

Richard Rose's Psychology of the Observer: The Path to Reality Through the Self

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Foreword

During the autumn of 1976, I first encountered Rose's teaching in a Los Angeles college on a poster in the Psychology Department. From the last line on it: "The Final Observer is One," I intuitively recognized that the person who wrote that "note in a bottle" to the rest of us drones in fantasyland had stepped outside our total realm into objective reality and Knew. I joined the local group, then went to the Farm for two weeks in the summer of 1977 to meet Rose and the others. After finishing the first half of graduate school in 1979, I moved to Pittsburgh and spent six years actively involved with the group in all aspects. In 1985, I moved back to California to finish the PhD program in Counseling Psychology. In part, I intended to make my career and identity a form of ladderwork. Another reason was that I knew I needed to totally immerse myself in Rose's teaching, work through every single aspect of it to the best of my understanding, and compile it into one comprehensive treatise, for my own benefit as much as for anyone else's. This manuscript was that dissertation. I hope it does service to Rose's genius and helps seekers clarify the path for themselves.

- John Kent

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Warm thanks also to Jim Burns and Alan Kahaney for their special friendship and to David Lane for his understanding support.

Re: "Killing the Buddha": According to Rose, a crippled chicken can still lay a healthy egg. And according to Zen, after Realization, as mountains are once more mountains, thus too chickens are once more chickens. Nonetheless, while this finger pointing at the moon is crooked and dirty, its aim is true. Sometimes, the Buddha commits suicide for us...

Abstract

This study describes the system of Transpersonal Psychology of spiritual philosopher and Zen teacher, Richard Rose. He calls this teaching the Albigen System, which has as its core the set of principles of mental inquiry referred to as the Psychology of the Observer.

The aim of this work is to approach Reality. The system recommended provides ways and means towards this goal through the purification of one's state-of-mind and self-definition. Based on his own experience, Rose claims this process of inner and outer work will lead the seeker to Enlightenment or Self-Realization, if diligently followed out to the end.

Rose considers this search for ultimate sanity to be the real work of psychology. His system is a practical, common-sense approach to Validity and incorporates esoteric principles dealing with the correction of the mundane, human psyche, as well as the navigation through the more transpersonal aspects of the mind-dimension. A methodology is offered for the transmutation of energy in the process of "becoming the Truth." The goal of the work is to arrive at the absolute state-of-being, which is said to forever answer all questions and resolve all desires.

This study presents Rose's teaching in an organized, systematic manner, explaining the meanings of and interrelationships among the principles involved, and ties in relevant material from similar spiritual doctrines, such as Advaita Vedanta, Gurdjieff's Fourth Way, Vipassana Buddhism, Kundalini, Jnana, and Raja Yogas, and Zen.

Rose's transpersonal "map," called Jacob's Ladder, is the central framework of his introspective system and is described in detail, including both its therapeutic and mystical aspects in refining the definition of Self as the final observer.

