

## Chapter 14

# The Psychology of Observation and Perception

It is time to narrow our focus and look more closely into the meaning of observation. Rose states: "(We must) properly analyze this thing called seeing. Who is seeing? And what is the quality of this seeing? What sees?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 5). This theme is continually repeated throughout the teaching because it is something even many people who consider themselves to be seekers on any number of paths do not examine seriously enough as a foundation to their chosen method of search. Observation or awareness is taken for granted as a natural function; neither its accuracy nor deeper significance being questioned. If someone asks us: "Who is seeing through your eyes?," we promptly reply: "I am." Few stop to ask themselves further: "Who is seeing through ME?"

Rose supplies the answer to this in his assessment of the psychology of perception. He claims we do not perceive with our senses, but rather: "The mind can see." He states this more precisely: "We don't see with our eyes, we only see with our mind" (lecture, 1986). This adds another level of complexity to our quest for the true understanding of life: not only are our senses and nervous systems imperfect instruments for receiving and processing information about our experiences in the world, but the mind that is the real recipient of this input is also unreliable in its interpretation of this data, due to all the ego-based conditioning, beliefs, states-of-mind, etc. already discussed. We do not live in the world – we live in our world. Furthermore, the Perennial Philosophy states the world itself is mind; they are inseparable.

We do not see the whole picture of existence as it is, from all vantage points. Like the blind men encountering the elephant, we see only our little part of it, from within the relative scene, from a poor angle, through a filter or cracked lens, with two eyes, and by a mind that does not know itself. We must see the elephant from all angles *at once*. William Blake's famous line promised: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, all would appear as it is – infinite." (Huxley, p. 189)

Rose points out a major danger inherent in our mental functioning; one that is as much a handicap in spiritual inquiry as in daily life: "The mind has the ability to create, better than to accurately witness. With the ability to create comes the ability to delude the self" (Rose, 1982, p. 139). This poses a problem not only in mundane experience, but in the implementation of any psychological or spiritual discipline in which one is inclined to project some desired state and then embrace it, rather than work to improve the ability to perceive reality objectively. He states that in truth, man cannot create anything real, but only discover that which is.

Here, there is a seeming contradiction. What he is saying is that the mind can create through projection, but that what is then perceived in experience is not reality, but only a narcissistic illusion. This is much like a mirage or hologram: it exists, yet it is not real.

Rose refers to this process with a term that usually has a positive connotation in metaphysical teachings, yet in the Albigen System is quite negative: visualization. Often, teachings of meditation urge the seeker to visualize something or other: a chakra, a ball of energy, an aura, an ascended master, an idyllic scene, white light, a thousand-petaled lotus, or some other symbol of spirituality or comfort. While this may have some functional value as therapy or inspiration, Rose considers this to not only not be truly spiritual, but that it is even potentially dangerous in regards to the serious business of searching for reality.

Visualization is that ability of the mind to create, leading to projection, and then the experiencer's identification with that projection—which includes that insubstantial, self-perpetuating mental entity called “me.” This is not only an abstract principle of phenomenology, however, meant only to be relegated to impersonal study in research papers. It has a detrimental influence on our actual psychological functioning as well, as Rose explains: “Rationalization, like temptation, comes to the human mind in everchanging form because all facts are immediately qualified with colors not intrinsic to the fact-state itself” (Rose, 1982, p. 145).

This is therefore one of the reasons for the kind of self-study Rose recommends. Unless we understand how our minds work and how its propensity towards delusion influences the life we experience, as well as defines the human self that is experiencing it, we cannot come to see the distortions in our seeing and thereby become free of its power to keep us asleep (*maya*). He offers his interpretation of the allegory in Genesis: Paradise represents direct-mind communication, perhaps among all creatures of all dimensions. Visualization was the apple which the pristine man should have avoided. He opened a new eye, one of his own doing [the paradox again: is anything of our “own” doing?], and closed forever the direct mind's eye. Not even God could find him, and God had to shout to find him. (Rose, 1979c, p. 12)

An implication of this principle is that once the power to create through projected thought is discovered, one must resist the ego-based temptation to “make one's dreams come true,” which is one of the more popular tenets of much New Age or mind-science philosophy. It is more important to realize—or at least to recognize the clue betrayed by this ability and surmise—that one is dreaming and so make jarring movements to wake up. This is wiser than working to concoct more enjoyable or self-flattering dreams that only seduce one into remaining in bondage. The message is that we must learn to purely perceive, instead of project—and to eventually attain the state where we do not perceive either, but rather invert our attention and realize the anterior Self from where the entire universe is born.

This kind of teaching is obviously quite subversive to the powers-that-be maintaining the “normal” world, hence the Gurdjieffian advice about one's needing to be a “sly man,” and Rose's warning that one must make tremendous efforts to wake up, but take care to not disturb the sleepers. By “normal” is meant those people who believe the world to be objectively real; those who believe themselves to be who they think they are; those for whom the meaning of life is pleasure, power, acquisition, vanity, or indulgence in any number of fantasies; those who believe in a dualistic, anthropomorphic deity who condones all of their desires (while their never questioning the source or nature of those desires); those who barter with this god for personal salvation in an earthly paradise; those who fully identify with the projection of life that passes through them; in short: those who do not suspect a thing.

As usual, Rose has a more succinct, dramatic way of defining our dismal status: "And the robot forgot his curiosity about his Designer, and projected phantoms of false hope and monsters of desire. And darkness was projected as light" (Rose, 1979c, prologue).

Before elaborating further upon the process of observation in regards to perception, following is a summary of some of the main themes involved in meditation that Rose advises us to keep in mind:

- (A) Keep to the business of observing. [Do not get side-tracked with irrelevant pursuits or getting caught up in the psychic material witnessed.]
- (B) Circumvent adversity (go around it). [Overcoming adversity is better than being overwhelmed by it, but out-witting it is better still.]
- (C) We should note at this time that it is always the truth-oriented part of the self that has the erroneous judgment. [Like the moon eclipsing the sun, the real "I" is deceived and seduced by "external" conditions or states-of-mind.]
- (D) It is apparent that at times the inner self, or anterior observer, is incapable of infallible apprehension...and even more, it is capable of distorted creations. [We are not only fooled by our inability to see the world as it truly is, due to some primordial defect of mind, we also help strengthen our chains in Plato's Cave by projecting our own shadowy beliefs and desires outward as reality.]
- (E) Visualization occurs with every perception, at the time of perception. [We do not see or know directly – we interpret, and in our interpretation is the world in which we live.]

One of the most valuable and original aspects of Rose's teaching is his precise analysis and categorization of the mental processes of perception and thought. According to him, these two processes are related: "I class our thinking processes as visions, because we do not think – we conjure" (Rose, lecture, 1986). He is saying that we perceive, retain, adjust, and project with the mind. We live in a visualized world. We do not see directly what is. "We" are this mind, not the Self in which the world is contained.

Rose considers most of our mental functioning to be entirely mechanical and non-volitional, contrary to our subjective experience that we are freely choosing to think or decide about something. A further complication is that while our thoughts are based on our perceptions from life experience, our perceptions themselves are not pristine, but are also forms of thought, in that our mental state determines how we see and so what we see. He wants us to recognize that our experience of life is actually a convoluted mental translation of experience.

Following is a brief outline of the faculties of the mind. The sequence of key principles to keep in mind is:

- (a) all life experience is relative and mechanical;
- (b) this experience is essentially a mental experience;
- (c) all mental phenomena or processes are forms of thought;
- (d) all thoughts are *visions*.

Their significance in regards to the goal of the quest is contained in Rose's repeated insistence that "The view is not the viewer," unless we wish to speculate on the two merging somewhere in an absolute state of Being. [The following section is condensed from Rose, 1979c, p. 20-24; 1981, p. 24-7.]

Rose considers the human mind to have three principle faculties: it **receives** (sense impressions), **records**, and **reacts**. We can call the first Reception or Perception, the second, Retention or

Memory, and the third would be Reaction, stimulus response, reason, or visualization (which is the mental projection of what we believe we see when a percept is received). He claims: "Visualization is the projection literally beamed out of us into our world-view and only then witnessed vainly as reality."

Perception is of two types: the percept or sensory type, and mental perception. Memory is also of two types: the material record of the senses, and the phenomena categorized as DNA, archetypal, or prenatal. Reaction involves the reflexive physical response to stimuli and attitudinal responses to the environment, but also represents a function called projection, which is essentially visualization. Projection is the result of a translation which occurs upon the receipt of a simple sensory percept.

So, with each faculty being more specifically defined, we now have:

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|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1a) Sensory Perception | (1b) Mental Perception    |
| (2a) Sensory Memory     | (2b) Ultra-Sensory Memory |
| (3a) Reflexive Reaction | (3b) Projection           |

Rose has defined thought as a personal reaction resulting from a percept affecting one or more memories. The genesis of thought thus begins with a percept. As perception is largely sensory, this distinct category of mental process should be called: *Somatically Induced Thought*. Memory is the automatic accumulation of percept-data. Memories are in turn perceived, thus furnishing material for more percepts. Visualization is a form of perception, using memories in new combinations. Imagination is the reaction of memories, stimulating visualization and an orderly creation of new memory patterns. Reaction occurs when subsequent percepts strike the impression made by previous percepts (meaning: memory). All the while, some faculty is aware of both perception and memory, and the inevitable reaction.

The next thing we notice is that we react to our own reactions. Yet, no matter how complex this process becomes, it is never more than reaction. He states: "It is not a divine candle in the head which we might label either discrimination or intelligence. And when we notice that we are reacting upon evaluation, we identify that process with ourself and call it Will." However, he maintains that Will is actually nothing more than a reaction to react in a fixed, planned reaction. He adds that although we cannot directly perceive our reacting except in some intellectual deduction, we can be aware of this process by observing the results of reaction.

Reaction is also of two other kinds. There is the automatic or programmed type of reaction which is somatic and largely reflexive. Then there is the mental reaction, which is unconscious. It is an Umpire function, which is the projection or perception to suit the universal-mind-paradigm. This is an Umpire-adjustment. [The Umpire will be further discussed in the section on Jacob's Ladder.]

The first two categories of mind faculties, Sensory Perception and Mental Perception, can be further divided into specialized functions. Following is an overview that explains the nature of each kind of experience.

[The first two categories are Sensory Perceptions]:

- (1) **Normal Sensory Perception.** (This refers to ordinary seeing, in which a sensory stimulus causes the mind to react, based upon previous experience, with a visualization-projection onto the environment; this projection being the only thing seen by the individual's awareness. The thoughts which result are seemingly self-generated but are merely reactions.)

- (2) **Abnormal Sensory Perception.** (This refers to visions that are found to be illusory or non-validated phenomena. This includes hallucinations, holograms, mirages, ghosts that cannot be verified, and illusions imposed upon the mind through hypnosis.) [The next four categories deal with Mental Perceptions, or Visualization-projections not warranted by percepts, in which the mind "sees" independently of the senses]:
- (3) **Mental Visions.** (In this, the mind watches synthetic projections from its memory bank, sometimes with the components being rearranged. This is commonly called imagination or reverie. This category also includes dreams of a non-revelatory nature.)
- (4) **Visions Without Projection by the Perceiver.** (These are non-physical visions that can be validated according to some law of reference. These include prophetic dreams or visitations, revelations or audible voices from some non-visible source, direct-mind or extra-sensory communications, and "magical" or supernatural visions. This faculty is the passive or receiving side of the projection-ability listed in category #6. *It may be that some of these visions are contacts with the Manifested Mind, or with emanations from the Manifested Mind.* This last term will be further explained shortly.)
- (5) **Visions of Mental Processes** without sensory percepts. (This is what Rose refers to as the Process Observer [see Jacob's Ladder]. This is the part of us that sees. It sees the somatic mind in all its workings from an anterior vantage point, although is unable to watch itself. *This is a genuine mental awareness by the Real Self, or Ultimate Self.* Much more will be said about this particular mental function in regards to higher meditation.)
- (6) **Deliberate Mental Projections.** (This refers to instances where visions are either projected by someone's mind upon the world scene or upon one's consciousness from another person or intelligence. These include psychokinesis, healings at a distance, possession, and materialization of objects. These are unreal manipulations or illusions projected into our mind, which we then visualize in the world. There is a creative dynamism in this; something miraculous. This category also includes the special phenomenon known as transmission...the direct conveyance of a deep spiritual realization.)

Understanding these categories of mental functioning and perception is vital to the work of self-knowledge and to find an escape from automatic, mechanical functioning, should this be possible (or rather from our identification with such functioning, which may in itself be as it is supposed to be). Rose is describing here the fundamental qualities of the entire range of subjective human experience. By studying the possible forms of error in our perception and thinking processes, we can take steps to eliminate them and return to a truer state-of-mind and thus more realistic relationship with the world...until the world and the self are seen to be inseparable by something, or from somewhere, else.

All this also relates significantly to the business of self-definition in that it is this anterior observing self that watches the vision of life we experience and is usually captivated by it, as well as fooled by the flaws seemingly built-in to the human being's mental functioning. Looking further ahead, Rose provides a glimpse of how our world of manifestation appears to those who have refined this quality of perception to its limit and whose reference point has thereby shifted to where they now see from the position of Reality: "The universe is an illusion only for certain people [so to speak] with special abilities of observation" (Rose, 1979c, p. 56).

Rose often refers to the familiar metaphor used by Ramana Maharshi to illustrate how erroneous is our point-of-reference as experiential beings. It also explains how this personal study of the mind leads to finding the Real Self. He likens our condition in life to a person who is watching a film in a theater. We become wholly identified with the characters and scenes on the screen as if they were

reality, while forgetting ourselves. The intent of the Albigen System is first to alert the individual to the actuality of the situation, and then to the need to pull one's attention back from the film being watched and to remember the self who is sitting in the audience. By doing so (i.e. living with or in awareness), the story being enacted before our view may also work out more harmoniously in the bigger picture than it otherwise might, although this would only be a side-benefit (to the actor we are). The next step is for one to peer back into the projector itself from where the movie emanates, to understand its mechanism, and then to become one with the light which is projected onto the screen through the film of mind-stuff.

Even this is not the final answer, however. Rose states that there is something behind even the projector and the light. He ties this in with Ramana Maharshi's earlier described distinction between the states referred to as Cosmic Consciousness (Kevala Samadhi) and Enlightenment (Sahaja Samadhi); terms admittedly meaningless and pretentious to those who have not experienced them. He refers to this distinction in connection with his reiterated theme that the view is not the viewer. This is true on even the highest level: "Whenever you see something or experience something – and this goes clear through to the experience of Cosmic Consciousness, the experience of ecstasy – this is not you. This is a visit. You're visiting a dimension, like Heaven" (Rose, lecture, 1979). The final answer would be that Reality that witnesses or gives birth to even Cosmic Consciousness.

Most of the information in the Albigen System is aimed at the individual seeker as its reference point, for the purpose of providing practical, experiential guidance along the path to Self-Realization. Rose does also offer an overview of the "cosmological" map (so to speak) of transpersonal psychology, in order to give the seeker a larger context for the search. He wants to make clear the qualities and significance of the different dimensions of what is loosely called "the mind." This outline puts much of the rest of his teaching into a more understandable perspective and indicates the course and purpose of meditation. [The following is condensed from Rose, 1979c, p. 19-20; 1981, p. 21-24, 29; 1985, p. 99.]

In this business of self-definition, when we speak of "us" (small u), or the self, we really mean the association of imperfect sensory perceptions and recordings, as well as the voices, egos, or appetites, all of which color the picture (physical world) that is witnessed by the mind. This "us" or self is what is called personality. However, the real "Us" (capital U), is the final observer, essence, or final awareness.

Rose claims that the master-plan from which we and the physical universe are created is contained in the mind dimension. This source is like a universal agreement of pre-incarnate man. It is the Universal Mind of Christian Science and the Oversoul discussed by Paul Brunton. Rose calls it the Manifesting or Manifested Mind.

He states that this mind which projects the relative world is universal and not solely the function of the individual person's head, which is in fact also its product. To isolate this projection-process for the purposes of self-study and to distinguish it from the percepts of self-observation, which may be incidents of process-observation, he calls it: Adjustment of Mind-Projected Perceptions. All physical (sensory) experience is AMPP, as is all visualization. Direct Experience leads to true experience, or to Mind (capital M).

So, in defining the mind, Rose is making a crucial distinction between the mind of adjustment (consciousness) and the Mind of awareness. He refers to the former as Manifesting or Manifested (since the projection is previously adjusted even before the person is born) mind, and the latter as Unmanifested, unparticularized, mind-stuff.

As meditation reveals, the mind (small m) performs two functions: one is AMPP and the other is the intellectual reaction to AMPP. We are always projecting, which is automatic, and always reacting to our projection, making endless, feverish analyses without really being aware of our own qualifying, catalytic influence upon the environmental picture. AMPP is automatic and unconscious, whereas the reaction can be generally considered to be semi-conscious and semi-automatic. It is only semi-conscious when it reacts in self-observation, or in the analysis of the thought processes.

**Mind (capital M) is aware of the whole above tail-chasing.**

Rose further explains how he distinguishes this Mind of impersonal awareness from the only mind that we generally know: the mind of consciousness, experience, phenomena, and identity – and points in the direction of the final Reality that encompasses both. He states that in objectively defining the nature of thought or thought-processes, one must also automatically conceive of a state of no-thought. A state-of-mind, if definable, must automatically involve a state of no-mind. The reality of “no-mind” does not mean non-existence, which is what the term seems to suggest to our mundane understanding, which cannot help but be fully identified with the projection-as-existence. Rather, it refers to the undefined mind, the undefinable mind, the unparticularized mind, the mind which does not think.

Rose testifies that “no-mind” is the “very aware platform” from which the mindstuff (Manifested Mind) that creates the world is generated, and is in turn witnessed by that which it creates. Also, it is from this position that we may become one with the Unmanifested Mind.

He explains that the Manifested Mind is like the cradle of the creation; this cradle being a transformer of an awareness even more powerful, but an undifferentiated and more universal type of awareness. It is this latter parent vehicle of awareness that he calls the Unmanifested Mind. “Unmanifested” here means not witnessable except in the experiencing of the phenomena which emanate from it, which is the Manifested Mind. This is a living place; a concourse of all souls because all of us can witness it. Mystics claim to know of it by entering it.

The Manifested Mind is the prop-room of the creation, where the idea or conception of the non-manifesting mind is made flesh. Our bodies and minds are Projections from this Manifested Mind. This dimension is a creation which, in relation to the Unmanifested Mind, is less than real, and is frequently described as being illusory.

This information is intended to give one a conceptual inference of what lies beyond our mundane minds. However, he cautions that the Unmanifested Mind cannot be perceived, even intellectually. Only the Ultimate awareness can touch it. He claims that when we are ultimately aware, we can enter the Ultimate Mind, or Unmanifested Mind. We cannot learn about it; we can only become it, or merge our awareness with it.

While he describes the specialized or Manifested Mind as emanating from the universal or Unmanifested Mind, he claims there is a source even ulterior to the Unmanifested Mind. It is from this source that Life or Light is born. Our stream of life finds its fountainhead long before our birth. Our very essence is projected from this Absolute. The Manifested and Unmanifested Minds are incidental to that Projection.

Rose has explained there being something beyond the traditional image of “God” as a perfect, Divine mind. Here, he also sums up the objective of his system of meditation and clarifies the significance of this report’s sub-title:

There is an intermediary state that you enter after death, and this is the mind dimension.  
The basic concept of the Atman and the Brahman would be closest, in regards the God

concept; the Atman being the individual ray that emanates from the central light that is the Brahman. The ray of light, that plays upon the void, seems to be an individual and identifies itself with a certain name, but it is really attached at the other end to the Brahman, the Absolute. So this is an entirely different concept of God than the guy with the big whiskers who sits up there and says, "Hey, you're getting out of line down there. You broke a rule". I don't say that God is even Universal Mind. The Absolute is a stage beyond mind. The mind is a dimension, and you discover that the mind is a dimension by losing the mundane mind. The individual mind gives way and you realize you don't have an individual mind – that it's mostly just contact with mind-stuff, so to speak. (Rose, 1985, p. 99).

The section on Jacob's Ladder will describe more clearly the method of realizing these ascending levels or dimensions of mind in one's own inner experience.

One thing we discover in honest meditation, according to Rose, is that within the microcosm of the individual mind, we have copied our divine parent and likewise made projections even more illusory and nightmarish than our inherited, or projected, existence.

The knowledge that our imperfect somatic mind is giving us an incorrect world-view helps us to realize that all our experiences are mental, not physical. It also helps us to realize that if there is an incorrect projection, then it is very possible that there is a correct projection. This would still be a projection and not Reality, although it would be a projection of a Real Manifesting Mind.

Rose provides a glimpse of the realization experienced at the end of this journey directly inward. He explains that as we project ourselves back through the mind-ray, we come to this universal, or Unmanifested Mind-Matrix. And here, we experience the truth of our own insignificance or nothingness in relation to the values once assumed by the Individual Mind. Thus, we are still observing with traces of the Individual Mind. He offers some important, though little-known, information in this testimony. He states that this viewing with the Unmanifested Mind is often mistaken for Enlightenment. But, he claims it is actually "'the mountain experience', which can be quite depressing, depending upon how much we remember of our relative selves" (Rose, 1978, p. 217). Rose adds:

It is only when we completely forget our relative selves that we transcend the Unmanifested Mind and enter the Absolute. And when we do, it shall only be a glimpse. However, the glimpse will be enough to carry the Individual Mind in unshakable conviction for the rest of its relative sojourn. (Rose, 1978, p. 217).

He admits the difficulty in attempting to teach this kind of material to people ("Talking about Enlightenment is like barking in a barrel"), but by doing so, presents a challenge to the seeker that offers hope:

When we are fully aware of the processes of the Manifested Mind, it becomes apparent that even concepts, or explanations, such as this entire work, are conditional and relative. So that in looking at it from the viewpoint of the Unmanifested Mind, it does not matter if you believe all this or not. It only matters that you look inside. Find out for yourself who your Ultimate Observer is. (Rose, 1981, p. 23).

This brings us to the primary message in Rose's teaching; the theme that is referred to in the title of this report. It is as if all the material preceding this point has been an elaborate, although necessary, introduction to the core of the Albigen System. Rose has flatly stated that his book, PSYCHOLOGY OF THE OBSERVER, contains the complete formula or road map to lead one to Enlight-

enment, if acted upon diligently. He does not make this claim to flatter himself, to sell books, or to trivialize something profound. Rather, he is testifying that the system or mental procedure which he describes is what brought him to that final answer, in actual experience. It is a short-cut; the most direct route. He is saying that all mature spiritual teachings have a common, inner framework of essential principles which can be implemented by the seeker, and that these can be described plainly. He sums up the higher aspect of the system in this key passage:

The true Self is the anterior [or Process] Observer, and the observation [awareness] of the anterior observer brings us to the ultimate or Absolute Observer. This sounds at first like a simple verbal manipulation or optimistic formula, but it is in reality, the true method of reaching the realization of the Absolute state of mind, pointed to by writers on Enlightenment. (Rose, 1979c, p. 13-4).

The previous section discussed the relationship between the Manifested and Unmanifested Mind-dimensions in conceptual terms. In the following passage, Rose brings these terms to life, as direct insights which can be experienced by shifting one's point-of-reference along the line of inquiry he describes:

The mind is a relative dimension. This stage-play that we are in here is a projection from another dimension. And there is a mind behind it that isn't manifested. Only some of it is manifested in this one. In order for the unmanifested mind to project this stuff to us, that dimension it is in must be a living thing; more alive than this one. This existence is more of the movie projection on the wall. And if you are persistent, you can enter it [the projector]. This is one of the steps that happens when you go through the formula of the observer. You realize that everything except your individual awareness is a subjective dimension. This ocean [from which each "water-drop" – or individual ray of awareness – derives] is a living dimension; much more so than this world. (Rose, 1985, p. 181-2).

This process of refining observation into pure awareness is what is meant by retroversing our projected ray and arriving at the ultimate pole of subjectivity (which is paradoxically found to be objectivity as well), from where it is now seen that everything that had previously been considered objectively real is actually a derivation or extrusion from this anterior Mind. Rose gives a feel for this experience: "This awareness might be called attention in the ultimate degree. And with this attention, we may discover that the whole world is projected through our mind, with endless energy that lays even behind that mind" (Rose, 1981, p. 29).

This is the "cosmological" application of the earlier discussed principle of personal psychology that in order to know oneself, one must be able to see oneself from outside the confines and biases of the human mind, from an impartial eye of observation. Likewise, to know the truth about our world, we must view it objectively from the impersonal vantage point in Spirit, and not from within it, through and by a defective, particularized mind. Rose conveys the image of a critical paradigm-shift in saying: "*To go outside the mind is to go inside the Self*" (lecture, 1979). This statement is worth serious contemplation.

He is indicating that our traditional understanding of the nature of reality is inverted. He has said that once the position of the Final Observer has been irrevocably attained, "You experience that the whole universe is inside of you" (lecture, 1986). It must be made clear that he is referring here to the capital "Y" You, not the ego-mind self, which a shallow or cynical understanding of the metaphysics of a humanized solipsism may seem to imply – that the world is inside our skulls. This

Universal Mind to which he is pointing contains the world, including all our human minds and egos along with it.

The human mind does superimpose its own layer of “maya” upon the “official” projection of the Creation, which is also maya. But, to step outside the confines of the personal, mundane mind, which is the only self we know, does not mean to affirm the vain “me” as being the center of the universe, as this “me” is also finally witnessed to be an illusion, along with the rest of humanity; a projection of the interior or anterior Self. Our point-of-reference of identity shifts when we watch ourselves die, and know this is occurring. The Self is not outside “us” — “we” are inside IT. Finally, there is the realization that one is the Self, and no longer the little “person” of which it is now aware. Keeping this context in mind, it should be further distinguished that “going out of one’s mind” (e.g. through drugs, insanity, or surrendering one’s ego-mind to another’s authority) is not the same as leaving the mind entirely, as a dimension. Even if the personal human mind is somehow exited (which is itself not a discrete, sovereign domain, but a conditional “psychic sphere”, with a very permeable membrane), one’s point-of-reference would still be within the larger mind dimension that contains it. This even holds true in the most extreme form of ego-mind negation: death. The belief in selfhood as a conceptual entity with which the soul identifies may remain. Upon one’s death, the soul, or individual ray of awareness, does not instantly stand alone in Reality, but may still get side-tracked into some other category of consciousness, or bardo, if it has not been sufficiently isolated beforehand; all of life and death happening in the mind. Most “life after life” accounts recorded in the literature are still relative experiences occurring in space-time, experienced by a finite self as its reference point, however indistinct or translucent it may be. To truly step outside the mind and enter the Self requires this ray to be fully retroversed, to where the mind in totality, in all its forms, can be seen clearly as a thing apart — from *Being*.

One of the many difficulties in making this transition, however, is our chronic identification with the picture-show. This results in our reluctance to pull our attention away from “The song of life that goes on forever...”, as Rose refers to the projected story playing itself out before God’s eye, and inquiring into the origin of the seeing of this vision.

Rose once provided me with a sobering glimpse of what the spiritually mature perspective is on the experience of mundane life after Realization has occurred, and one re-enters the world of illusion. I had asked him one of my typically naive questions: whether he considered life to be meaningful, if he felt any motivation to participate in worldly activities again, if he could appreciate the cosmic drama better now as the actor, the audience, the writer, etc. all at once. He replied: “You forget that I do nothing and yet everything. Upon returning, i (small I) may be aware of projecting, feeling beauty, etc., but it always knows that it is nothing” (personal correspondence, 1978). Note his referring to Richard Rose as “it,” not “me.” He never forgets the Reality that is forever the backdrop or foundation of all that appears to be.

Humanity has always longed for freedom from death, for communion with God, for Heaven, for some vague, elusive condition of eternal perfection and belonging. The road maps for reaching these transcendental states have been many, yet often describe such roundabout routes that many seekers become lost or tired long before they attain the goal. One of the most appealing qualities about Rose’s manner of teaching is his ability to forthrightly convey some of the most vital principles of esotericism; ones that are often garbled behind excessive symbolism and dogma in traditional teachings, yet doing so without trivializing his subject. Rose defines the essence of the spiritual path in one statement: “**Observation is the secret of immortality**” (lecture, 1986). Observation is what draws one back along the projected ray, into the anterior awareness that is of the Self.

One should learn to watch all that is before one's mental view with complete detachment and resist the urge to interfere with the life-experience one is witnessing, and even to note that the desire to intervene derives also from this person that is seen and is not of oneself (meaning the inner or anterior self). This passive backing away from oneself occurs while respecting the paradox that one must also make determined efforts to become truthful in all ways – even though one is doing nothing. Detachment is not of the person. Detachment is from the person. To be a renunciate does not mean to give up possessions – but to give up the possessor and reactive ascetic both. He has plainly stated the primary instruction to keep in mind throughout the entire course of inquiry: "OBSERVATION IS JUST LOOKING UNTIL REALIZATION IS ACHIEVED" (Rose, 1979c, p. 85). To get caught up in any other pursuit or process is to become immersed in duality once more and be diverted away from one's true Self.

Although self-observation seems like a simple, obvious form of meditational practice, one encounters a major problem in working to perfect this quality of mindfulness. The question is: while being short of the infallible, Absolute state-of-being, how can one be certain that what one is experiencing is genuine, objective observation by the real observer outside of the mind, and not some thought or ego-function of observation by a part of the mind within the mind masquerading as this real observer? (There is one subtle distinction to keep in mind here, to avoid confusion. Rose acknowledges that the observer too is ultimately found to be a part of the mind, but the awareness that passes through it, or of which it is made, is from beyond the mind – from the Self.) The latter can still be some form of delusion or colored perception and one may not realize it until afterwards, when one's point-of-reference has changed (e.g. Rose's comments about the person beginning the alcohol/drug/sex experience not being the one who finishes).

For example, one may wonder, while dreaming, whether what one is currently experiencing is a dream or is "reality" (as it were). After subjectively examining one's state-of-consciousness, one may come to the conclusion: "Yes – this is indeed definitely happening and not just another dream." Or, one may have the experience while dreaming of realizing that one is "in" a dream, and then proceed to observe oneself, with the conviction: "I am watching myself experiencing this dream, and thus am behaving and thinking sensibly right now due to my state of awareness of it." Then, the alarm goes off, one wakes up, and realizes that one's immediately preceding conviction-state about the reality of one's experience, the genuineness of one's awareness, or the rationality of one's conduct was entirely false, since the experience and all estimates of sanity were merely ephemeral components of a dream, as was the belief that one was watching oneself dream from a vantage point of objective awareness.

In other words, pinching oneself to test if one is dreaming is meaningless, since the pinch-experience can itself be a part of the dream. Then, how is one to establish a valid reference point with certainty? **The arrival at true awareness can be the only valid point-of-reference.**

There is an implication to our acknowledging the difference between the genuine awareness of a dream and just its conditional pseudo-observation from within the dream-state, as a part of it. If we cannot be certain of our actual, epistemological status while dreaming, how can we be so confident of our awakesness while we are in this "real" dimension?

All this relates to Rose's claim: "You don't know anything (for sure) until you know everything." One can know that awareness is genuine only when one is truly aware from outside consciousness and *has realized*, and hence know the full truth about what is seen, but not necessarily know that the experience of observation may not be real, so long as one is still only viewing the scene as a mental locus from within consciousness.

This predicament emphasizes the need to somehow make this transition from watching the mind with another part of the mind (the mental “observer” that is itself a highly refined thought and subject to error), to watching it with an undefinable awareness from outside the mind. Without this truly objective, impersonal quality of vision, one may be vainly indulging in an erroneous self-observation in which one’s seeing is polluted by various desires, egos, and rationalizations, while merely assuming that one is seeing oneself accurately. This is why we must be able to see our filters to seeing. Watching a demonstration of hypnosis in which the subject fully experiences the mock-reality the hypnotist is suggesting – and then humbly recalling our own previous states of certainty while hypnotized or deluded – forces us to take this matter more seriously.

Even after one has evolved to a certain level of spiritual maturity and one’s inner vision is fairly reliable, there is still room for yet another devious error to take place; one more way in which the ego-mind can outwit the seeker’s attempt to find the true Self.

A good metaphor for illustrating this is, again, the mechanism of a word processor, in which a sequence of text is recorded and stored after it has been written. Then, if one wants to work on this material further, the original document is not recalled from the storage area, but the machine instead automatically replicates the original text, and one works on this copy. This same mental “sleight-of-hand” can occur with self-observation.

Rather than pure, direct “seeing” of the mind by a spiritual witness, what may happen is a subtle process of the mind’s content being instantly copied, as it were, by another part of the mind. The act of observation is also cloned as an ego, rather than being a living, existential function; all this as one operation or mass-concept. Then, one engages in a mental study of this content from that ego of observation, assuming that it is genuine awareness of the mind from outside the mind-dimension, when it is all still actually one complex, high level thought or visualization within the mind. This is a more refined form of the dichotomy that Rose warned about earlier of not splitting oneself up in meditation, with one part watching another, but to view oneself directly as a whole.

The challenge is to be alert enough to be able to adroitly separate the seer from this syndrome in which the self is trapped and OBSERVE even this trick of the mind occurring, and not be seduced by the mind’s simulation of spiritual awareness. One must take care not to turn observation into a concept of observation, but to actually observe even these unwitting concepts of observation; observation as a living verb, not a static noun. Furthermore, as Jean Klein teaches, there is no “observer” as an ego or specific entity – there is only observation.

Since the ego-mind does not wish to be ended, this deceptive maneuver can be one of the final attempts by the lower forces to keep one in maya. It will act to perpetuate its existence, even by insidiously misusing spiritually oriented teachings meant to end or transcend the mind. Much like external sensory input perceived while we are sleeping (noises, hunger, temperature) being worked into the dream as a part of the story already taking place, our terrestrial dream-mind has the tendency to incorporate even a valid philosophical principle from outside itself back into the dream-state as only one more concept to reinforce the dream-state, rather than be awakened by it. (The seemingly inevitable degradation of the original teachings of the founders of the major world religions by their subsequent followers is sad evidence of this.) Likewise, the mind will desperately try to divert the thrust of any effort that aims at Self-Realization, and turn it into but another form of fantasy, egotism, or procrastination. One may entertain the illusion of waking up, while remaining fast asleep. This is why the path is said to be like a razor’s edge, requiring constant vigilance and intuition to diagnose one’s real status. Perhaps this is what Zen Masters are for, and the “inner Guru.”

I had asked Rose about this trap in meditation; one that can be likened to a dog chasing its own tail. His reply was most astute and summed up some of the main themes in his teaching:

Regarding the psychology of observing: the process of self-observation that you describe as possibly being a mental structure – is the exact route. As long as you see that the mind may be deluding itself – you are on the right track. The mind does invent processes and does build concept-structures. But the MIND does not (capital M-Mind). You cannot reason-out an answer to a non-relative problem. You can only become the TRUTH. Reason is an endless piddling with the infinite variables of the binary system. When you break through, the binary mentality is paralyzed. You have to become. From the non-somatic AWARENESS you will know (personal correspondence, 1988).

Recognizing this distinction between the contents and functions of consciousness within the mundane mind and the transpersonal awareness of this mind is not only a consideration in working through one's own meditation. In evaluating other teachings and procedures which one might wish to implement, it is also necessary to understand the goal to which they can be expected to lead. It is an admittedly simplistic – although accurate – generalization to state that the final objective of many forms of therapeutic psychology, New Age metaphysical doctrines, and even the Gurdjieffian teaching is to bring one to a state of pure, undivided, conscious experience. This is a fine ideal, certainly. Yet, this is still not equivalent to the transcendence of this experience, however perfect, joyous, and harmonious it may be, into *Being*. As mentioned in another context, Rose has amended the traditional image in Zen of “When hoeing corn, hoe corn” to correctly be: When hoeing corn, watch this person hoe corn – do not identify with it.

One way to get a feel for this qualitative distinction in dimensions is by seeing the change in the view before the mind's eye when waking up from a dream and re-entering the waking dimension. One must be careful to discern the underlying common denominator or pivoting point (the screen of mind) revealed during the instant of transition between the two states, as well as recognize that both states actually exist on the same level of mental experience. This is much like switching television channels: what remains constant are consciousness (the variety of broadcasted programs) as a continuous flow of perceived experience, and the still witness of this consciousness. The “string” that runs through and connects this necklace of different forms of consciousness is the “I am” awareness. It is an advanced state of mindfulness to isolate this quality of awareness and reside in it. This is also the central message in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*: the pointing to the only thing that is real.

The difficulty in our achieving this is that we are programmed to be continually drawn into the picture-show of experience and identify with it, all the while reacting to it and adjusting our perception of it. We can get a brief taste of what it means to not project familiarity onto the world when awakening in the morning with a rare case of momentary amnesia, in which one knows nothing: the date, the location, one's name, one's personality, one's values, etc. One is looking out at the room with a blank, anonymous mind – like a stranger in a strange land – and imagining nothing. This is similar to turning on the radio and hearing some music that is at first unfamiliar and perceived as just vague, foreign sounds, but then after a few seconds, one sequence of notes triggers an association of memory patterns and the sounds become mentally organized into a familiar tune.

These occasional clues given to us by life indicate that at first, sense impressions are an indistinct mass of forms, seemingly out of a void, and only become meaningful after we process and translate them. It is quite a task to interrupt this automatic, personalized adjustment and learn to see the undifferentiated flux of percepts directly, without the interpretation – and then to intuit the Reality behind them.

Following is Rose's metaphorical description of our status as ignorant beings lost in the dazzling delusion of life – and a hint of the direction towards Reality:

..and so, the robot saw motion in that which did not move, and began to love things which had no substance, *and to develop reactions which it called thoughts*. ...and being so immersed in his thoughts, the robot did not realize that (his thoughts) apply only to relative experience, and that relative experience admits opposites in matters of reaction or direction. So that in choosing the realm of thought, and overlooking the possibility of No-thought, the robot passed by the door of the Absolute, wherein thought is only a distraction (Rose, 1982, p. 147).