NDE. These terms are now becoming widely used by the scientific community, even by those critical of the survivalist interpretations of such phenomena.

An example of an individual's gradual conversion process may be seen in the case of Marcello Truzzi, who started the Zetetic magazine some five years ago to criticise paranormal literature scientifically. However, after five years of studying the material, his own position seems to have softened considerably. Truzzi then abandoned the Zetetic to a hard-core group who (like himself five years before) are committed to debunk all paranormal phenomena as unreal, and started a new publication, the Zetetic Scholar, to take a "critical but objective look" at survival and other central issues in parapsychology. Truzzi says (from experience!) that we cannot change science by convincing the skeptics, who are not open to such conversion in the first place, but rather by slowly persuading the more liberal and open-minded of the scientific community.[108]

2) Paradigm Conversion by Personal Persuasion

There are not many cases in which trained scientists have actually switched their allegiance from an old paradigm to a new one, but they are all the more striking for their rarity. One famous early example of a drastic switch in world-view, occa-

sioned by persistent study and persuasion, is the Conan Doyle/ Harry Price case. Doyle himself had been a critic of spiritualism until he began studying it, after which he became increasingly convinced of its importance, and of the truth of personal survival. In his later years, he wrote less fiction, but devoted almost full time to this subject. Harry Price, the scientist who spent most of his time debunking mediums, was agnostic if not hostile to the whole idea of survival. But after "Doyle himself" appeared to Price in a seance, and other information inaccessible to the medium through normal means was revealed about the ill-fated crash of the R-101 dirigible in 1930, Price himself at last became a believer in survival.[109]

A softening in the anti-survivalist posture may be noted by chronological surveys of the writings of individuals such as Broad, Murphy, Dommeyer, and Flew. After decades of studying survival research in order to criticise it, they became less able to declare categorically that "it just can't happen," and in Broad's words, to feel more disappointed than surprised if survival turns out to be the case. The most striking conversion is undoubtedly that of George Price, whose diatribe against ESP in 1955 we cited above. Over a period of more than 10 years he corresponded with J.B. Rhine and his associates at Duke. In the end, Price at last became convinced of their integrity, and concomitantly, of the actual existence of forces which apparently contradict mechanistic paradigms and make sense of survival.[110]

3) Non-conversion and Supercession of the New Paradigm

The other half of the "conversion" coin is that many scientists are simply never able to re-view their world through new paradigms. Kuhn's books on scientific revolutions are littered with examples of scientists who were famous in their day, who died in staunch opposition to theories which were becoming increasingly acceptable and would ultimately replace their own completely. Prince's Enchanted Boundary, as another example, lists an incredible number of great scientists who would not change their minds on the survival issue even in the face of strong evidence. With such intransigence, how can science ever hope to change? Physicist Max Planck summed it up in his autobiography:

> [Boltzmann's triumph over Ostwald] gave me also an opportunity to learn a fact--a remarkable one in my opinion: A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die off, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it.[111]

Coming from a scientist who rubbed shoulders with the leaders of 20th century physics and philosophy, this statement is a scathing denial of the widely touted "objectivity" of scientists, and a strong confirmation of the reasons for theory-rejection being more psychological and educational than theoretical or scientific. To put the case a little strongly, many of the logical positivists and Skinnerian behaviourists of the '50's and '60's have neither converted nor consented to the new waves of psychology. But they are now finding themselves supplanted

by a new breed of scientists who have themselves experimented with meditation and mind-altering drugs, who themselves can no longer accept the mechanism of the 19th century, and who are much more open to the possibilities of survival research.[112] The next decade or two may see an increasing liberalism in this area, coinciding with an increasing interest of "legitimate" young scientists to consider alternate paradigms which allow for the introduction of survival and reincarnation hypotheses.

4) Public Opinion and Scientific Change

One further factor, more important in free than in totalitarian countries, is the effect of public opinion on scientific investigations and determination of the boundaries of "legitimate science." We have already noted that the scientific community may use charges of "playing to the vulgar crowd," or "occultism" to discredit some survival researchers. But a growing number of philosophers of science in the west are beginning to recognize public interest as an important element in the decision of scientific legitimacy. Paul Feyerabend, in particular, is outspoken against the tyranny of traditional scientists. He upholds the public interest in UFO's, astrology, and survival as probably having important glimpses of truth; and he repeats that the public should be the ultimate arbiter of what science studies.[113] This is partly, according to Feyerabend, because in our society, a great deal of the money of science comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers. But even more importantly, he

says, the common man has adequate shrewdness and logic to see through the "monumental ignorance behind the most dazzling display of omniscience."[114]

Scientists are disagreed as to whether such issues should be left completely in the hands of laymen. Whether of apathy or of worship, the mood of a country towards its sciences may have a tremendous impact upon the support they receive.[115] Similarly, in the field of survival, there can be little doubt that the public awareness of near death experiences and OBE's (visible in a growing literature of death, even in fiction) has substantially influenced the legitimization of survival research as a field of study--regardless of the final outcome and conclusions to which these scholars of survival will ultimately arrive.

In overview, then, this section has tried to demonstrate several theses in the philosophy of science which also relate to our conclusions about survival. First we saw some of the ways in which contemporary physics has rendered traditional mechanistic materialism a highly questionable hypothesis. This opens the way for some survivalists to hold that their theories are compatible with modern physics. Others, however, still hold to a radical dualism: that mind and matter are in principle not explicable on the same grounds.

We then considered some of the apparently rational objections to evidence for survival, on the grounds that such research is not scientific. Objections based on repeatability, theory-

requirement, and "inherent probabilities" were all seen to be ill-founded, and inadequate to impugn the value of survival research. We then turned to other sorts of resistance to survival research: psychological, educational, religious, and social. These types of objections do not stand as real reasons for rejecting or revising the conclusions we shall present in this dissertation. However, they do explain some of the origins of dissent borne in the breasts of those who have not studied carefully the issues and evidence.

In this last chapter, we proposed that the gradual legitimization of survival research can serve as an interesting case study in the history and philosophy of science. We were able to demarcate four separate phases in the growth of survival studies, showing a transition from rejection or suppression to independent growth and finally to assimilation or acceptance from traditional science.

This chapter, then, will have cleared the air of numerous fallacious arguments and tactics, so that we may recognize them when they arise yet again to attack our conclusions. It should help us to recognize the inappropriateness of a number of criticisms, while showing that survival research is in principle just as scientific as any other empirical study. On the basis of this chapter, we can understand the psychological motivations and sociological methods for the rejection of survival research by some authorities--and we can also see that we do not need to be taken in by their arguments or prejudices.

PART V: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER I: SURVIVAL IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE

A) Preliminary Observations

Section One of this study concluded that there were insurmountable difficulties in the purely materialistic interpretation of Christian resurrection. In order to make sense of resurrection, some sort of conscious carrier of identity seems necessary in the "intermediate state" between death and the resurrection--or else the resurrection may be thought of as occurring immediately upon death, but in some very different sort of universe, perhaps an apparitional or idealistic one. Section Two found a similar situation with regards to rebirth: a subtly material or non-material (idealist) entity must be postulated as a carrier of personal identity unless the reincarnations are all immediate, which they are not. It also pointed out that descriptions of an idealist-type post-mortem world, the Pure Land, are plentiful in Buddhist philosophy, and that Buddhism also contends for the existence of supra-personal, unconceptualizable states. Section Three showed that there is substantial and growing empirical evidence which would support these ideas of an ethereal body and locus of consciousness surviving the death of the material body--perhaps in an idealist "next world." And Section Four saw that objections to survival are psychological and social, and not grounded in reason.

This all leads us to the point where we may ask again, "Does consciousness survive bodily death? If so, what can we conclude about its experiences at death and thereafter? How would the adoption of a survivalist position force us to modify our views of the world? And what sorts of studies might further clarify the nature and status of the afterlife? These are some of the questions which this concluding section must attempt to answer. We have seen the arguments of the philosophers through many centuries in two very different traditions--and the similarities between some of their conclusions. We have seen the empirical evidences which might indicate that man survives bodily death, and that alternate interpretations and attempts to repudiate such evidence are less than adequate.

Before discussing the nature of the afterlife, and the nature of the universe in order for an afterlife to be possible, we may first want to touch on two issues of strong popular interest. We may think briefly about the question, "What might it feel like to die--and survive?" We can consider the circumstances immediately surrounding the moment of death. Secondly, we may reconsider the issues of resurrection and reincarnation. If neither is taken to occur immediately upon death, then neither is really the sort of survival with which we are concerned. At the same time, both point to the importance of invisible intermediate states, on which the body of this chapter will be focussing. And both have immense importance in the minds of the masses.

1) The Range of Experiences at Death

a) Wide variety of experiences and explanations

The first thing we should note from our empirical studies discussed above is that there is an extremely wide range of experiences surrounding death. Even among civilized, literate, modern peoples, there is a tremendous variety in the nature of our personalities, consciousnesses, and experiences while alive. Similarly, there seem to be tremendous variations in the nature of the causes and situations of death as well. Therefore it should not be too surprising to find that people report having very different experiences on different deathbeds, or in their apparition/OBE type experiences. Of these experiences, some may be caused by chemical changes in the dying brain, indicating nothing of the nature of a future existence. Some may have physical correlates but not necessarily physical causes. Others have no neurophysiological correlates whatsoever, but appear to be simply a different level of experience.

Thus, the questions, "What is the next world like?" "What will it feel like to die?" or "Will my consciousness survive the death of my physical body?" are either too broad or too specific and personal to answer with assurance from the limited range of evidence upon which we may generalize. Rather, we must begin by asking: what is the range of experiences which some humans may possibly undergo during and following their physical deaths?

b) "Stages"--or no stage at all

This range of experiences possible has already been alluded to by scholars like Moody and Ring, who itemize a number of "stages" through which dying people pass.[1] We have emphasized that these are not sequential steps through which everyone will pass. But each of these stages has been reported by someone, so it is quite possible that others will experience them again in the future.

Thus, many people at death may experience a whooshing sound, or find themselves passing through a black vortex, tunnel, or void. Some may see colorful nets, lights, and geometric imagery. Some may have veridical OBE's, seeing their bodies from outside them; others may have dreamlike hallucinations of chemical origins and doubtful referentiality. Some may have visions of departed loved ones, holy figures, or heavenly scenery. Some of these events are at least partly neurophysiological; others are inexplicable except on the survival hypothesis.

We must not forget, however, that most people die, in peace or pain, without reporting any remarkable experiences or saving grace.[2] Based on the evidence alone, it seems that only a minority of dying people have OBE's or NDE's. The number reporting "memories of past lives" veridically is still far smaller. We are not entitled to jump to the conclusion that everyone will survive death or be reborn. Rather, it seems more probable that there is a wide range in the ways that different people will experience survival--if indeed they experience anything at all.[3]

c) The role of expectation

It is a common theme in many books on survival that the expectations of the person determine whether and in what way his conscious experience continues. This is the theory which Price and Hick have advocated earlier;[4] it is reiterated by many mystics, religious writers, and scholars of survival. It is said

> [The afterlife] shall be a reflection of the ideas and desires held by them during their period of earth life--a dramatization of their desire-ideals of their past life. In short, the Indian really finds his "happy hunting grounds," and the other primitive peoples their particular paradises as pictured in their creeds and faiths.... The conception of the "golden gates" is but a little higher in the scale than that of the "happy hunting ground" for it is purely material, and reflects the ideals of a race whose desires are for glittering and costly things.[5]

This argument is also turned against the nonbeliever:

> The Viking's Valhalla, the Indian's Happy Hunting Ground, could also have a real existence for a number of psyches. The convinced materialist could experience the total emptiness he anticipates after death; the only essential difference would be that he finds himself still psychically living and conscious.[6]

This makes for a very "neat" theory indeed, with an ironic tinge of cosmic justice to it: if the materialist wants meaninglessness and emptiness at death, that is just what he shall find. This proposal is not clearly false, and it might be reworked to square with empirical studies, but as it stands, it is premature. For we have seen cases in which "convinced materialists" and atheists had "heavenly," mind-opening experiences on their deathbeds. And there are devout religious people who die in agony and report nothing, or who experience only unconsciousness while tem-

porarily pronounced dead.[7] It still might be true on some subtle level that "we experience what we believe," at death, but it is clear that belief in a certain species of afterlife is not alone adequate to produce that experience immediately upon death. Yet it is reasonable to expect that the psychic state of the person at death strongly influences his subsequent conscious experience, if he has any. This is an issue which we shall explore more thoroughly below.

We have seen that men may experience many things at death --and many men may experience nothing. Let us now think further about the nature of the post-mortem state. We have identified several possibilities, ranging from ethereal bodies to idealistic other worlds or transcendent non-personal (nirvanic) states.[8] In the popular religious mind, however, the most widely expected post-mortem state is one of reincarnation--either in a physical body here on this earth, or in a para-physical body in a resurrection world. Let us briefly reconsider the status of these concepts in relation to the evidence adduced above.

2) Reincarnation

a) The best available hypothesis

Regardless of the emotional ease or difficulty with which Westerners may respond to this concept, reincarnation has been shown to be the most reasonable hypothesis to explain verifiable memories of former lives. When a child exhibits memories which could only be attributed to someone now dead, and insists that he

was that person before "he died;" when he shows skills and talents (linguistic, athletic, artistic) which he could not have learned in his present life and which the deceased had had; and when, at the same time, marks on his body correspond to marks on the body of the deceased; no other hypothesis can fit the data as well as taking the child's claim at almost face value. There is a sense in which he was someone else in a former life on this earth, and now he is as he appears. Under carefully controlled conditions, cases of possession or hypnotic regression may provide similar evidence. On the basis of such combined evidence, it is most reasonable to accept that at least some people are reborn in new human bodies after their deaths in former human bodies. Theologian John Hick concludes:

> There are forms of reincarnation doctrine which may be broadly true pictures of what actually happens. It may be true, as Vedantist teaching claims, that an eternal "soul" or "higher self" lies behind a long series of incarnations....Or it may be true, as Buddhist teaching claims, that "units" or "packages" of karma (as distinguished from higher selves) produce a series of persons, one of whom is me.[9]

Hick believes that persons do not evolve through a series of pre-human incarnations, but are created ab initio ex nihilo by God.[10] Either case is possible, and the evolutionary one easier to square with scientific cosmology. Hick has also mentioned the debate between the Buddhists and Vedantins about what it is that survives bodily death. This debate becomes less of a problem in later Buddhism, and we can suggest at least one sense in which it is a pseudo-problem that need not trouble us further.

b) Resolving the identity problem

If a boy named Z remembers being a man named Y, who is now dead, it is trivially true that Z is not absolutely identical to Y. But then Y today is not identical to Y at birth. The important element here (in addition to memory) is that of continuity. This conscious continuity is preserved by the mental element which persists through various bodily sequences--called the atman by Vedanta, and the alaya-vijnana by Mahayana Buddhism. Both philosophies agree that the body is more temporary and less important than the cultivation of the mind. The Vedantin de-emphasizes the possessive grasping desires of the atman by distinguishing between the empirical self (ahamkara) and the true atman, which does not really belong to any psychophysical personality in the first place. The Buddhist de-emphasizes the self in slightly different language, by saying that "there is no soul (anatta)"--but he recognizes the psychophysical personality built up of the five khandas, and the element of consciousness which continues after the break-up of the human personality and its components. The Vedantin may have a stronger sense of the integrity and individuality of the person, while the Buddhist emphasizes the constancy of change in the realm of phenomena. Whether we call Y the same as Z depends partly on the way we define sameness. The more important, and empirically verifiable fact is that there are people who identify themselves with previous people, where such identification makes the best sense of their unusual memories, talents, and features.

c) "Laws of reincarnation"

Although our empirical studies are still in their infancy, the past 20 years of research have led to some further generalizations about the nature of rebirth, worthy of summarizing here: (i) Story's Law suggests that persons are usually reborn within a few hundred miles of their deaths, although not necessarily in territory known to the dying person.[11] (ii) Evans-Wentz' Law says that persons will reincarnate in ways they believe possible; if a person is raised to believe that sex-change is impossible in rebirth, he will be reborn in a body of the same sex, and vice-versa.[12] (iii) Parker's Law sees violent death and/or unfulfilled cravings or desires for things in this life as the primary causes of reincarnation, and this agrees with the Buddhist teachings on the subject.[13] (Both Stevenson and Banerjee have found that many of the reincarnation cases reported were those of people who had died violent deaths.) (iv) Martinus' Law would assert that people are reborn relatively quickly when they die in childhood, but adults who die must spend a longer period in some intermediate state.[14] In fact, Stevenson's data suggest that periods of several years are not at all uncommon between remembered incarnations.[15] We must stress that all of these "laws" or hypotheses are inductive generalizations open to empirical verification, in the same way that generalizations about meteorites or earthquakes can be better confirmed or rejected as more and more examples are found and examined.

However, we have no validated cases of people who report seeing their way into a new body at the moment of death. The rebirth process, whether of days or of years, is not immediately apparent to the dying person as he departs from this world. As both Buddhist and empirical accounts have stressed, it is rather the element of consciousness which continues and is necessary to make sense of identity between rebirths.

The Christian believer in resurrection finds himself in exactly the same situation on this point. Since resurrection, like reincarnation, is not instantaneous upon death, but occurs some time later, some carrier of personal identity is necessary. Consciousness alone is not enough, because if it rests, it is thereby extinguished forever. There is a gap, an interim between this life and the next embodiment, if there is one. If we are to make any sense of personal identity at all, there must be both the process of consciousness and its ontological substrate present during this interim between incarnations. This locus of consciousness may be a vehicle or blueprint invisible to the human eye.[16] But it must exist, for if not, we have only the paradoxical situation of paranormal memories and replica bodies with no genuinely real memories of past lives. Conversely, the existence of subtle bodies or ideal realms wherein consciousness might temporarily exist in a non-physical state will make meaningful the possibilities of resurrection and/or reincarnation, as well as other forms of survival.

B) An Apparitional World

1) The best available hypothesis

In our study of OBE's and apparitions, we found that apparitions were most often produced by the dreams or projections of the consciousness of the person who corresponded to the apparition. We saw that people having veridical OBE's perceived the physical world from perspectives and places distant from their physical bodies, and that devices or animals could sometimes detect a "presence" in that same place. If purposeful apparitions are produced and detectable in such ways and show no significant differences from apparitions of the dead (as we saw was the case) then it seems reasonable to impute the same causal process to apparitions of the dead, especially when they provide information and motives unknown to any but the deceased. We may then assert that the deceased person was in some sense dreaming or projecting his consciousness to an area where his apparition was perceived.

The similarity between this theory and that of traditional ghosts or spirits may lead to its immediate rejection by hasty critics. In fact, this discarnate body theory is the easiest way to make sense of individual identity and personality after death.[17] This theory would suggest that man has two "bodies;" a physical, material body, and an invisible, ethereal or "astral" body. At death, the ethereal or astral body leaves the corpse, as it may do temporarily during OBE's. Sometimes its leaving the corpse

may be perceived by people attending the deathbed. In other cases, it may appear to loved ones in other locations, as if to inform them of the death or counsel them on some matter of importance to the deceased. Far from invalidating the theory, this problem of spirits is the problem of human destiny after death.[18] Nor need such a theory of invisible bodies conflict with modern science. Such bodies might well evolve through processes paralleling the evolution of our physical bodies from lower animals.[19] They may be the sorts of entities so commonly encountered in Indian literature as the linga sharira or the Buddhist alaya-vijnana--a subtle body of consciousness.[20]

Such a theory of normally invisible bodies might be made completely compatible with modern non-Newtonian physics, for

> Even the grossest materialism would have to allow that it is conceivable that the seat of consciousness and personality is not the physical brain after all but an "astral" brain that can survive the death of the physical body.[21]

Some materialists might desire to disagree with this statement, but their disagreement, as we have seen above, is based upon the faulty assumption that modern science has identified and understood everything in the universe. In fact, it is only one system in a long history of systems which have needed continual revision.

> We are never entitled to declare that a certain effect must be non-physical just because it happens to be incompatible with any certain system of physics [emphasis ours].[21]

There are at least three ways in which invisible bodies may be reconciled with modern materialism; let us briefly review each of the options of the ways the world might be to enable this.

2) Reconcilable with Materialism

a) Particle/wave theory

It may be that discarnate bodies are made of some yet inadequately studied particle or wave-like stuff. This theory was first formulated by F.W.H. Myers 80 years ago. Myers speaks of a metaethereal universe, "which appears to lie after or beyond the ether; the spiritual world in which the soul exists."[23] This theory was developed by Murphy into what he called the "Myers-Newbold theory," a system he feels is midway between traditional Spinozistic monism and Cartesian dualism.[24] The existence of an unstudied ethereal order is somewhat demonstrated by psychic phenomena, and supported by such researchers as G.N.M. Tyrrell.[25]

Other investigators have proposed various names for the wave/particles which might account for psychic phenomena and make sense of survival of invisible consciousness after death. Dobbs calls such particles psi-trons, and attributes to them an imaginary mass with the status of other yet unidentified imaginary sub-atomic particles.[26] Carington coins the term psychons, to refer to such particles which interact primarily with consciousness and might survive death;[27] C.D. Broad used the term psi factor in similar ways.[28] Roll, emphasizing the survival aspect over the psychic aspect of this material, calls them theta agents,[29] while Thouless and others call them shin after the Hebrew character.[30] The point is that (i) there may exist types of matter/particles/waves which we have not yet adequately studied; (ii) the fact that

they have not yet been studied by science does not make their existence any the less probable; (iii) they may help to explain psychic phenomena and apparitions before death, and make sense of what survives after death.

This ethereal stuff may be analogous to other wavelengths of color or radioactive rays which had not been discovered until the beginning of this century. The more we come to understand our universe as a continuum of waves (rather than as discrete, bowling-ball-like entities), the more plausible it appears that there are parts of this energy continuum which have escaped scientific study heretofore. The notion of such subtle matter would not only make sense of survival, but would tally well with the Hindu/Buddhist world-view that there are other sorts of matter than those which we normally perceive with unaided eyes.[31]

b) Force-fields

Alternatively, the "body" which survives might be analogous to a force-field--an invisible organizing principle--which assists in the interaction of consciousness and body during life, and structures some kind of body-consciousness after death. Randall is among the major proponents of this view, holding that psi-factors are like magnetic fields selectively bounded by material fields. Rhine also prefers to think in terms of energy over matter:

> Back of the phenomena of psi must exist an energy that interoperates with and interconverts to those other energetic states already familiar to physics. Psi energy is imperceptible by the sense organs and does not in any way yet discovered function within the frameworks of time and space and mass, and yet does lawfully operate....[33]

Yet another more recent version of the force-field theory is the so-called holon or holographic theory. It was first proposed by Pribram as an explanation of memory systems in the brain, and picked up rather uncritically by Ring to account for phenomena ranging from apparitions to survival.[34] In brief, a hologram is an image formed when in-phase laser light is shined through a film on which the interference patterns from similar sources have already been refracted and recorded. Holograms resemble the brain in only one respect: when a portion of either is destroyed, the images or memories stored therein are sometimes retained *in toto*, unaffected by local damage.[35]

Aside from this curious similarity, Pribram has not shown in what sense the brain could resemble a hologram, for there are no films and no laser beams scanning within the brain. Ferguson and Ring, however, expound that this brain theory somehow gives us access to a whole new "realm of meaningful, primary pattern reality that transcends time and space."[36] It is unclear how the brain relates to this reality, nor are we justified in calling either such realms "holographic reality."[37] If such a theory were developed into a workable system, it would fall closer to fields than waves or particles, and yet it is still sensorially connected to our construction of the physical realm.[38]

The energy-field theory is somewhat more problematic than the "straight" wave-particle theory for several reasons. At present, we do not really understand *how* fields like magnetic,

gravitational, or subatomic force-fields work. We simply know that there appear to be regularities on those levels, and we name the domains in which they work, "fields." To adopt field theory at this time would be just another case of "explaining" one unknown with reference to another but feeling more comfortable because of the analogy.[39]

Ultimately, of course, there may be some sense in which matter and energy-fields are interconvertible. If this is so, then both theories may be correct. At present, the contrast between waves-and-particles and energy fields is a useful distinction. The majority of survival theoriests speak in terms of wave-particle models. But we should bear in mind that these are not the only possible contenders, and that field-theory might also make sense of survival without contradicting science.

c) Fourth dimension theory

Another way of explaining the survival of invisible bodies by a minor revision of present physical theory is the admission of a fourth spatial dimension. Such theories are sometimes called fifth dimension theories by those who count time as a fourth. But time is clearly not the same sort of dimension as the first three physical dimensions, nor is it clear that any other dimension have temporal aspects to it. We shall speak of a fourth dimension as referring to a physical realm or dimension (<u>not</u> time) in addition to the three dimensions in which we consciously live. Such dimension-theories are not lacking in proponents either.

In the early part of this century, physicist Ernst Mach considered the fourth spatial dimension as a purely mathematical concept which would also explain the sudden disappearance or appearance of objects in this world, if it occurred.[40] Ouspensky did some rather wild speculation along this line,[41] before Hart first applied dimension theory to psychic phenomena in 1953.[42] Hart's work failed to distinguish between purely mathematical constructs and the metaphorical conceptions of "other dimensions" which are not unequivocally identifiable with mathematical versions.[43] More recently, Benson has worked out a version of the fourth dimension which would make sense of both psychic phenomena and physical systems like tunnel diodes.[44] A growing number of physicists are inclined to accept the possibility of other dimensions, or hyperspace,[45] analogous to the dimensional system in which we live, but either inaccessible to or invisibly interpenetrating our own.[46]

Such theories would also lead to the suggestion that the other realms seen by people temporarily dead may be located in other dimensions, into which we can enter only by penetrating a dimensional tunnel between this and the next. Another dimension may operate on different time frequencies than our own, and enable objects to freely enter and leave our own three dimensions which can be perceived from that dimension as we would perceive a "flatland," but perhaps lacking some physical aspects.[47] If there is one other spatial dimension, then there may be any

number of "planes" each perpendicular to the plane in which we live, each providing a realm of existence for its inhabitants which need not contradict the geography of any other such realm. To use Hart's crude analogy, it is rather like the fact that the dreams of people all sleeping in the same room need not invalidate or conflict with anyone else's.[48]

If they can be adequately formulated, dimension theories will have tremendous explanatory power and implications. At present, however, we know so little about other dimensions or how we might access them--and about whether mathematical dimensions are in fact similar to psychic fourth dimensions--that we must let the matter rest until physics, electronics, and other branches of science come up with further evidence. In the meantime, we may admit that the fourth dimension is possible, in which case we may be unconsciously living in it right now, or able to move to it at death, given the proper circumstances. In any case, none of the world-views just mentioned need destroy the physicists' conceptions of the world--only expand them.

3) Observations and Difficulties

If there are other forms of matter, waves, energy, fields, or dimensions, why is it that we are so unconscious of them? This question may be leveled as a rhetorical attempt to discount the probabilities of there existing such entities. More serious examination, however, opens up a deeper understanding of the ways we view man and the universe.

a) Limitations of senses

Man cannot exhaustively understand his universe with his senses alone. Not only can we not see ultraviolet or infrared, hear dog whistles or bat calls, but we are just beginning to expand our understanding of the electromagnetic spectrum in this 20th century. We have used our intellects and intuitions to gradually understand a small part of our universe, but in terms of detecting the range of possible waves and dimensions, we are but terribly primitive physical organisms.

Many philosophers believe that our brains might be inherently capable of receiving more information than they do--but that the opacity of our senses to other phenomena has practical value. Kant reasoned that the body was not the cause of our thinking, but rather a condition restrictive of it.[49] James developed the idea that the brain was a restrictive filter of reality in his essay on "Human Immortality."[50] Building on Bergson's ideas, Moncrieff put the theory of sense-limitation in an evolutionary context:

> The function of the sense organs is to restrict or canalize the clairvoyant powers which every sentient organism has, and to limit them...by shutting out what is biologically irrelevant.[51]

This may be one reason that we cannot normally see the subtle material forms which primitives and schizophrenics claim to see, or sense the myriad psychic impulses which may be whirling around us--because they are not conducive to our effective functioning in this material world.

b) Telepathic interaction

Thirty years ago, Ryle argued that the mind were nothing more than a computer-like set of actions and tendencies. He called the "concept of mind" a "category mistake," and attempted to exorcise from common language the concept of the "ghost in the machine," controlling our brains.[52] Only a few years had passed before Eccles could answer, from his studies of brain physiology, that the brain is "precisely the sort of thing that a ghost might operate[!]"[53] Tart has more boldly propounded that our brains and decision-making functions are governed, not by sensual and chemical inputs but by psychic and telepathic forces, especially by the non-physical mind exercising telekinesis on the brain.[54] LeShan theorizes that the brain acts as a transducer between levels of reality (e.g. physical reality, dream reality, clairvoyant reality); and that field theory enables us to understand the brain, mind-body interaction, and survival as well.[55] The evidence surveyed on OBE's and apparitions in particular enables us to propose that subtle bodies might exist and play a part in survival. Harrison proposes that

> Apparition bodies...have the advantage of not being visible to everybody, which could explain why we cannot see people in heaven or hell. Since apparitions do not exclude material objects from the space which they appear to occupy, there would be no difficulty about finding room for them. ...This suggests the possibility of a community of people with apparition bodies communicating by auditory apparition words or apparition gestures....The difference between a real body and an apparition body becomes something like one of degree.[56]

These statements are not to be taken as authority that such realms of apparitions do in fact exist. Rather, they are mentioned to show that some scientists are already comfortable with these concepts. The evidence has already been supplied in our previous sections, and it is not refuted by modern physics. The existence of such realms is similarly asserted by Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhists (and Hindus). An apparitional survival world (or worlds) might contain body-like structures, images, memory, and continuity. Thus it might make sense of survival in a way that even the positivists would not object to.

c) Cautionary observations

A couple of cautionary observations are in order here. (i) The existence of subtle matter or fields does not in itself simplify the mind-body problem. For the astral body, if we dare label it that, is still not equal to consciousness itself. We are still faced with the unanswerable question of their interaction, as C.D. Broad realized:

> There are plenty of fairly well-attested facts which afford prima facie empirical evidence of the ghost in the machine theory, if ghost is used in its proper sense ...astral traveling, out-of-the-body experiences, haunting, bilocation, materialization, etc....We shall then have to consider, in the case of each living person, <u>two</u> relationships, viz., (1) the relation of his mind to <u>his</u> ghostly or astral body, and (2) the relation of the latter to his ordinary, physical body.[57]

Thus, astral-type bodies are a significant contribution to the survival question, but they in no way "solve" the traditional mind-body problem. This humbling point should not be forgotten.

(ii) The proof of the existence of an astral body, if our evidence were accepted as such, is still inadequate as a description of survival. As H.D. Lewis has put it, the assurance that his astral body would continue to exist is as of little comfort as the assurance that his bones would not deteriorate. As long as astral bodies are not themselves equal to consciousness (but merely a carrier of it), they do not guarantee the sort of survival we seek. It is equally possible that, like corpses, some astral bodies continue for some time without continuing consciousness. It is the conscious aspects of the astral body that are important to us, not the astral body by itself. But we are still far from knowing much about the assocation of consciousness and the body. Although material and astral bodies may be used by humans to identify one another, and they provide convenient domains in which we can interact, it would be just as wrong to reduce humanhood to an astral body as to a physical body.[58]

Thus, we are not really concerned with ethereal survival unless it is somehow fundamentally mental. Our studies of OBE's and apparitions provide some indication that their structures are fundamentally mental in a deeper sense than our bodies. People reporting their OBE's, for example, say that their mere volition was effective as or equal to the performance of the desired action. Apparitions may appear fully clad within locked rooms. What provides this clothing is surely not the existence

of ethereal hats and boots, but the power of the mind of the projector (cf. the case where a mother sees her son before her dying in his bloody fatigues).[59] Thus there is a sense in which the subtle or apparitional realm is more psychically malleable, more open to direct volitional influence than our present physical universe appears to be. To carry the argument to its ultimate conclusion, we might assert that the psychic waves, fields, or ether in which apparitions appear to exist and function may be in some way intermediary between mental activity and physical observability. While this intriguing hypothesis accords with the evidence we have presented, we cannot say much more about which theory (waves/fields/dimensions) best accounts for apparitions at this point.

C) An Idealist Next World

In our first section on resurrection and modern philosophy, we concluded that some sort of philosophical idealism would make the best sense of a resurrection world, if there were one. When we studied Buddhism, we saw that Pure Land Buddhists affirm the idealistic ontology of the Pure Land, and the Tibetans of the Bardo, or intermediate state. When we turned to studies of apparitions and OBE's, we found that their fully-clad character, their ability to move by volition alone, their apparent transcendence of space, pointed also towards a more idealistic than materialistic view of things. Characteristics of NDE's such as

visions of religious figures and heavenly realms also tend to indicate that the dying person is seeing into another state, from which his senses normally shelter him, and which has some super-physical or idealistic ontological status. There is but a hazy grey line between asserting that there are other dimensions like ours which behave in a more mental way, and asserting that there are realms of spirit and ideas as well as of matter. This is an old philosophical bone of contention which we need not expect to resolve here. However, we can begin to study (1) how idealism would square with the concepts of science; (2) whether idealism might be experimentally verifiable; and (3) how we may resolve some of the problems which superficially infect any idealistic doctrine of survival.[60]

1) No Conflict with Material Science

Since we are speaking about an idealistically-based next world, there need be no inherent conflict between the structure or existence of that realm and this. Price's models of an image-world experienced after death might be one clear example of what the idealists' next world could be like; the heavens described by Pure Land Buddhists or by NDE patients might give a complementary or different picture. To be meaningful, any sense of survival in a next world must include consciousness and perhaps memory and volition as primary characteristics. The physical body will not live after death, and we have seen that even an astral body living after death will be quite mean-

ingless unless it is intimately associated with consciousness. Since it is the mind or consciousness whose survival we are considering, then, it need not surprise us that the "realms" of which it is conscious after the decease of the physical body are also mind-dependent, or idealistic. Many thinkers have supported this suggestion.

Tyrrell and Ellis, among others, have argued that idealism makes the best sense of "other worlds" in their relation to this world.[61] Mundle and Beloff cogently argue that if ESP evidence counts in favor of dualism, then it counts even more strongly for Berkeley's forms of idealism, in which there is no problem of how minds interact with matter at all, since "matter" is merely certain kinds of ideas in mind, and mind to mind interaction is taken as fundamental.[62] Murphy has found that even physicists are coming closer to the acceptance of a Berkeleyan idealism,[63] and this claim is at least superficially substantiated by LeShan's surveys.[64] In accounting for the objects of NDE visions, Ring reaches similar conclusions:

> Just where do the landscapes, the flowers, the physical structures, and so forth come from? In what sense are they real?...This is a realm that is created by interacting thought structures....Since individual minds "create" this world [out of thoughts and images], this reality reflects to a degree the "thought-structures" of individuals used to the world of physical reality.... "The world of light" is indeed a mind-created world fashioned of interacting (or interfering) thought patterns. Nevertheless, that world is full as real-seeming as is our physical world.[65]

In sum, the idea that the "next world" has idea-based images

and perceptions receives some support from psychologists as well as philosophers and NDE researchers. All agree that such an idealism makes consistent sense, both of the mechanisms of various psychic phenomena, and of the "scenery" of the next world in NDE's. Such an idealism, of course, is also in keeping with the suggestions of meditators and mystics in both Western and Eastern traditions.[66] It would appear that such predictions of an idealistic next world need not conflict with the physicists' conceptions of this world, since they are fundamentally distinct realms. But how could we ever know that the next world is in fact idealistic? Are such claims subject in any way to the sorts of verificationist/falsificationist principles we want to apply to statements about this world?

2) Verification Theoretically Possible

The confirmation of the idealist nature of the next world need not seem so impossible as the questioner might presuppose. Further investigations of just the sort which we have considered in this study (OBE's NDE's, etc.) may yield additional facts which tend to confirm or deny the idealist hypothesis. Moreover, if the Buddhists are correct that mysticism gives previews of the same realms which are visible at death, then we need not wait until death, but can conduct other sorts of research with living meditating subjects.[67] Of course, we might have to devise new methodologies of science to investigate a realm which is in essence experiencable but mind-dependent and non-material.

The one scientist to take this proposal seriously is Charles Tart. He has suggested that we should recognize ASC's (altered states of consciousness) as giving insights into other idealistic realities. Tart advocates research using teams of people who would volunteer to explore the realms of the mind much as we now explore the sea or the stratosphere. They would be trained in methods of reporting and objectivity, and learn to verbally report experiences as they were having them, or to remember them in such ways that they could be recorded immediately on return to waking consciousness and "this world." They could be given carefully controlled doses of drugs which are known to produce ASC's, or rely solely on their natural meditative abilities to achieve altered states, if they showed talents in that direction. Tart knows that the public is not receptive to such proposals at the moment, and is also aware of the dangerous side-effects of some hallucinogens. However, the important philosophical point is that we can make a cogent case for the scientific study of ideational realms through altered states of mind, and whether his programme is adopted or not, its canons and principles harmonize with those of modern science.[68]

That we should be able to construct a "geography" of idealistic landscapes, while mind-boggling to many Westerners, is nothing new to India. There Patanjali's Yoga system, the _Visudhimagga_ of the Abhidharmists, the _Meditation Sutras_ of the

Pure Land sects, and the Book of the Dead--to name but a few--are step-by-step guides to achieving other states and experiencing other realms, with the assumption that the practitioner will be able to verify for himself the teachings through discipline and practice.[69] If a program like Tart's were ever adopted, we might gradually learn what variables (psychological and religious as well as physical) contribute importantly to enabling or producing visions of what nature, and how we can better compare the visions of different subjects. It might even become possible to take intersubjective trips, where two or more people experience themselves going together to another realm, just as it is possible to have shared dreams. But this is purely speculation. The important concept for philosophers to remember is that such meditative or altered-state access to idealistic realms, in addition to more extensive studies of NDE's, might give verification to statements about the status and contents of such realms. Thus, the statement that the next world is an idea-based realm is in principle verifiable, and not subject to the charges of "meaninglessness" which positivists are so wont to level.

3) Some Objections Answered

Several major objections are immediately leveled against any theory of survival which no longer seems to require physical bodies of any kind, and talks about mind-dependent realms. Let us lay these skeptical objections to their final rest.

a) Solipsism

One common argument against survival in an idealist next world is that such experiences would be inescapably solipsistic or subjective, lacking any physical basis. Numerous reponses are available to this challenge. In the first place, the nature of the next world is the way it is, and it is not be changed or argued against simply because we would rather have it any other way. If the idealistic life after death were indeed solipsistic, it might take a while to discover the fact, but our desire that it be otherwise would not necessarily make it so. It is possible that the phase of solipsism after death is only a temporary stage, prior to encountering other beings,[70] or that the combined thoughts of minds on roughly the same "level" might produce environments common to an entire set of such minds.[71] There still might be an aspect of subjectivity in the sense that elements of private experience remain, that the other-minds problem remains a real one, and perhaps that some of the experiences which one projects in the presence of other minds are not fully experienced by the others.

On the other hand, there might be considerable intersubjectivity. The fact that this intersubjectivity is influenced by the experiencers themselves is analogous to Heisenberg's discovery that the very act of investigating changes the object investigated.[72] The difference is one of degree, not of kind.

The demand that the external world be somehow "objective" is increasingly giving way, even in the "hard" sciences;

> Objectivity in short, is now conceived of as intersubjectivity. Intersubjective norms are not agreed to by the members of a society because they are objective; they are objective because they are jointly accepted.[77]

Thus, the materialistic sort of naive realist objectivity which is presupposed by the objection from solipsism, is not even thought to be attainable in this world; its absence in the next world need prove no obstacle to the reality of that realm. On the contrary, if the realm entered at death is indeed an image-projection of numerous minds in concert, there might be a distinct feeling of material reality and intersubjectivity. So the argument from solipsism (1) would not keep idealist worlds from existing; (2) need not apply to an idealistic next world any more than to Berkeley's conceptions of this world, and (3) presupposes desiderata which are not attainable even in this world.

b) Identification

Another commonly-raised pseudo-problem is that people in an idealistic next world might be unidentifiable, since they lack the "astral" sorts of bodies we suggested might provide psychophysical continuity. To answer this objection, we must first distinguish the perspective from which identity is being considered. It is quite conceivable that, if all that exist in the next world were disembodied minds, there might be no

immediate, public, perceptual way of identifying other people--in which case this objection collapses into the arguments against solipsism and subjectivity, and can be similarly answered.[74]

On the other hand, there is nothing inherent in the notion of an idealistic world which need make it any less public, less identifiable, or less real-seeming than the world we presently inhabit, which most people think is not idealistic. Berkeley's dialogues well illustrate that an idealistic world may include perceived bodies, persons, and sensations of all sorts, with the only significant difference being that their underlying essence is not material but spiritual (or ideational). Similarly, just as it is possible that all the apparently real solid entities in this world are just so many impressions in our minds kept harmoniously coordinated by God or by a law of psychic nature, so it is quite possible that an idealistic "next world" might have real-seeming bodies and perceptions. These might be the projections of the minds in those next worlds, individual or collective, and they might behave according to different principles, lacking material or wave-form substrates.[75] But once it is realized that perceivable bodies are possible in an idealistic universe, the problem of identification is no more.

c) Ideas not Persons

A third pseudo-problem which we should lay to rest is A.J. Ayer's old claim that disembodied minds are logically possible after death, but that they would not constitute persons. In

other words, it is admitted that survival of my mind is possible, but not that this mind would equal me. We may respond with two related observations.

(i) In part, the question may be a purely semantic one. Let us imagine a situation in which Ayer finds himself continuing to have experiences: he feels his perceptual locus drifting out of his head, looks down on his body and hears a doctor pronouncing him dead, feels himself pass through a dark tunnel, and arrives in "heavenly fields" greeted by his grandmother. A bit of mental experimenting--moving and stopping, telepathizing and getting telepathic messages--might serve to demonstrate that his new existence was decidedly mental and idealistic in a way which his former existence had never been. Ayer could now think to himself, either

(a) I know that this body which I perceive is not physical in the way that my former body was. And I know that the former kind of physical body is essential to the definition of a person. Therefore I am no longer a person [but a mind, spirit, fantasy, or what-have-you]!

or

(b) I no longer have a physical body of the sort which I had. But I still continue to remember my previous self and its experiences. I am continuing to have experiences, desires, and even quirks of personality. I guess that I was wrong that physical bodies are essential to selfhood. For I still exist, and I should like to call myself a person still, even though I know lack a gross physical body.

One line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that persons cannot survive bodily death; the other, that they can. But nothing important in the situation has changed except the

definition of the term person, and our ability to apply it to the new sort of existence in which survival is experienced. Then the argument that "persons do not continue to exist after death," is really quite hollow, for it says nothing about what really happens, but only makes a stipulation about how we use certain words. Murphy puts it this way:

> The question for science should be not, "Is this Myers or not?" but "What are the similarities between this evidence [or state] and Myers?" The question is not, does a physical person exist after death, but what are the similarities between what exists after death and what exists now.[76]

We have argued at length in section I that those similarities must include memory, continuity, and consciousness to be meaningful. These characteristics can certainly be maintained in a Berkeleyan (or even solipsistically idealist) next world. Thus the attempt to define persons so that what survives would not be persons because they lack physical bodies simply skirts the main issue, and does not deny significant survival except in an obvious and trivial sense, that the body does not survive.

(ii) There is another type of "survival" however, to which such criticisms might apply with greater force. That is, if there is some sort of depersonalized, transcendental, nirvana-like state, in which memory and volition as well as bodies are eradicated, there might be more serious reason to ask whether such survival were truly personal. It might be personal in the sense that a stream of consciousness might continue distinct from other streams of consciousness; yet without memory or voli-

tion, such minds might not merit the label of "person" in the way we are accustomed to using the term. Such arguments, again, do not in any way diminish the likelihood of such states existing. Rather, they make such a prospect simply more or less appealing according to one's religious predilections, and they approach the boundaries of the indiscussable.

D) Transcendent Supra-Personal States

If James and Moncrieff are correct that the body and brain are filters on reality--and if such filters do not continue after bodily death--it is possible that death may represent the end of all personal limits and boundaries, without necessarily being the end of conscious experience altogether. A radical removal of the limitations of consciousness might lead either to a sense of union with a "collective unconscious;" to an "explosion" or expansion of consciousness into transpersonal states; or into other states of disembodied consciousness difficult to depict or identify. This theory is defended most adamantly by Grosso, but C.D. Broad also speculated about the khanda-like break-up of the personality into floating bits of psychic "flotsam and jetsam" at death.[77] Murphy sometimes shared this view, but felt that it would change the whole nature of survival discussion:

> Does personality survive bodily death or not? The question presupposes a sharpness, a distinctness, an encapsulation which simply is not an attribute of the thing we know as personality....Human personality during life here on earth is an aspect of the field in which it appears. After death the field must surely be very different. No fixed unit recognizable in one field can be transferred, as by surgical implantation [to another].[78]

Grosso, and sometimes Murphy and Broad, sees the depersonalization of mind at death as an inevitable consequence of the loss of bodily restrictions. Price and Hick, by contrast, also recognize the possibility of transcendent nirvanic states after death, but deny that they will be automatic; rather, they must be achieved after much further spiritual development. Hick concludes his massive study of survival with the prediction:

> In progressively "higher" worlds,...self-protective egoity withers away, so that the individual's series of lives culminates in a last life beyond which there is no further embodiment but instead entry into the common Vision of God, or nirvana, or the eternal consciousness of the atman in its relation to Ultimate Reality.[79]

Our studies of NDE's above suggest that few if any people realize a transcendence of personal consciousness at the moment of death, although a decrease in ego-boundaries is occasionally mentioned. Both traditional Christian doctrine and Buddhist theory would propose that the "vision of God" or true nirvana is accessible only to the most spiritual of persons. But it is possible that some people (the Buddha?) realized such a state immediately upon death, and that others (Jesus?) achieved it after existing temporarily in some other post-mortem state.

Grosso says that the concept of indescribable nirvanic states has been ignored in the West because of its unpalatability to traditional Christians—but palatability has nothing to do with its truth.[80] The worst problem with such states is not so much that they are hard to accept as that they are hard to explain. Thus, the Buddha remained silent when asked about his existence

after death. In more modern phrasing, if we know that Jones will transcend personality but still have some sense of consciousness after death, can we call that consciousness which survives Jones? Murphy responds that this sort of question itself contains illegitimate presuppositions. In short, a nirvana-like state may well exist, but if it does, it is not something which we can very fruitfully discuss in ordinary language--nor is the question of personal survival any longer a meaningful question in that context. The person is neither immortalized nor destroyed. There is no more self, but the consciousness is not thereby necessarily annihilated. Thus discussion of nirvana and transcendent states may not properly belong to a study of personal survival of death, but it is worth recognizing at least the possibility of such other impersonal alternatives.

CHAPTER II: CONCLUSIONS

A) Types of Survival

In previous chapters, we have consistently advocated that the variety inherent both in the human condition and in the experience of death implies that not all men should be expected to experience the same thing--if anything at all--at death. Speaking purely from the available evidence, and relying only on principles of induction, we may arrive at least at the following tentative conclusions:

1) Some people lack coherent conscious experience after being pronounced dead. Many other people report nothing after being revived from coma. While there may be some problems in memory or hesitation in reporting, the evidence suggests that for some people, at least, death may simply be a "blackout"--the end.

2) Some people are reborn into other human bodies. They will be most likely to remember their former lives if their deaths were violent and if their culture does not suppress such reports. Except for cases in which young children are reborn, there will normally be a period of years intervening between reincarnations. In rare instances, re-incarnation may also take the forms of spirit possession or be revealed by hypnotic regression. But no one reports being reborn immediately upon physically dying.

3) Some people will survive in ethereal bodies after the decay of their physical bodies. The fact that most apparitions of living people are produced by the people they resemble suggests that most apparitions of the dead are also produced by the people they resemble. This case is strengthened because apparitions sometimes convey information or motivations known only to the deceased. Apparitions are most intelligible on the assumption that there are other forms of matter, fields, or dimensions which physics has not yet studied. To the person surviving in an ethereal body, it will feel as if his locus of conscious thought and perception had been released from his head at death, and he was now living in a permanent out-of-body experience.

4) Some people will find themselves passing away into realms which are ideational or idealistic in their ontology. While some of the scenery and images perceived in such states will be unique to each individual, other features may be intersubjectively perceived by many consciousnesses. Such idealistic realms need feel no less physical for their lack of material substrate or their violation of "laws of matter." The idealist model best accounts for the phenomena of meditative and deathbed visions.

5) At some point after death, some people may experience selfless transpersonal or transcendent (nirvanic) states. However, we lack the appropriate language and experience to characterize such states further, and since they are super-personal, they go beyond the present discussion of <u>personal</u> survival.

If the Christian materialist wonders what we have done with the traditional resurrection, judgment, heaven-and-hell scenarios, we must refer him back to Chapter I, where we found insuperable difficulties in making sense of a materialistic resurrection. Many Christians, however, may find something akin to the sort of angel-bodied survival they desire in conclusions 3 or 4. And in each of these cases, we are talking only about survival shortly after the death of the physical body. None of this should be taken to rule out the possibility of a world-wide resurrection, judgment, and conditionalist immortality a thousand years hence on a Christian model. But unless some of our conclusions are true also, the resurrection of new people will be only a great day of replica-making, for there will be no conscious continuity nor personal identity unless survival of types 2 to 4 are admitted.

The entire array of afterlives (2 to 5) above is closely compatible with the world-view of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhists studied in Section II. In this Buddhist tradition, there is both rebirth of people into this world (2), and also rebirth into the invisible realms of ghosts or gods (3). In addition, there is passage through a tube or vortex to idealistic heavens (4), whose essential structure is ideational, and which may be experienced in meditation as well as at death. Finally, for the rare Buddha or bodhisattva, there may be a state of selfless nirvana at death (5) of which we can say no more.

This is not an apologia for Mahayana or Vajrayana Buddhism. Some Buddhists may reject this scheme, and philosophers of other persuasions may accept it. We are simply observing that the four-fold world-view concluded above is quite analogous to the world-view found in some Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist thought. If our analysis of 20th century evidence is correct, this world-view is more consistent with experience and more philosophically insightful than is mechanistic billiard-ball materialism, to which large sectors of the scientific community still dogmatically cling.

Oversimplified, then, our conclusion is this: there is good evidence that some persons have survived death in the past, and by induction, that some people now living will continue to have conscious personal experiences after bodily death. In the measured phrasing of philosopher C.J. Ducasse:

> The balance of the evidence so far obtained is on the side of the reality of survival, and in the best cases, of survival not merely of life on earth, but survival also of the most significant capacities of the human mind, and of the continuing exercise of these.[81]

Ducasse arrived at these conclusions after careful studies of his own 20 years ago. The best evidence for survival, however, has just emerged in the past five to ten years--and it fully supports his judgment. Our philosophical conclusions, however, should be tempered by several important caveats on their interpretation and application, and on the limitations of this study.

B) Cautionary Comments

1) Contra Generalization

It is tempting to want to generalize about the patterns of survival through which all men might pass. It is possible that all men indeed pass through the same sorts of states: through rebirths, various heavens, and/or realms of pure mind. However, non-mystical 20th century evidence does not support such generalizations at this time, much as aesthetic and "explanatory" interests might desire a more universal model.

We noted earlier that at least one possible afterlife scenario is idealistic. Hick concluded that Berkeleyan idealism made the best sense of resurrection in future worlds, as did the Mahayana Buddhists in an utterly different cultural context. Idealism could also be true of ethereal realms, and even of this material world, as Berkeley has cogently argued. The major differences between this world (if it is idealistic) and an idealistic heaven are in the degree of apparent objectivity--of the environment's imperviousness to human volition--rather than in the nature of kind of "stuffs" of which the two universes (this and the next) are composed. Hick himself wrestles with this problem without really resolving it:

> Given a Berkeleian account of a post-mortem world (or worlds), we must go on to ask why this should not also apply to our present world....Why should this world differ from any other worlds in fundamental character?[82]

Hick concedes that an idealist view of this world would make equal sense, and says that the only reason for not adopting an idealist view is "the assumption [sic] that Berkeley's theory is not true of this world." It would be more philosophically consistent and aesthetically pleasing to apply the idealistic model to this world as well, if we really believe that other worlds will prove to be so. This is precisely what numerous Buddhist and Indian philosophical schools would contend is the case, as would Schopenhauer, Bradley, and Mary Baker Eddy, each in their own ways in the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, reality is not necessarily definable in terms of the most rational or the most economical systems. With the exception of certain psychic evidence not discussed in this dissertation, there is little empirical basis to claim the superiority of an idealist over a materialist interpretation of this world. So for the time being this too must remain an open question, like that of the universality of a single model of post-mortem experience. These continue to be important philosophical questions for an understanding of the nature of man and the universe, but we cannot presume to resolve them here.

2) <u>On Ethics</u>

Some readers will doubtless be disappointed that we have not drawn any overt connections between the nature of the afterlife and the ways we live in this world. Others may feel that the most important arguments for an afterlife are ethical ones

to which we have scarcely alluded in this work (e.g., that conceptions of future life are essential to assure that there is cosmic justice in the universe).

a) Universe not just

To deal with the latter issue first, it is by no means clear that the universe is just, that there is any sense in which the universe "must" be just, or that it would necessarily be any more just because there were an afterlife. Ethical arguments may persuade the already religious; they may make us long for a realm where present sufferings will be recompensed and wrongs will be righted; they may imbue the cosmos with a sense of meaning for man which a non-ethical universe would lack. But they give us no irrefutable insights into the nature of things. It is possible that the universe is not the way we think that it ought to be, and we must be as wary of arguing from "ought" to "is" as we are of arguing from "is" to "ought."

b) Inadequate evidence

To the former question--the ethical relevance of survival to this present world--we must regretfully respond that there is too little evidence to make any statement. We are in a position ironically similar to that of the Buddha, who saw good men born into both good and evil wombs, and bad men born into both good and bad wombs--but we are not able to sort out all the factors and variables yet, as he was reputed to have done. We do have evidence that many non-religious people have "heavenly"

NDE's, and occasionally very devout people have "hellish" ones. People who would be judged equally moral by most human standards have extremely different experiences at death, ranging from blackout or life-review to OBE or beatific visions. Either our moral judgments are terribly faulty, or there is no correspondence between moral status and NDE's--or both. We simply do not know enough to predict which actions or beliefs will lead to what sorts of experiences, so we are in no position to make moralistic pronouncements.

"However," it may be argued, "if there is even a fair chance that consciousness may survive, we should cultivate our minds, which will be more lasting, rather than seeking first material goods, status, wealth, etc." While we are in strong sympathy with this statement, one would probably feel the same even if there were no evidence for survival. On purely logical grounds, if the next world is an idealistic one, it may be possible that the wealthy entrepreneur <u>does</u> "take it with him;" he is able to project, perceive, and perhaps even derive pleasure from the objects which once gave him satisfaction here, although they are now no more than projections of his own mind.

Price and Hick argue that such pleasures would grow hollow in a heaven of long duration, but we are not concerned primarily with duration of post-mortem experiences. Unless we know more about the specific nature of the next world, there is as much reason to study theoretical mathematics (to avoid becoming bored

in a more rarefied mental existence) as there is to be "moral" here on earth, when there is no clear guarantee or indication of what that will produce in the next life.

This is not to deny that survival is an issue of immense ethical importance. It may cause us to rethink the ways we look at abortion, euthanasia, suicide, or the "right to die." These are very important subjects for future studies, but not for this one. Furthermore, many wise and spiritual men of many cultures have stressed that there is a moral nature to the universe, and that this will be more clearly discerned in the next world. If so, this too has very important implications for how we live and think here and now. But like the question of idealism, this too is an issue for personal choice and faith, not yet empirically confirmed or falsified at this writing.

3) On Further Study and Experimentation

In this dissertation, we have assumed that philosophy can not be done in a vacuum, but must be based on the facts of experience. Both the Buddha and modern scientists would agree on this point. There are several issues which are particularly important for future studies to confirm or falsify, and which may affect our conclusions here.

a) The mechanisms of ESP

More rigorous studies of the mechanisms of ESP are essential. Discovery of such mechanisms might lead to alternative (non-survivalist) explanations for some of the phenomena we

have surveyed. Conversely, they might suggest that the phenomena indicative of survival do not use the same mechanisms, further invalidating so-called "Super-ESP" theories.

b) NDE's

We need more extensive and rigorous studies of NDE's, particularly with regard to physical states and cultural influences. Further published proof of brain death prior to resuscitation and reporting of NDE's is important to set straight the widespread belief that experience of any kind is impossible without cranial activity. Such studies would literally prove survival, at least temporarily, and utterly refute the already obsolescent mind-brain identity theory. Comparative studies of atheists, Buddhists, or unlettered jungle tribesmen may also give us important data on how universal deathbed visions really are, and how much a product of cultures which more or less consciously believe in and expect them.

c) Altered states

We need a deeper understanding of altered states of consciousness. Whether altered states give perspectives into other realities or merely image the psychological state of the subject, there is much to be learned from such research. Someday, perhaps Tart's plan for universities or laboratories of people researching meditative states--pooling, comparing, and analyzing their findings--may become a reality. Then we shall learn much more about the non-physical "geographies" of the

minds in which we live. In the meantime, we still have the option to attempt to explore such realms individually, preferably under the careful supervision of trained masters.

The question of personal survival of physical death is actually the question of the nature of man, the relations of consciousness to reality, and to the body with which it normally seems affiliated. One in ten people may give us usable evidence about the nature of survival on their deathbeds--once in their lifetime. If the Buddhists and mystics are correct that glimpses of other realities including the afterlife may be gained through disciplined meditations in this life, then this offers us another course worthy of investigation. Even if this theory that meditation allows insights into other realms were mistaken, it is certainly not unfalsifiable nonsense or a non-referential statement. It is a pathway which may be practiced and evaluated on its own merits, even as the Buddha urged his followers to do.

Many sincere religious individuals may be disappointed in the limited scope of these conclusions. They may claim to know more than we have demonstrated here, without the need for such dry philosophical analyses. Traditional Christians may disapprove of what they take to be a Buddhist coloration in our conclusions. We should reiterate that we are not defending Buddhism, but intellectual honesty. Many other religions may have developed ontologies and frameworks equally capable of making good sense of the data here studied; Buddhism is but one

example and not necessarily the best. This study, however, has adduced the insights of logicians, Buddhists, scientists, and psychologists, to demonstrate in a rigorously reasoned academic format that several sorts of survival are both possible and probable for some persons. While there are sociological and personal psychological reasons that many people may reject these conclusions, these conclusions shall stand unless and until overriding counter-evidence is adduced and interpreted.

ENDNOTES

ABBREVIATIONS OF JOURNALS USED

IJPP	International Journal of Parapsychology
IJPR	International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion
JAMA	Journal of the American Medical Association
JASPR	Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research
JPP	Journal of Parapsychology
JNMD	Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease
JSPR	Journal of the Society for Psychical Research (London)
PSPR	Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research

NOTES TO PART I: THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE ON SURVIVAL

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[92]ibid., pp. 32-34.

[93]Shaffer, "Personal Identity," (see n. 57).

[94]Hick, Death, p. 266.

[95]Price, "Survival," pp. 24, 39.

[96]Hick, Death, p. 271.

[97]Badham, Christian Beliefs, p. 144.

[98]Price, "Survival," p. 37.

[99]Hick, Death, p. 272.

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[101]Hick, Death, p. 271.

[102]H. D. Lewis, The Self, p. 163.

[103]Penelhum, Survival, pp. 51-52.

[104]Price, "Survival," p. 37.

[105]ibid., pp. 30-32.

[106]ibid., pp. 46 ff.

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[108]Badham, Christian Beliefs, pp. 140-44.

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[110]Geach, "Immortality," p. 15.

[111]Paul Helm, "A Theory of Disembodied Survival and Re-embodied Existence," Religious Studies XIV (March, 1978) pp. 15-16.

[112]Charlie Dunbar Broad, "Human Personality and the Question of the Possibility of its Survival of Bodily Death," in Lectures on Psychical Research (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), pp. 419, 422.

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[114]Peter T. Geach, Mental Acts (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957) pp. 114-116.

[115]cf. Flew's comment that "our overriding concern should be with truth not comfort," in "Survival" in Persons and Life After Death, ed. H. D. Lewis (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978) p. 109.

[116]Broad, "Human Personality," pp. 408, 422.

[117]Shaffer, "Personal Identity," p. 156.

[118]Karl Ameriks, "Criteria of Personal Identity," Canadian Journal of Philosophy, VII, no. 1 (March 1977) p. 62.

[119]Flew, Atheism, p. 131.

[120]Quinton, "The Soul," pp. 54, 64.

[121]Georges Rey, "Survival," in Rorty (n. 26) p. 52.

[122]Ducasse, Critical Examination, pp. 126-27.

[123]Richard L. Purtill, "Disembodied Survival Again," Canadian Journal of Philosophy, VII, no. 1 (March 1977) pp. 130-31.

[124]Perry, Personal Identity, pp. 12-15.

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[126]Perry, "Importance," p. 72.

[127]Madell, p. 53.

[128]Joseph Butler, "Of Personal Identity," in Perry (ed.) Personal Identity, p. 104.

[129]Quinn, "Some Problems," p. 355.

[130]Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (reprint) (Cambridge: The M. I. T. Press, 1969) III, ch. 6, #9, pp. 356-7. K. Lehrer and R. Beanblossom, eds. of Thomas Reid's Inquiry and Essays (Indianapolis: Library of Liberal Arts, 1975) p. 294, mistakenly cite Book II, ch. 27, #9, which does not exist.

[131]Perry, Personal Identity, pp. 12-18.

[132]M. P. Grice, "Personal Identity," in Perry, Personal Identity, pp. 75-95.

[133]Flew, Atheism, pp. 139-40.

[134]cf. Kathleen Wilkes, "Consciousness and Commissurotomy," in Philosophy (Cambridge) LIII, no. 204 (April 1978) pp. 185-188.

[135]Sperry, "Forebrain Commissurotomy," pp. 102-07.

[136]R. Puccetti, "Sperry on Consciousness," Journal of Medicine and Philosophy II, no. 2, (June 1977), pp. 130-37.

[137]Purtill, "Disembodied," pp. 125-30; cf. Williams, "Problems," pp. 20-25.

[138]Eccles, The Self, p. 304.

[139]Puccetti, "Sperry on Consciousness," p. 128.

[140]Arthur Ladbroke Wigan, The Duality of Mind (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1844). For recent references, cf. J. Levy, Cerebral Asymmetry and the Psychology of Man (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 245; and R. G. Ley, Cerebral Asymmetries, Emotional Experience and Imagery (Waterloo, Ontario: University of Waterloo, 1979), p. 41.

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[142]Quinn, "Personal Identity," p. 110.

[143]Flew, Atheism, p. 143.

[144]Rubin Gotesky, "Disembodied Life," Pacific Philosophy Forum III, no. 2, pp. 68-76.

[145]Frederick C. Dommeyer, "Body, Mind, and Death," ibid., III, no. 3, pp. 6-7.

[146]Broad, "Human Personality," pp. 420-23.

[147]Peter F. Strawson, Individuals (London: Methuen and Co., 1959), p. 115.

[148]Penelhum, Survival, pp. 103-104.

[149]J. M. O Wheatley, "The Necessity for Bodies," JASPR, LXVI, no. 3, (July 1972), p. 326.

[150]in C. V. Borst, pp. 56-57; cf. Long, below, p. 316.

[151]Flew, Atheism, p. 117; cf. Flew, "Is There a Clear Case for Disembodied Survival?" in JASPR, LXVI, no. 2 (April 1972), p. 143.

[152]Geach, "Immortality," pp. 11-12.

[153]Douglas C. Long, "Disembodied Existence, Physicalism, and the Mind-Body Problem," in Philosophical Studies XXXI (May 1977), pp. 309, 316.

[154]Ian Stevenson, "Survival and Embodiment," JASPR, LXVI, no. 2, p. 155.

[155]Max Scheler, "Tod und Fortleben," (Death and Survival) in Schriften aus dem Nachlass, (Berne: Franke, 1933) I, pp. 397-406; John McTaggart, Some Dogmas of Religion (London: Edward Arnold, 1906), pp. 94, 99, 113.

[156]R. H. Charles, Eschatology (New York: Schocken, 1963), pp. 72-3.

[157]D. S. Russell, Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 359.

[158]Pierre Benoit, ed., Immortality and Resurrection (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 102-108.

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[160]cf. G. W. H. Lampe and D. M. MacKinnon, The Resurrection (London: Mowbrays, 1966) pp. 36-39; C. F. D. Moule, The Significance of the Resurrection (London: SCM Press, 1968); and M. Perry, The Easter Enigma (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 148, 188.

[161]cf. Walter Kasper, Jesus the Christ, trans. V. Green (London: Burns & Oates, 1976), pp. 127-144; Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1978), pp. 374-376; Karl Rahner, The Resurrection (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970), pp. 323-333.

[162]Quinton, "The Soul," pp. 70-71.

[163]R. B. Schiffer, "The Concept of Death: Tradition and Alternative," in Journal of Medicine and Philosophy, III, no. 1, pp. 24-37.

[164]Martin, p. 108.

[165]Flew, Atheism, pp. 126-28.

[166]Stevenson, "Survival," p. 156.

[167]H. H. Hart, The Enigma of Survival (Springfield: Charles C Thomas, 1959) reviewed by C. D. Broad in JPP, XXV, no. 2 (June 1961) p. 145.

[168]R. H. Thouless and B. P. Weiner, "The Psi Processes in Normal and Paranormal Psychology," in Proceedings of the SPR, XLVIII, no. 174, (Dec. 1947); cf. Chung Yu Wang, "The Structure of Shin and Immortality," in JASPR, XLIV, (1950) pp. 65-66.

[169]Gotesky, "Disembodied Life," p. 69.

[170]Gardner Murphy, "Psychic Research and the Mind-Body Relation," JASPR, XV, no. 4, (1946) p. 206.

[171]Badham, Christian Beliefs, p. 32.

[172]Broad, "Human Personality," pp. 410, 425.

[173]Flew, "Survival," in H. D. Lewis (ed.) Persons and Life After Death (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978), p. 109.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II: BUDDHIST VIEWS OF SURVIVAL

[1]Roy Amore traces this practice back to the Visuddhimagga: cf. his "The Heterodox Philosophical Systems," in Frederick H. Holck, ed., Death and Western Thought (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 134.

[2]Lynn A. DeSilva, The Problem of the Self in Buddhism and Christianity (Columbo: Study Centre for Religion and Society, 1975), p. 20.

[3]S. Radhakrishnan, Eastern Religions and Western Thought (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 83.

[4]Milindapanha quoted in Theodore de Bary (ed.) The Buddhist Tradition (New York: Modern Library, 1969), pp. 30-32.

[5]cf., e.g., DeSilva, p. 28.

[6]Mahavagga, trans. Narada-Thera in The Buddha and His Teachings, (Columbo: Vajiraramaya, 1964), pp. 100-102.

[7]K. N. Jayatilleke, The Message of the Buddha (New York: The Free Press, 1974), p. 134.

[8]K. N. Upadhyaya, Early Buddhism and the Bhagavad Gita (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1971), p. 368.

[9]Vinaya Pitaka, Maha-vagga VI, xxi, 1-10; cf. also Anguttara Nikaya, Atthaka-nipata, Ch. 12, 4.

[10]J. G. Jennings, The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1947), p. xxxvii.

[11]Milindapanho, ed. V. Trenckner (London: Luzac, 1962), pp. 46-48.

[12]Jayatilleke, p. 119.

[13]G. C. Pande, Studies in the Origins of Buddhism (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1957), pp. 493-495.

[14]Upadhyaya, pp. 373-376.

[15]Pande, p. 490 (esp. note 223).

[16]E. R. Sarathchandra, The Buddhist Psychology of Perception (Colombo: University Press, 1958) pp. 80-82.

[17]cf. Alex Wayman, "The Intermediate State Dispute," in Buddhist Studies in Honor of I. B. Horner (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974), p. 238, n. 30, 34.

[18]Upadhyaya, pp. 302-304.

[19]Mahakamma, trans. Kern, pp. 260-262.

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[21]Buddhaghosa, The Path of Purity (Visuddhimagga) (London: Pali Text Society, 1931), p. 665f.

[22]cf. numerous scriptural references adduced by Francis Story, in Rebirth as Doctrine and Experience (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1975), pp. 65f.

[23]see Amore, p. 124.

[24]cf. Jayatilleke, pp. 135, 143.

[25]cf. Bimala Churn Law, Heaven and Hell in Buddhist Perspective, and The Buddhist Conception of Spirits, (both Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishers, 1973, 1974).

[26]Jennings, p. xliii.

[27]cf. Upadhyaya, pp. 337, 341.

[28]Eugene Burnouf, L'Introduction a l'histoire du buddhisme Indien (Paris: Maisonneuve et Cie, 1876) p. 525.

[29]Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, The Buddha and His Religion, 3rd ed., trans. L. Ensor (Sir John Lubbock's Hundred Books, Vol. 94, London, 1895) pp. v-vi.

[30]Max Muller, Selected Essays on Language, Mythology and Religion, vol. II. (London: Longman's, Green & Co., 1881) pp. 301-3.

[31]Robert Caesar Childers, A Dictionary of the Pali Language, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, & Co., 1872-75), Nirvana (p. 266b).

[32]James D'Alwis, Buddhist Nirvana: A Review of Max Muller's Dhammapada. (Colombo: William Skeen, Government Printer, 1871) pp. 40-43.

[33]Th. Scherbatsky, Buddhist Logic (Leningrad: Academy of Sciences, 1930-32), p. 868.

[34]ibid., pp. 871-2.

[35]George Grimm, The Doctrine of the Buddha (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), 2nd ed., p. 5.

[36]Digha Nikaya I, 200, quoted in K. N. Jayatilleke, The Message of the Buddha, ed. Ninian Smart (New York: The Free Press, 1975), p. 200.

[37]Same as note 28, q.v.

[38]Max Muller, Selected Essays, vol. II, p. 306.

[39]Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys-Davids, "A Historical Aspect of Nirvana," in Wayfarer's Words, vol. II (London: Luzac & Co., 1941), p. 657.

[40]E. J. Thomas, The History of Buddhist Thought, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948), pp. 127-30.

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[42]Louis de La Vallee Poussin, Bouddhisme: Opinions sur l'histoire de la dogmatique (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne et Cie., 1908), p. 75.

[43]Louis de La Vallee Poussin, Le Dogme et la philosophie du bouddhisme (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1930), p. 51.

[44]Jean Baptiste Francois Obry, Du Nirvana bouddhique en reponse a M. Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire (Paris: Auguste Durand, 1863), p. 85.

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[46]F. Otto Schrader, "On the Problem of Nirvana," Journal of the Pali Text Society, (1904-5), p. 164.

[47]Norman Pliny Jacobson, Buddhism, The Religion of Analysis (New York: Humanities Press, 1965), p. 147.

[48]T. Magness, quoting Ven. Chao Khun Monghol Thepmuni, in Samma Samadhi (Thonburi, Thailand: Bhasicharoen, 1955), p. 17-18.

[49]T. R. V. Murti, The Central Philosophy of Buddhism (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1955), p. 48.

[50]Frauwallner and Hoppe are quoted in the preface to George Grimm The Doctrine of the Buddha (see n. 35) Preface, pp. 3-5.

[51]K. N. Upadhyaya, Early Buddhism and the Bhagavad Gita (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1971), p. 342.

[52]De Silva, pp. 37-39.

[53]H. T. Colebrooke: Miscellaneous Essays ed. E. B. Cowell (London: Trubner & Co., 1873), Vol. II, p. 425.

[54]T. W. Rhys-Davids (and W. Stede) "Nirvana" in The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary (London: Luzac & Co., 1921-1925), p. 326a.

[55]Roy T. Amore, "The Heterodox Philosophical Systems," in Death and Eastern Thought, ed. Frederick H. Holck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), p. 128, and quoting the Sumyutta Nikaya III, 251.

[56]ibid., p. 129; cf. notes 20-22, p. 161.

[57]David J. Kalupahana, Buddhist Philosophy, A Historical Analysis (Honolulu, University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 87.

[58]David J. Kalupahana, Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1975), p. 180.

[59]Sogen Yamakami, Systems of Buddhistic Thought (Calcutta: University of Calcutta Press, 1912), p. 33.

[60]Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), p. 51.

[61]Milindapanha, Trenckner, ed. p. 73, quoted in William Theodore De Bary The Buddhist Tradition (New York: Modern Library, 1969), p. 30. Note De Bary's analysis: "Nirvana is not total annihilation, but at the same time it involves the complete disintegration of the phenomenal personality--a paradox which cannot be explained in words." (p. 30)

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[65]E. R. Sarathchandra, p. 103.

[66]Minor Anthologies of the Pali Conon, trans. F. L. Woodward (Oxford University Press, 1948) Udana VIII, Vol. II, p. 98.

[67]cf. Pande, p. 510.

[68]Jayatilleke, p. 122.

[69]cf. Upadhyaya's lucid summary on p. 343.

[70]M. I., 167; cited in ibid.

[71]Anguttara Nikaya (Gradual Sayings) i, 167. Unless otherwise specified, references will be made to editions of the Pali Text Society, eds. Thomas or C. A. F. Rhys-Davids. (London: Luzac or Oxford University Press).

[72]Kuddhakapatha, VIII, 13-16. cf. James P. McDermott, "Nibbana as a Reward for Kamma," in JAOS, v. 93, #3, pp. 34407.

[73]Kathavatthu, VII, 6. cf. James P. McDermott, "The Kathavatthu Kamma Debates," in JAOS, v. 95, #3, p. 430.

[74]Milindapanha, 294-7. cf. James P. McDermott, "Kamma in the Milindapanha," in JAOS, v. 97, #4, p. 463.

[75]cf. Whalen Lai, "Tales of Rebirths and the Later Pure Land Tradition in China," in Berkeley Buddhist Studies, III, ed. Michael Solomon (in press)--hereafter, BBS. Mss. p. 3.

[76]Karl L. Reichelt, Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism, trans. K. V. Bugge (New York: Paragon Book Reprints, 1968; originally Changhai, 1928), pp. 92, 115.

[77]J. J. M. deGroot, The Religious System of China (Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishers, 1972), v. IV, pp. 96, 113, 421f.

[78]Teresina Rowell, "The Background and Early Use of the Buddha-ksetra Concept," in The Eastern Buddhist, v. VI (pp. 199-246, 379-431; also v. VII (pp. 131-169). (Kyoto: 1934-37). Here, cf. esp. pp. 202, 426.

[79]Digha Nikaya, iii, 146-156. (9b) Samyutta Nikaya, i, 227, 293.

[80]Rowell, pp. 419-424.

[81]Digha Nikaya, ii, 25; Anguttara Nikaya i, 10, 26-27.

[82]Rowell, pp. 219, 415.

[83]Kotatsu Fujita (藤田宏達), Genshi Jodo Shiso no Kenkyu (原始浄土思想の研究). (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), pp. 487 ff.

[84]ibid., p. 496; cf. note 16, p. 499.

[85]Gregory Schopen, "Sukhavati as a Generalized Religious Goal in Sanskrit Mahayana Sutra Literature," in Indo-Iranian Journal, v. 19 (Aug.-Sept. 1977), pp. 177 ff; 204-5.

[86]Erik Zurcher, The Buddhist Conquest of China. (Leiden: Brill, 1959), p. 221.

[87]Fujita, pp. 51-1, 116 ff.

[88]Taisho 26, 230-33; #1524.

[89]Trans. by Daigan Matsunaga, in The Foundation of Japanese Buddhism, v. 2. (Tokyo: Buddhist Books International, 1976), pp. 22-3, 30.

[90]These texts are in Max Muller, ed. Sacred Books of the East, v. 49. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), pp. 34-40; 93-95. For a comparative catalogue of the contents of the sutras, see Fujita, pp. 448 ff.

[91]Muller, p. 52

[92]ibid., p. 38.

[93]ibid., pp. 42-44.

[94]cf. note 18 and Hsuan Hua, A General Explanation of the Buddha Speaks of Amithabha Sutra. (San Francisco: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1974), p. 117.

[95]Muller, p. 62-6.

[96]T'an-luan, "A Short Essay on the Pure Land," trans. Leo Pruden in the Eastern Buddhist, n. s. VII, 1 (May, 1975), p. 87.

[97]cf. D. T. Suzuki's Appendices to Shinran, Kyogyoshinsho, trans. D. T. Suzuki. (Kyoto: Shinshu Otaniha, 1973), p. 350 ff. For further discussions of the Trikaya see D. T. Suzuki, Studies in the Lankavatara Sutra, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1930), esp. pp. 308-313. cf. also Gadjin Nagao, "On the Theory of the Buddha Body," in the Eastern Buddhist, n. s., IV, 1, (May, 1973), p. 36.

[98]Julian Pas, "Dimensions in the Life and Thought of Shan-tao," a paper delivered at the Society for the Study of Chinese Religion (AAR) (St. Louis: Oct. 1976), mss. p. 14.

[99]David Chappell, in "Chinese Buddhist Interpretations of the Pure Lands," in Buddhist and Taoist Studies, I (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977), pp. 30 ff., shows how Chih-i and Hui-yuan reduced the Pure Land into simply a higher level of samsara or illusion.

[100]same as note 18. Unpublished translation by Kenjo Urakami, entitled "Gatha Discourse on the Sutra of the Buddha of Infinite Life," p. 7.

[101]Roger Corless, "T'an-luan's Commentary on the Pure Land Discourse," University of Wisconsin Ph.D. dissertation, 1973, pp. 140-141.

[102]Ryosetsu Fujiwara, The Way to Nirvana (Tokyo: Kyoiku Shinchosha, 1974), pp. 54-6. cf. also T'an-luan, p. 82.

[103]Chappell, pp. 37-39.

[104]ibid., pp. 42-46.

[105]Rowell, p. 228.

[106]ibid., p. 397.

[107]The Eastern Buddhist, I, 1, (1921), p. 152.

[108]Julian Pas, "Shan-tao's Interpretations of the Meditative Vision of Amitayus," in History of Religions, v. 14, #2 (1974), pp. 100-103.

[109]Meditation on Amitayus (Amitayur-dhyana-sutra) trans. by Junjiro Takakusu, in Muller, op. cit., p. 186; above descriptions from pp. 170-180.

[110]Pas, "Dimensions," pp. 22, 25.

[111]Pas, "Interpretations," p. 105.

[112]Allan Andrews, The Teachings Essential for Rebirth, A Study of Genshin's Ojoyoshu (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1974), p. 78.

[113]Zurcher (n. 16), pp. 219-220.

[114]Kenneth K. S. Ch'en, Buddhism in China (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 111.

[115]Zurcher, p. 221 feels this shows he saw the Pure Land at death.

[116]ibid., pp. 227-8.

[117]Zenryu Tsukamoto (塚本善隆), Bukkyo no Shiso, v. VIII, Chugoku Jodo (仏教の思想第八巻 中国浄土) (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1968), p. 283.

[118]Pas, "Interpretations," pp. 113-5; "Dimensions," p. 10.

[119]David Chappell, "The Formation of the Pure Land Movement in China: Tao-ch'o and Shan-tao," in BBS, III (in press); Mss. p. 24. Tsukamoto believes that Shan-tao himself may have suicided; pp. 273, 288.

[120]Fujiwara, pp. 134-6; 146. cf. H. H. Coates and Ryugaku Ishizuka, Honen The Buddhist Saint (Kyoto: Chionin, 1925), p. 574.

[121]Chih-pan, A Chronicle of Buddhism in China, 581-960 A.D., trans. and ed. Jan Yun Hua (Santiniketan: Visvabharati, 1966), pp. 69-73.

[122]M. W. de Visser, Ancient Buddhism in Japan (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1935), pp. 334, 327.

[123]Coates & Ishizuka, p. 493; Rensei himself predicted the hour of his death based on visions, and his passing was accompanied by music--p. 499.

[124]Matsunaga, pp. 13-14.

[125]ibid.

[126]Coates & Ishizuka, p. 203.

[127]Shojun Bando, "Myoe's Criticisms of Honen's Doctrine," in Eastern Buddhist, n. s., v. VII, #1 (May, 1974), pp. 41-2.

[128]In Sammai Hottoki [Honen Shonin Zenshu] (法然上人全集) (Osaka: Honen Shonin den Zenshu Kankokai, 1967), pp. 863-4.

[129]Jikai Fujikoshi (藤越), "Bannen no Honen Shonin," (晩年の法然上人) in Indogaku Bukkyogaku Kenkyu, v. 20, #1 (Dec. 1971), pp. 121-7; cf. also Tamura Encho Honen Shonin den no Kenkyu (Kyoto: Hozokan, 1972), App. pp. 24-38.

[130]From George Tanabe, "Myoe Shonin: Tradition and Reform in Early Kamakura Buddhism" (Columbia University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1981).

[131]Bando, p. 40. Myoe, Zaijarin, KKB, pp. 317b-318; cf. 367a.

[132]Myoe, Zaijarin, KKB, pp. 317b-318; cf. 367a.

[133]Fujita, p. 575.

[134]Milindapanha, 80, 17-27.

[135]Fujita, pp. 577; 580, n. 12.

[136]Muller trans., p. 15.

[137]ibid., p. 99.

[138]Takakusu trans. in Muller, ibid., pp. 189-198.

[139]Shan-tao is quoted by Genshin in the Ojoyoshu; Andrews, p. 83.

[140]cf. "Honen's teachings to Lay and Clerical Disciples" in Coates and Ishizuka. The notion of constant recitation is also predicated upon the fact that we must be prepared to die at any moment; cf. pp. 440-441.

[141]same as note 39.

[142]T'an-luan, p. 83.

[143]Coates & Ishizuka, p. 57.

[144]deGroot, n. 7.

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[148]Ch'en, p. 344.

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[166]Here Chu-hung anticipates modern scholars' arguments by four centuries. cf. also Senshu Ogasawara (小笠原宣秀), Chugoku Kinsei Jodokyoshi no Kenkyu (近世浄土教史の研究). (Kyoto: Hyakka-en, 1963), p. 217.

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[363]cf. n. 359, O & H, pp. 63, 66.

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[366]Richard A. Kalish, "Contacting The Dead: Does Group Identification Matter?" in Kastenbaum, Between, pp. 61ff. Kalish found minor differences in ability to contact the dead consistent with the Sheep-Goats theory, indicating that scientific training and skepticism reduces receptivity to such unusual experiences.

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[369]ibid., p. 312.

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[382]Maurer, pp. 31-32.

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[386]B. Z. Karmel and E. B. Maisel, "A Neuronal Activity Model for Infant Visual Attention," in Cohen and Salapatek, p. 124.

[387]Philip Salapatek, "Pattern Perception in Early Infancy," in Cohen and Salapatek, pp. 172-175.

[388]Maurer, pp. 60-61.

[389]Salapatek, in Cohen and Salapatek, pp. 200-201.

[390]*ibid.*, pp. 211-212.

[391]Leslie B. Cohen and Eric R. Gelber, "Infant Visual Memory," in Cohen and Salapatek, pp. 378 ff.

[392]M. Jones, "The Development of Early Behaviour Patterns in Young Children," *Pedagogical Seminary and Journal of Genetic Psychology*, XXXIII (1926), pp. 537-585.

[393]O & H, p. 152.

[394]Ring, *Life*, p. 60; Sabom & Kreutzinger, p. 200.

NOTES TO PART IV: PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

[1]Nicholas Maxwell, "The Rationality of Scientific Discovery," Part II, Philosophy of Science, XLI (Sept. 1974), pp. 275-295.

[2]Cyril Burt, "Psychology and Parapsychology," in Science and ESP ed. J. R. Smythies (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 81. The notion of Basic Limiting Principles in modern western science was first proposed by C. D. Broad in the 1940's as a description of rules which man could not conceive of things or events violating--within our present world-view. Careful analysis shows Broad's BLP's to involve not only considerable disorder, but to be already disproven by quantum as well as Einsteinian physics.

[3]quoted by John C. Poynton, "Parapsychology and the Biological Sciences," in Parapsychology and the Sciences, ed. Alan Angoff and Betty Shapin (New York: The Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., 1974), p. 117.

[4]Henry Margenau, "ESP in the Framework of Modern Science," in Smythies, p. 213.

[5]Arthur Koestler, "The Perversity of Physics," in Angoff and Shapin, p. 165. On the demise of laws like causality, see also Max Planck, A Spiritual Autobiography (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949), p. 149.

[6]Burt, pp. 107-8.

[7]Lawrence LeShan, "Physicists and Mystics, Similarities in World-View," Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, I, no. 2 (1969), pp. 1-15.

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[9]cited by Nils O. Jacobson, Life Without Death? trans. Sheila La Farge (New York: Delacorte Press, 1974), p. 221.

[10]Herbert Benson, "Physical Aspects of Psi," in A Century of Psychical Research; The Continuing Doubts and Affirmations ed. Alan Angoff and Betty Shapin (New York: The Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., 1971), pp. 147, 152.

[11]James Jeans, in ibid., p. 148.

[12]Hideo Seki, Five Dimensional World (Tokyo: Chuo-koron-jigyo, 1974), cf. also Burt, pp. 107, 120-121.

[13]Hornell Hart, "The Psychic Fifth Dimension," in JASPR, XLVII (1953), pp. 7 ff. Hart's conception is ambiguous in that it sometimes uses dimension as a mathematical construct and sometimes as referring to some other psychic realm. The problem is far from solution, but it is possible that such a dimension-theory approach may eventually find heuristic utility if not validity.

[14]J. Gaither Pratt, "Parapsychology, Normal Science and Paradigm Change," JASPR, LXXIII, no. 3 (1979), pp. 25-26.

[15]Charles C. Tart, "Emergent Interactionism and Consciousness," in Brain/Mind and Parapsychology ed. Betty Shapin and Lisette Coly (New York: The Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., 1979), p. 182.

[16]Gardner Murphy, "Psychical Research and the Mind-Body Relation," JASPR, XL, no. 4 (1946), pp. 192, 207.

[17]John Beloff, "Parapsychology and Its Neighbors," in Philosophical Dimensions of Parapsychology, ed. Hoyt L. Edge and J. M. O. Wheatley (Springfield: Charles C Thomas, 1976). cf. also the articles by Murphy and Meehl following Beloff's in the same volume.

[18]Remy Chauvin, "To Reconcile Psi and Physics," in ibid., pp. 410-14.

[19]cf. Poynton's observation that "Despite remarks such as [Heisenberg's] we still have the ridiculous situation that perhaps most biologists and psychologists are still aggressively trying to conform to outdated world-views which in some way constitute their ideas of physics." Parapsychology, pp. 118-119. cf. also Alister Hardy, "Biology and ESP," in Smythies, p. 149.

[20]Antony Flew, "Parapsychology Revisited: Laws, Miracles, and Repeatability," The Humanist, XXXVI, no. 1 (1976), p. 28.

[21]Lawrence LeShan, "Parapsychology and the Concept of the Repeatable Experiment," IJPP, VII, no. 1 (1966), p. 133.

[22]ibid.

[23]Michael Scriven, "New Frontiers of the Brain," in JPP, XXV, (1961), p. 310.

[24]examples from LeShan, "Parapsychology . . . Experiment," p. 124.

[25]R. G. A. Dolby, "Reflections on Deviant Science," in On the Margins of Science, ed. Roy Wallis (Keele: University of Keele, 1979), p. 32.

[26]Pratt, loc. cit.

[27]Gardner Murphy, "Are There any Solid Facts in Psychical Research?" in Edge and Wheatley, pp. 396-397.

[28]cf. Max Planck's assertion, "I must take exception to the view . . . that a problem in physics merits examination only if it is established in advance that a definite answer can be obtained." (p. 139) Planck goes on to show how experiments without definite answers have still had important results for science.

[29]Michael Scriven, "Explanations of the Supernatural," in Philosophy and Psychical Research, ed. Shivesh C. Thakur (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), pp. 188-189.

[30]For an additional discussion of the nature of explanations, see Michael Scriven, "Explanations, Predictions, and Laws," in Baruch A. Brody, ed., Readings in the Philosophy of Science (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 102-103.

[31]Scriven, in Thakur, pp. 192-193.

[32]George R. Price, "Science and the Supernatural," in Science, CXXII, no. 3165 (1955), p. 362.

[33]J. B. Rhine, "Comments on 'Science and the Supernatural'," in Science, CXXIII, no. 3184 (1956), p. 12.

[34]This argument is used by George Price in "Science and the Supernatural." It is originally found in David Hume, "Of Miracles," in Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding, 2nd. ed., (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1902).

[35]cf. the section headings in Paul Feyerabend, "How to be a Good Empiricist--A Plea for Tolerance in Matters Epistemological," in Brody, pp. 328-334.

[36]C. J. Ducasse, A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Life After Death (Springfield: Charles C Thomas, 1961), pp. 149 ff.

[37]cf. note 33.

[38]Lawrence LeShan and Henry Margenau, "An Approach to a Science of Psychical Research," JSPR, L, no. 783 (March, 1980), pp. 274-5.

[39]cf. Thomas S. Kuhn, "The Function of Dogma in Scientific Research," in Brody, pp. 357 ff.

[40]Marcello Truzzi, "Paul Kurtz' Analysis of the Scientific Status of Parapsychology," in JPP, XLIV, no. 1 (1980), pp. 39-41; 89-90.

[41]R. A. McConnell, "The Resolution of Conflicting Beliefs About the ESP Evidence," JPP, XLI, no. 1 (1977), pp. 199 ff.

[42]quoted by Rosalind Heywood, "Notes on Changing Mental Climates and Research into ESP," in J. R. Smythies, p. 48.

[43]J. Bruner and L. Postman, "On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm," in D. C. Beardsley and M. Wertheimer, Readings in Perception (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1958), pp. 654 ff.

[44]Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 135.

[45]quoted in Rosalind Heywood, p. 57.

[46]originally in JASPR, III, no. 2 (Feb. 1909), reprinted in William James on Psychical Research, ed. Gardner Murphy and Robert Ballou (New York: Viking Press, 1960), p. 92.

[47]Ernst Rodin, "The Reality of Death Experiences," in JNMD, CLXVIII, no. 5 (May, 1980), pp. 259-262.

[48]cf. D. Bramel and L. Festinger, "The Reactions of Humans to Congitive Dissonance," in A. J. Bachrach, ed., Experimental Foundations of Clinical Psychology (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 256. cf. also McConnell, p. 212.

[49]cf. Paul Feyerabend, Science in a Free Society (London: NLB, 1978), pp. 1-4, particularly stresses this idea.

[50]Kuhn, "Function of Dogma," p. 357; these same ideas are also found in his Structure of Scientific Revolutions.

[51]J. W. Brehm, "Post-Decision Changes in Desirability of Alternatives," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, LII (1956), pp. 378-384.

[52]Charles C. Tart, "States of Consciousness and State-Specific Sciences," in Edge and Wheatley, p. 444.

[53]Thomas Kuhn, Structure, pp. 114, 151.

[54]in Rosalind Heywood, p. 50.

[55]Lawrence LeShan, "Some Psychological Hypotheses on the Non-Acceptance of Parapsychology as a Science," IJPP, VII, no. 3 (1966), p. 378.

[56]Whately Carington, Telepathy (London: Methuen & Co., 1946), p. 45.

[57]I. Bernard Cohen, quoted in JASPR, XLVI (1952), p. 159.

[58]Brian MacKenzie and S. L. MacKenzie, "Whence the Enchanted Boundary?" in JPP, XLIV, no. 2 (1980), p. 127.

[59] ibid., pp. 149-152.

[60] William McDougall, "President's Address to the Society for Psychical Research," in SPR Proceedings, XXVII (1914-5), pp. 157-175.

[61] W. F. Prince, The Enchanted Boundary (Boston: Boston SPR., 1930).

[62] ibid., pp. 20-120.

[63] ibid., pp. 210-220.

[64] cf. e.g. Christian Century, America, etc. reviewing Moody and Osis.

[65] cf. Ernst Rodin, "A Reply to Commentaries," in Anabiosis II, no. 3 (Feb. 1981), p. 15.

[66] Burt, in Smythies, p. 64.

[67] J. M. O. Wheatley, "Reincarnation, Astral Bodies, and Psi Components," JASPR, LXXIII, no. 2 (1979), p. 109.

[68] Heywood, p. 48.

[69] Kneller, p. 108.

[70] William James, p. 64.

[71] cf. George Mandler, "An Ancient Conundrum," (Review of The Self and Its Brain) in Science, CC (June, 1978), p. 1040.

[72] cf. David Boadella, Wilhelm Reich (London: Vision Press, 1973) and Michel Cattier, The Life and Works of Wilheim Reich, trans. G. Boulanger (New York: Horizon Press, 1971), p. 211.

[73] cf. Harold I. Lief, "Commentary on Dr. Stevenson's 'The Evidence of Man's Survival After Death'," JNMD, CLXV, no. 3 (1977), p. 171.

[74]quoted by Heywood, p. 57.

[75]Antony Flew, "Is There a Case for Disembodied Survival?" JASPR, LXVI, no. 2 (April 1972), p. 129.

[76]George Price, same as n. 32.

[77]C. E. M. Hansel, ESP: A Scientific Evaluation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966); H. B. Gibson, "The Royal Nonesuch of Parapsychology," in Bulletin of the British Psychological Society, XXXII (1979), pp. 65-67.

[78]H. M. Collins and T. J. Pinch, "The Construction of the Paranormal," in Roy Wallis, ed., On the Margins of Science: The Social Construction of Rejected Knowledge (Keele: Keele University Press, 1979), p. 251.

[79]Ruth Reyna, Reincarnation and Science (New Delhi: Sterling Publications, 1973).

[80]Paul Allison, "Experimental Parapsychology as a Rejected Science," in Wallis, p. 286.

[81]ibid., p. 287.

[82]Truzzi, pp. 90 ff.

[83]This would explain the relative infrequency of reporting such memories in the West.

[84]Eileen J. Garrett, Adventures in the Supernormal, A Pesonal Memoir (New York: Garrett Publications, 1949), p. 441.

[85]E. U. Condon, "UFO's I Have Loved and Lost," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, December 25, 1969, pp. 6-8.

[86]Collins and Pinch, pp. 257-258.

[87]Allison, p. 278.

[88]R. A. McConnell, et al., "Experimenter Effects in ESP," JASPR, LXIX (1975), p. 144f.

[89]The 1970's have seen an increase in the number of death-related journals such as Theta, Omega, and Death Education, but the majority of these concentrate on social and psychological aspects of bereavement, suicide, and terminal care, rather than on the issue of survival after death. There is also an increase on the survival-related literature within the journals of parapsychology, and a new journal devoted exclusively to survival research, Anabiosis. However, none of these are listed in the major indexing and computer services, and their subscriptions are quite limited as yet.

[90]R. A. McConnell, "The Resolution of Conflicting Beliefs About the ESP Evidence," JPP, XLI, no. 1 (Sept, 1977), p. 212.

[91]cf. Collins and Pinch, p. 258.

[92]ibid., p. 259.

[93]Kneller, p. 191f.; cf. Kuhn, Structure, p. 168.

[94]Allison, p. 279.

[95]An application to a number of federal and private foundations to do research on the cross-cultural nature of death-bed visions, on the models of Osis and Ring, by the present author, was rejected on the grounds that the proposal did not fall within one of their established categories or subjects of funding. Other agencies refused even to read such grant proposals.

[96]Raymond Moody, "Preface," to Life After Life (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1976).

[97]cf. Bibliographic entries for Garfield, Grof, Kalish, Kastenbaum, Matson, Rawlings, Ritchie, Ring, and Sabom.

[98]esp. those by Sabom, Schoonmaker, Grosso, Pilotti, and Wistrand. (Cited in Anabiosis, III, no. 2, p. 10).

[99]Most recent and interesting of which is M. A. O'Roark, "Life After Death: The Growing Evidence," in McCall's, March, 1981.

[100]For the dangers of lay affiliation, see Allison, pp. 238 ff.

[101]Collins and Pinch, p. 253.

[102]Apparently Paul Allison's, in Sociology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1973 was among the first. Jeff Mishlove's dissertation at Berkeley in 1978 has since raised serious questions about the rights of the university to grant such degrees. Stevenson's chair at the University of Virginia Medical School is founded and funded by Chester Carlson, the legendary founder of the Xerox Corporation.

[103]cf. John Grant Fuller, The Great Soul Trial (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

[104]Collins and Pinch, p. 255.

[105]All above information from ibid., p. 254.

[106]Personal Communication from Dr. Kenneth Ring, February, 1981.

[107]Kuhn, Structure, pp. 202-203.

[108]Truzzi, p. 49; 89.

[109]cf. the excellent coverage in John Grant Fuller, The Airmen Who Would Not Die (New York: G. P Putnam's Sons, 1979).

[110]cf. Kuhn, Structure.

[111]Planck, pp. 33-34.

[112]Tart, same as note 15.

[113]Paul Feyerabend, Science in a Free Society, pp. 60-90 passim.

[114]Paul Feyerabend, quoted in "News and Comment," Science, CCVI (Nov. 2, 1979), p. 537.

[115]Kneller, pp. 226-232.

[116]cf. Sandra Mertman, "Communicating with the Dead," in Robert Kastenbaum, ed., Between Life and Death (New York: Springer, 1979), esp. pp. 124-132.

NOTES TO PART V: CONCLUSIONS

[1]Kenneth Ring, Life at Death (New York: Howard, McCann & Geoghegan, 1980), pp. 23-33.

[2]Robert Kastenbaum, "Happily Ever After," in his Between Life and Death; cf. esp. pp. 16, 20, 22. Kastenbaum argues for a much-needed antidote to the presentation that might imply death is "fun," or merely an easy release from suffering.

[3]Robert Kastenbaum, "Death Through the Retroscopic Lens," in ibid., p. 180.

[4]John Hick, Death and Eternal Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 414-416.

[5]Yogi Ramacharaka, The Life Beyond Death (Chicago: Yogi Publication Society, 1940), p. 80.

[6]Jacobson, p. 266.

[7]cf. Maurice Rawlings, Beyond Death's Door (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1978)--shows even good Christians occasionally undergoing "hellish" type experiences.

[8]This thesis is further developed by Michael Grosso, "Possible Nature of Post-Mortem States," JASPR, LXXIV, no. 4 (1980), p. 422.

[9]Hick, p. 392.

[10]ibid., p.457.

[11]This seems true even of Europeans dying in Asia (!); cf. Ian Stevenson, "Carington's Psychon Theory . . ." JASPR, LXVII, no. 2 (1973), p. 132.

[12]ibid., pp. 133, 135.

[13]Adrian Parker, States of Mind (New York: Taplinger, 1975), p. 168.

[14]Jacobson, pp. 368-369.

[15]We have already cited the years elapsing between death and birth in the previous section supra, q. v.

[16]J. M. O. Wheatley, "Reincarnation, etc." p. 118.

[17]ibid., p. 111.

[18]J. B. Rhine, "Research On Spirit Survival Reexamined," JPP, XX, no. 2 (June, 1956), p. 127.

[19]J. B. Rhine, "The Science of Nonphysical Nature," in Jan Ludwig, ed., Philosophy and Parapsychology (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1978), p. 125.

[20]Hick, p. 344.

[21]R. Binkley, "Philosophy and the Survival Hypothesis," JASPR, LX, no. 1 (1966), p. 28.

[22]John Beloff, "Parapsychology and its Neighbors," in Edge and Wheatley, p. 383.

[23]F. W. H. Myers, Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death (London: Longman's, Green & Co., 1903), pp. xix-xxi.

[24]Murphy, in Edge and Wheatley, pp. 391-392.

[25]ibid., p. 402.

[26]Adrian Dobbs, "Time and Extrasensory Perception," in SPR Proceedings, LIV (1965), pp. 249 ff.; cf. also Dobbs' "Feasibility of a Physical Theory of Psi," in Smythies, pp. 241-253.

[27]Whately Carington, Thought Transference (New York: Creative Age Press, 1946).

[28]C. D. Broad, Lectures on Psychical Research (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), p. 416.

[29]William G. Roll, "A Critical Examination of the Survival Hypothesis," in Angoff and Shapin, A Century, p. 125.

[30]R. H. Thouless and B. P Weiner, "The Psi Processes in Normal and Paranormal Psychology," in Proceedings of the SPR, XLVIII, no. 174 (Dec. 1947).

[31]cf. Stevenson, "Carington's Psychon Theory," p. 138.

[32]J. L. Randall, "Psi Phenomena and Biological Theory," JSPR, XLVI (1971), pp. 151-165.

[33]J. B. Rhine, "The Science of Nonphysical Nature," p. 125.

[34]Ring, pp. 234 ff.

[35]Karl Pribam, "Holographic Memory," interviewed by Daniel Goleman, Psychology Today, February 1979, p. 84.

[36]Ferguson, p. 84.

[37]Ring, p. 237.

[38]Pribam, loc. cit.

[39]cf. articles previously cited by Scriven, Meehl.

[40]quoted in Jacobson, p. 226.

[41]cf. Peter D. Ouspensky, A New Model of the Universe (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943).

[42]Hornell Hart, "The Psychic Fifth Dimension," JASPR, XLVII, (1953), pp. 3-11.

[43]C. J. Ducasse, "Letter to Hornell Hart," in ibid., pp. 52 ff.

[44]Herbert Benson, pp. 147, 152.

[45]ibid., quoting James Jeans.

[46]Burt, in Smythies, pp. 106, 120.

[47]This suggestion (of reaching other dimensions through tunnels) is Ken Ring's; p. 234.

[48]Hart, "Psychic Fifth Dimension," pp. 6-7.

[49]Immanuel Kant, Kritik d. Reinen Vernunft, 2d. ed., (Leipzig: Verlag der Durrschen buchhandlung, 1906), p. 809.

[50]"Human Immortality," in William James on Psychical Research, p. 292 (originally written 1898).

[51]M. Moncrieff, The Clairvoyant Theory of Perception (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), p. 7.

[52]Gilbert Ryle, The Concept of Mind (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1949).

[53]Charles C. Tart, "States of Consciousness and the State-Specific Sciences," Science, CLXXVI (June 12, 1972), pp. 1203-1210.

[54]John Eccles, The Neurophysiological Basis of Mind (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 278 ff.

[55]Lawrence LeShan, Towards a General Theory of the Paranormal, IX (New York: Parapsychological Monographs; Parapsychology Foundation, 1969), and "Human Survival of Biological Death," in Main Currents of Modern Thought, XXVI, no. 2 (Nov. 1969), pp. 36-57.

[56]Jonathan Harrison, "Religion and Psychical Research," in Thakur, p. 111.

[57]C. D. Broad, Ethics and the History of Philosophy (New York: Humanities Press, 1952), p. x.

[58]H. D. Lewis, loc. cit.

[59]See citations in chapter on Apparitions, supra.

[60]We speak here not of the "starry eyed" sort of idealism found in people with ideals, but rather of the philosophical idealism which holds that the underlying essence of all things is idea.

[61]Tyrell, quoted by David Ellis, in "The Chemistry of Psi," in Angoff and Shapin, Parapsychology, p. 214.

[62]C. W. K. Mundle, "The Explanation of ESP," in Smythies, pp. 205-6; cf. Beloff, in Edge and Wheatley, p. 384.

[63]Gardner Murphy, "Psychical Research and the Mind-Body Relationship," JASPR, XL (1946), p. 192.

[64]LeShan, "Physicists and Mystics . . , " p. 1-15.

[65]Ring, pp. 247-248.

[66]cf. Swedenborg, cited in ibid., p. 296.

[67]cf. Emilio Servadio, "Mind-Body, Reality, and Psi," in Shapin and Coly, pp. 234-38.

[68]Charles C. Tart, "States of Consciousness and the State-Specific Sciences," Science, CLXXVI (June 12, 1972), pp. 1203-1210.

[69]Non-western sources emphasize that psychic states are nothing to explore frivolously or casually; training, discipline, and a master are required the protect the sanity of the practitioner.

[70]Price's theory is analysed into these two [solipsistic and intersubjective] levels by Michael Grosso, "The Survival of Personality in a Mind-Dependent World?" JASPR, LXXIII, no. 4 (1979), p. 369. Martinus is cited in Jacobson, esp. pp. 276 ff. Pure Land Sutras have been repeatedly cited above in our chapter on Pure Land Buddhism.

[71]Ring, pp. 247-248.

[72]Werner Heisenberg, Philosophical Problems of Nuclear Science (Greenwich: Conn.: Fawcett, 1966), p. 82.

[73]H. D. Aiken, The Age of Ideology (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 14.

[74]cf. Pamela Huby, "Some Aspects of the Problem of Survival," in Thakur, pp. 123-127.

[75]cf. H. H. Price, "Survival and the Idea of Another World," in Terence Penelhum, ed. Immortality (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1973), esp. pp. 40-46.

[76]A. J. Ayer, The Central Questions of Philosophy (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974), pp. 124-125.

[77]Grosso, "The Survival . . ." pp. 376-377.

[78]Gardner Murphy, "Field Theory and Survival," JASPR, XXXIX, no. 4, pp. 200-201.

[79]Hick, p. 464.

[80]Grosso, p. 379.

[81]Ducasse, p. 203.

[82]Hick, p. 275.

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