

Chapter 18

Personal Accounts of Transpersonal Experiences

It cannot be proven to another's mind with words and concepts that the foregoing described map which Rose offers will lead one to spiritual discovery. The validation for the receiver of this teaching can only be in the form of direct, subjective realization for oneself, from having followed through on the manner of inquiry recommended. Otherwise, all these guidelines remain only ink on paper. This report, as is the Albigen System, is meant as a workbook, not a travelogue.

Therefore, in lieu of a standard "results" section, which is inapplicable in this situation, following is a collection of testimonies from several individuals who have devoted years to working with the general scope of teachings presented in this study. The experiences range from a glimpse through the veil of relative, egoic consciousness, to a temporary visit to a higher dimension, to complete Awakening. An appreciation of these diverse accounts will give the reader a feel for the meaning of transcendence. They serve as a pointer to another state-of-being.

These are being presented plainly, with minimal commentary. Their worth as validation, and hence corroboration, must be inherent in the experiences themselves, which the intuitive reader may be able to apprehend. Their living reality can be known only to the owner of the voice that describes them.

Mark J., a long-time student of Rose's, talks about a terminal experience which happened to him after a period of crisis and loss. He refers to the Realization only indirectly, commenting more on its implications to the path:

I did have an experience. It was not the Absolute, but the basic experience for which the Absolute is the icing on the cake. It was the fundamental experience for which Rose's system aims — the death of the personal self and ego. On the other side of the ego, there is nothing bad. With that experience I could have ended my life, but as mountains are mountains again, and rivers are rivers, and egos are egos, I will go on. I got the answer from that experience. It isn't that I decided I got the answer, or gave up (I never gave up) and settled for something, but I actually got it and it's not something I have doubts about. The thing is: I'm certain it takes years to incorporate the insight. The somatic mind is what has the experience, but it takes years for it to come to terms with it and gradually alter its whole psychology in accordance with it. [Rose would

clarify that the final spiritual realization occurs outside the somatic mind, but that should "one" return into the body and projected world afterwards, the mundane mind would need to translate it into relative terms.]

I don't "own" it the way the ego owns something, because the ego got smashed in it. I think it is exactly the same experience for everyone. Actually, I don't think it is any ultimate answer, but a step to another level; something that is then the "answer" for it. The Zen "death experience" or "ego/mind death" is only one (level of realization).

The most important thing I learned from the whole experience is that you must make a vow or determine to yourself to want to know the truth, no matter what it means to the personal self; even if it means your total immolation. Even if you don't get the answer in this life, I don't think it matters.

The more you make spiritual efforts, the more all the negativities, inside and out, keep flying at you. It's more important to "live the life" than to go for the experience per se. I'm convinced that everyone gets it sooner or later irregardless, depending on how intensely you "live the life". (But) many will not make the effort to climb the spiral staircase, which has head-high steps not so easy to mount.

Wanting an experience automatically puts a block in front of it. One conclusion I've come to is that in going for Enlightenment, you don't go directly for Enlightenment, but that the experience occurs because you have placed an Ideal which is outside your personal ego above everything else. In Rose's system, this is "finding Truth no matter what it might be (whether to your personal liking or not)." In other words, you don't get Enlightenment from going for Enlightenment, but from going for a value you place as superior to your egos, wants, and desires. It's the by-product of serving an ideal, and sincere loyalty to that Ideal [the vector] above all else is the only thing that carries you through anyway.

Surrender isn't a passive thing, but really a dynamically more active consciousness than the normal aggressive-egoistic state. I've always had in the back of my mind that "surrendering" would mean to become some sort of vegetable. It's not true, though. The substratum of consciousness beyond the ego is a much more alive and individualistic state than the narrow ego. The philosophical conclusion I came to on the whole thing is: while the ego thinks it has to protect its existence, in truth, you can't be destroyed because you are an integral and absolutely necessary part of the whole, or Universe — like one of the facets on a jewel. The jewel (universe) can't do without that facet; it's part of the whole.

I went with truth and lost out on the material level, but got eternally rewarded.

Mike C., another veteran Rose student, had (possibly like Moses) a glimpse of "the Promised Land" after a period of intense philosophical work. The breakthrough was precipitated by his listening to someone read "The Three Books Of The Absolute" at the end of this period. Its penultimate line: "Silence is forgotten..." stuck in his mind like a monstrous koan. He wrestled with it constantly for weeks. Then — something exploded in his mind. Like Mark, he does not elaborate much on the experience itself, but on the convictions resulting from it, (in somewhat melodramatic terms):

It all began with a desperation and inspiration. The former was provided by me and my lifestyle, the latter by Richard Rose and his system and lifestyle. His Light shined

bright enough to penetrate into the dark depths of my self, where my Self had lain dormant, unknown for all my life. These were the beginning steps in the process of my awakening.

I had been saved from my own personal hell and had a glimpse of something greater than myself. It has been said that one glimpse is enough. If and when you have an experience, you will better understand what it means to Know, and Contain, and Honor. It is difficult for me to explain, and for others to comprehend, those things that were revealed to me in that fateful glimpse...of Reality.

My evaluation of that realization: from one side of the fence, it is and was worth dying for, worth sacrificing all of what appears to be life, all the "fun," joy, sorrow, tears of laughter and pain – everything is naught until they are seen from afar. And from the other side, it is and was and always will be my (birth)right, your birthright, and the same for everyone; if I, you, and they want it badly enough.

The most important things in life are friends on the path, a teacher who knows, and an eye for the truth; small t until capital T becomes unavoidable. And the truth is to be found or sought in every single moment of living, and it rarely is what our egotistical selves would desire, because the truth doesn't give a damn about those egotistical selves.

I do not exist except in the Absolute, and this life that we cling to so dearly is no more than a dream. You are no more than a dream, until you KNOW, prove, or discover otherwise. I wonder how and why I wasted all those years thinking I was someone. The great relief is knowing that you aren't. The great struggle is to forever maintain an even keel relative to the above facts; never allowing the mind to settle on either side of the line, but only in the middle, in-Between.

The experience did not change me. It allowed a certain Essence who inhabits a particular body, to find Itself, or become again in touch with Itself. "Me" is a misnomer, in that "me" indicates the presence of someone, or something. Forget how it will change "me" and allow that "me" to BECOME. The experience answers and satisfies the only true and honest desire we have (if we will admit it): that is to discover who or what we really are. It does not satisfy any needs or desires associated with that mundane "me" mentioned above.

The relevance of the process leading up to the experience? Damn it! It was never and never can be described as a "process." It is a life, a way of living, a way of taking each breath with a hunger for the TRUTH. If treated or looked upon as a process, it will be forever doomed to be an extension of the ego, the small s self, that is interested in such things as processes. Be careful or you'll miss this. Zen is never a process, only a questioning doubt, always a doubt, until the doubt breaks the shell of the illusion, the cosmic egg.

The Psychology of the Observer path is very direct and very subtle. So much so that it can be missed in the blinking of an eye (or in the passage of a thought). It is a very subjective, personal approach to something that ultimately is not so subjective or personal.

Our desire for truth will carry us through and allow the commonplace to become spiritual...or magical. Rose's system teaches non-thinking creatures the fine art and

science of real thinking about the self; not about processes, motorcars, ballgames, or making a living. It is solely dedicated to man discovering Man.

My recommendations to other seekers: Don't B.S. yourself into believing that seeking is fun or should be along socially acceptable lines, or even "spiritually" acceptable lines. Seeking is tearing your heart out milligram by milligram and dissecting it under the microscope of your enquiring mind, which is dedicated to Truth. There is no other way. We go out by ourselves, but if we are lucky, we may make the connection before the end, and thereby not remain alone for eternity.

If our concept of the small s self was not fragile, it could not be shaken. This self is the masquerader, the creator of deceit and illusion in our lives, and thereby the reason for our state of non-reality. Nothing can shake the capital S Self, for it IS. I know we cannot think or reason or rationalize or wish or love or hope or emotionalize our way into Realization. We aren't going to make it unless we leave ourselves behind. And I don't think that can happen by any act of will, but only by elaborate, intense, arduous preparation, and luck/destiny. The hills are again hills, and we are only blessed for that instant wherein we can see them from the vast perspective that is the Mountain.

You cannot comprehend the entire mental dimension. Better to become the Truth, and you will henceforth observe the mental dimension from a point of greater reality.

God has really provided me with some wonderful opportunities over the last year. Some of them hurt me a lot, but not the part of me that means anything. ...to be awed by the mystery of life and how it works in a pattern and fashion often unfathomable by my mind. There is always some dim awareness of the unfolding of events in the drama in exquisite order, right along side of the emotional involvement and attachment to it all. I feel the true nature of detachment to be another level of awareness in a person concerning life's events. He is both in and above the paradox at the same time; reaping the benefits of a conciliatory observation.

The forces of adversity are eternal and omnipresent, even when one becomes the Path. The trick is never to allow the mind to wander in reverie, and hence become more or less susceptible to those forces. A need for Enlightenment is just as destructive as a need for sex, only the action is more subtle. And harder to defend against. A man needs nothing; he just is. Period. We lack nothing. What we have is an abundance of concepts about what it takes to live—and die. A seeker IS the search, until he dies. If you were told that Enlightenment was just around the next bend, what would you be willing to do to make the turn?

You are not on Jacob's Ladder. You are Jacob, dreaming. Keep watching the spaces between your thoughts.

One anonymous individual provides a testimony of transpersonal experience of a different order. Although the account described was not that of an ultimate philosophical answer, the sequence of events and the psychic crisis that opened into revelation and resolution was a perfect parallel—if transposed to a "higher key"—to the hard course that would lead one to the final spiritual realization:

...For the previous year, I had been going through a series of hellish episodes of a mental or psychic nature. There was a profound feeling that what I perceived around me was possibly not real. At one point, I had the overwhelming and utter conviction that I was

losing my mind, my grip on reality. The conviction arose from a profound feeling that I had no point of reference to relate to. Concurrently, there was a manifest and growing conviction that I was going to die. Not physically, but a part of my mind was dying and there would follow a rebirth of sorts.

Strangely enough, with everything that was going on, I did not panic. What could I do? I decided that if I was going to go insane, I would watch myself go insane; observe the process. There was nothing else to do. I had gotten into the habit of analyzing the contents of (my mental experiences), trying to find some meaning or design which might possibly lead me to a way out of my situation. This went on for a year.

Finally, I awoke from the last of the recurring visions I was to have. I was desperately analyzing the contents of the vision, trying to make sense out of the whole horrible puzzle my existence had become. I reached the end of my analysis. I had no answer. There was no answer, at least that I could perceive. There was nothing more I could do. I gave up, totally, completely, to the depths of my being.

What followed then can only partly be described, for although there was somewhat of a visual component to this, what cannot be conveyed is the overwhelming absoluteness of the convictions experienced.

Immediately upon giving up, it was as if I had been hit by a bolt of lightning. A tremendous surge of electricity seemed to course through me causing my body to involuntarily convulse and contract with great intensity. After this sudden shock passed, I became suddenly aware of every possible emotion I had ever felt: fear, love, hate, wonder – the whole emotional palette of my makeup. But these did not pass before me in sequence. I experienced all of them simultaneously; the entire range of feeling I was capable of in an instant, yet each individual emotion was distinct and utterly perceivable.

Then a great emptiness settled in my mind and the answer came to me clearly and distinctly, absolutely and without contention, as to what had caused all of my misery and been the source of the tormenting visions I had experienced: an overwhelming and total fear of rejection to the point that I had rejected myself. What I cannot convey here adequately is that this realization was not mere speculation or theorizing about a possibility. I was being shown a fact; I was not thinking at all. The possibility of intellectual doubt about what I was experiencing just did not exist. I was outside looking in at an absolute about myself.

As this realization about myself unfolded, I became aware that I was viewing two different worlds. I could still see my physical surroundings, but I was concurrently viewing an interior world or vision. I saw myself as an ego, an entity who at some time in his early, forgotten childhood, built a wall around himself to protect and isolate him from other people; a psychic wall, yet nonetheless very real and very solid in the dimension of my being in which it existed. I was amazed because I realized that there was no possible way, in my ordinary consciousness, for me to have seen this wall. I had not the slightest inkling of its existence. I was seeing something new and unknown for the first time, and as I marveled at its unsuspected existence, it melted; literally melted before my internal eye.

As this passed, I both felt and witnessed the heart area of my chest open up as if it were a door of some sort, and I went inside. I was now within myself in a vast region of space. I felt myself moving towards what I can only describe as a limitless intelligence

of total power. It seemed to me to be a being separate from myself as I know myself. Radiating from it was a complete and total impersonalness or impartialness. My personal wants and desires were completely insignificant in the light of what I was witnessing.

And then it ended. Suddenly. Whatever energy or force had powered this had exhausted itself. All I knew was what I had gone through for the past year was over. I was weeping involuntarily....

After first encountering Jim Burns at a group meeting, Rose explained he was "tipped off" that Jim had had the Enlightenment experience when Jim remarked to the others that one cannot know the truth about life, the mind, the world, and oneself until fully leaving this relative dimension and seeing it directly and objectively, as a whole, from "over there." From this, and his other insights about the real nature of things, Rose recognized that Jim had been to the same "place" he had.

An entire book needs to be written—and will be—about Jim's dramatic odyssey and extensive understanding of the inner path. His teaching is essentially the personal, psychological methodology of "becoming the truth." His testimony is based on a spiritual experience which concluded a period of intense self-reflection, philosophical contemplation, and prolonged emotional trauma, finally culminating in his death. It could be said symbolically that whereas Rose first climbed the Mountain (of manifested life) before his head was chopped off, Jim was crushed beneath the Mountain—but knew everything there was to know about it! Both died from the ordeal...and discovered the Self. He has referred to the experience as his having found "Christ Consciousness," and realizing that ultimately: HE IS THAT. For now, here is a sampling of his observations:

The problems of the world are rooted in the fact that each individual person has not yet discovered the nature of his own consciousness. The grand awakening, should it ever come, would be one in which every individual person is brought to realization and complete, clear awareness of their own internal workings. The general maelstrom mankind finds itself in is the result of all the machinations of projection and transference in which everybody is working their own internal conflicts out on everybody else.

If the average person's mind were hooked to a loudspeaker and you could hear what went through it, you would probably look for the highest building around so you could be dead the first time. You are walking around in a reality that is the production of this common consciousness. There are very few who understand the functions that the mind is trying to fulfill and maintain.

The biggest desire of man is to know knowing.

You don't have to know everything. You only have to know what you have to know.

Completed feeling generates new consciousness.

The ultimate form of emotion is insight.

There is a perfected image behind every thought, and until you have every one of them honed to a razor edge, you can't achieve the comprehension that your soul so desperately needs.

Your internal system is entirely capable, given the opportunity, to teach you what it is trying to teach you. Your inner being knows. Your outer being is always unknowing.

Your system is constantly trying to get some inner job done. It is perfectly attuned to the potential of expanding your total consciousness to its absolute maximum. It can guide you exactly to the thinking required to deal with the outer circumstances or other aspects of consciousness that is absorbing your attention. This is all built in by natural design. It is endlessly trying to do this. It can't stop doing it.

Truth is the elimination of the question; the emotional experience of the resolution of the problem generating the question. Understanding is that state of being where the questions aren't there anymore.

To be caught up with time leads to being outside of time.

I've been almost always in the exclusive "presence of myself." Generally speaking, I'm never in conflict with my self.

The attitude of my Being toward me is: "What did you do for me today?"

Everything is an extension of the questioning process. This is the point that most scientists lose track of. Why are they asking questions in the first place? Why are the questions so insufferably unanswerable no matter what they find? The reason is that they are answering the wrong questions. Reason is the handmaiden of emotion and not the other way around. Ego wants it to be the other way around. Intellect is a monster when it is not connected in comprehension with feeling.

Every time you break through into a sharp, clear realization or imagery in any area, all of a sudden you set up a whole new standard and everything you've ever thought up has to be brought up and compared with it. It's a standard process and you have to start all over again. This occurs until you break through and achieve the awareness of THIS I KNOW IS ME. When you achieve that realization, you break into the final frontier. From then on, after you've done the massive review and reevaluation from breaking into that final frontier, everything thereafter is done for the rest of time. I spent thirty years doing it.

When you start looking at yourself, you are looking at blind feelings. The point is not to go with your feelings, but to understand what is behind them. The last guy that "went with his feelings" is doing life for murder. People are like boiling kettles all the time, but become so accustomed to it that they regard it as normal. This is the "shadow side" of a person and is what is trying to get these feelings to the surface.

To be genuinely "clear" is to have answered to every question you have had to date, and I've been there on a regular basis. If that isn't paradise, I don't know what is. It is to have taken every feeling that ever came into your comprehension and to have traced it all the way back to its roots.

I put people into a trance by talking, but I tell them about it. I put them into a trance in the area of reality where resolution takes place.

There is the feeling of the first time you ever puzzled at something, and came to an insight about it and had that sense of relief, and that sense of space—mental space—that comes only when you have an insight. When you have enough insights about yourself, you maintain that sense of space ALL the time, and you become conscious of the fact that you are that mind; that is what you become. Once you maintain that, it never leaves you.

The ultimate basis of sexuality is the drive for all comprehension. When I'm in the mental realm, ordinary sexuality does not exist for me. Nearly all the sex urge is not genital at all if you experience the depth beyond the superficial. Real libido is beyond the false libido of sex. I have fought with the concept of sublimation of energy since the first day I heard of it. You advance the whole front. You don't take something out of here and put it over there.

The whole of society is endlessly trying to make good on things that are worthless. They spend their lifetime pumping themselves up with fantasy because they can't stand the facts.

If you get stuck looking at too much reality, you're going to come apart at the seams. Life will become meaningless and your mind will refuse to have anything to do with it. When you get to the point where you're not willing to put up with it under any circumstances, your mind collapses; which is what happened to me.

All mental illness is the result of loneliness. If you are true to yourself, you will be abandoned, and you will do anything to avoid abandonment—which is the whole crux of the internal argument. We have the habit built into us of blaming ourselves instead of others. It is easier to blame oneself than to face the abyss of isolation. And loneliness is something that always afflicts those with high IQ's. They have nobody that takes as obvious the things they take as obvious. They are bound into higher concepts.

We have finally gotten to the point [in social history] where we've bought enough time for a few people who have the genetic propensity to be the resolvers, the true researchers, the perceivers of new information and insight into the workings of the mind.

Because few children can cope with clear realization of the lunacy around them, they bottle up their instinct to clear insight and realization, and thereby pass over into the very lunacy they so fear.

Guess who holds the throttle, the choke-hold on the highest spiritual experience? What do you suppose it means in the Bible: "Until you become as a child..."? That's what it means! Until you pacify that child and he disappears, you do not have access to the spiritual heights. Take it from one who went that way and found out! All psychic energy first comes through the hands of that child.

You have to repair the bridge to the inner self that was broken in childhood.

A great problem is the fear involved in realizing that you know nothing. When I first came to the place of being able to face the terror of the unknown, I split the only rock that was ever difficult for me in my entire life. Facing the unknown takes a lot of personal quiet and divorcement from the world around you. I studied this very carefully. It is the bridge between the inner and outer man.

The unconscious is suppressed conscious capability. It is the large body of unanswered opportunities to answer questions. The need was there. The question was generated, but it wasn't answered to. I separate between that dimension and the true subconscious, which can only generally be reached through the meditative process. The subconscious is the generator, in my experience. To get to the higher levels, I had to answer to the unconscious to the point where it would give me five minutes off, and then get into the subconscious to determine what direction it wanted to go in. I would answer to that,

and when that was done, I would automatically find myself in the superconscious, which was the point of my thrust in the first place.

Ego is a very phony, slippery, and difficult thing to get hold of. Everything is “I did” and the truth is that you don’t do anything. You are the victim [or result] of your circumstances, but at a certain point your need for identity takes over and you say “I did. I thought. I this and I that.” If you really examine the thing, you are just sitting in a theater while this is taking place [including watching the ego believing in itself]. You’re where it happened and that’s about all you have to do with it.

We are at the crossroads of becoming. We have nothing to do with how things got here or where they are going.

Consciousness is at the crossroads of desire and fulfillment. When your consciousness doesn’t get what it needs, it disintegrates. Ego is intrinsically involved in this, so the ego dies also.

I escaped into my mind from a world I couldn’t stand. I forced myself to think. People were making me so miserable that I had to learn what made their heads tick. I had to do it with no fantasy involved and strictly and clearly see what made them operate. When I fully understood people to my own satisfaction and still it brought about no relief, it caused my inner death. I went to the other side.

The most overwhelming experience I’ve had was the knowing of my Overself. It answered to a whole realm of being that I had no suspicion even existed before the experience. I feel this experience is what has carried me through the rest of my life. I know that this body will pass and I will return to that place.

I died from remorse, from failure. I literally died from it; the pressure was so great. It got me to the other side and the minute I got there my first question was: “Did I fail?” My answer was: “You couldn’t have failed if you tried to. You did a brilliant job. You went down like a valiant sailor.” I haven’t been bothered by failure again. I know it is a false concept. No one can fail.

I’ve been on both sides of the line many times in my life, and if it weren’t for that fact, if I hadn’t had the perspective of timeless things, I simply couldn’t have maintained the ability to stay on the street.

In my experience, I had to totally give up the sense of any personal being and to take the chance that there would not be something there destructive to me. Which I was able to do and did.

I only have faint traces of memory of what it is like on the other side. I know I had complete freedom of choice whether to come back or not. I had complete knowledge. There were no blind decisions. I knew exactly what was involved, but for some reason I chose to come back.

You are rooted in this system. If you stop breathing while you’re on the other side, you won’t come back. It’s as simple as that. Now, I had a choice over this the first couple of times I went over. I was given the opportunity to knowingly choose. The main reason for coming back was my attachment to people. I was so attached to the idea of my death generating a sense of loss in them. Over there, you have completely resolved all questions. You come back out of a sense of duty, which is generated out of being here. It is not native to that condition. I was still alive here, so I still would have died here.

Had I ceased living here, the sense of duty would have evaporated. It is only generic to this condition. When you are on the fence and the life force and health is good, you tend to come back. You think you have a choice, but you probably don't.

We are not all here. We are familiar with physical existence and accept it as being here. This dimension is truly being run, in my view, from a stable position of superior knowledge that we generally can't have insight into from here. When I was on the other side, this life I have now was just a sad, sad joke.

I was 100 by the time I was 13. I've been an old man all my life.

The source of (the universe) is an energy, of which the most physically understandable aspect is light. This energy is "slowed down" to an extent where there is time and space. In the condition beyond time and space, there is only a condition in, not a condition to question in. Our problem is our lack of ability to accelerate our being to the absence of time, the absence of motion.

My deity is comprehension. I don't really view it as deity, but as a pain in the rear I have to contend with. But I suppose that's pretty much my view of deity too.

People are always at war within, but most don't realize it. I'm different in that I've faced this war and came out the other side and had my "day in the sun." Once you've had your day in the sun, your system will not accept any other answer.

I have stood at the peak of the universe and surveyed it all in comprehension.

I accept the unfoldment of me before the only audience that matters — me. And I know I've had nothing to do with what I've gone through. I've been the little character that sits at the crossroads. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Alan K. has been seriously involved in spiritual work for several decades, notably Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teaching and finally graduating into Advaita Vedanta. In particular, he has studied closely with Jean Klein. In a dialogue, he recounted to me a climactic shift in spiritual identity that was occurring to him, as his "being" opened into Reality. His comments explain the higher aspects of the Psychology of the Observer very well:

From a certain point of view, you could say the mind was maturing or opening. It could take in something it couldn't quite take in before. There is no real change, because Truth is Truth. There's nothing that needs to be gained or embellished or constructed. It's already there. The only difference is that the mind ceases to confuse itself. We see everything in a dualistic pattern. Everything is turned into subject-object and opposites. We take for granted the ultimate nature of objects in space and time. But at a certain point, the mind ceases to do this, to work in this segmented pattern. It just stops constructing this world of duality. Everything is already complete, as it always was. So, it isn't so much a question of expansion or discovery, but just a question of ending a process that was erroneous to begin with.

Q. Your sense of "I" or anterior "selfness" — is that no longer "Alan"? Is Alan now a character you are aware of?

It's felt as though there's a remnant that believes in itself. An appendage, almost, instead of a person. Like an old coat; it feels like that. But the old coat is only a problem for the old coat! It has nothing to do with me. It's not an issue. Like some old coat that

appears and disappears, at a certain point, it has no meaning, other than in its own sphere. Basically this is the difference between now and before. Now there is a conviction of certainty that I AM THE ALL. I am not the body, to put it in negative terms. Nothing has altered; nothing has changed; only that the mind ceases to get away with its usual style of confusion. But that little bit is incredible! Its implications are extraordinary! When that takes place, you feel there's no sense of need, fear, desire, or compulsion. Everything is felt present at once. There are no more dividing lines between things, or between me and everything else. That's just what the mind is: it's a dividing line that separates reality, supposedly "out there", from reality, supposedly "in here." The Absolute reality doesn't do that. This is seen as a whole. It is impossible to break up the Absolute into bits and pieces.

There is no arrival in any of this. There is no someone who attains Enlightenment or Reality. That would be a contradiction, an acceptance of the dualistic idea: that there could be such a thing as time and space. They are simply a mental construction. Within it you have objects and persons and things and distances, with time and space between them. Those are just mental forms of imagining. When it becomes an absolutely certainty, as a negative fact, that it doesn't exist – you will know. You will have a deep conviction that that's a fact. You will suddenly find yourself in wholeness, in emptiness, in openness.

There is a sequence to this that is important. It begins in our regular state, where we consider ourselves to be a subject in a world of objects; where you see the world outside, and feel yourself as somewhat distinct. But, little by little, we realize that even that is just an idea, another object, another imposition of the mind. At a certain stage, you will have the experience in clarity where you see that the world is really inside you (You). You are not in the world at all. The entire world arises and falls in Your consciousness. At a certain point, you find yourself to be that pure consciousness only.

This is the dualistic place. That had been my usual condition for a number of years. The difference now is that the world is not felt inside as a distinct entity, as an object that appears and disappears, but EVERYTHING is felt inside, in consciousness. There are no objects. Even objects are nothing but pure consciousness's expressions. So, all that's happening is that consciousness is happening to consciousness. On this level, nothing is happening; there is only pure consciousness; the whole thing. So, whatever you look at with this openness is just pure consciousness. This is the background from which all the dualities emerge. And knowing that, instead of feeling alienated from objects, from feeling as another subject-object in a world of objects, everything is then seen as pure oneness, pure subjectivity, with no separation or projection. It puts an end to desire. Everything is complete as it is.

Q. Is the desire for Realization valid? Has your sequence of search been satisfied?

The sequence of searching is seen as an illusion, at this point. I don't have the mind...*that was*. It is very clear that all desire is absolutely futile, in any direction. Even the desire for Truth is based on the illusion that you are incomplete; that you need to become whole or Enlightened. The only thing that needs to happen is the mind ceasing its indulgence in splitting and dividing things from each other. Or, put more simply: the mind needs to see that everything it experiences is the result of its own projection and measurement process.

All the thoughts that flow into you and out of you are part of a certain stream. It is purely genetic; all mechanical and involuntary. Within that happening, at some point, you (or rather the mind) assumed somehow, erroneously that you were this person; this body-mind mechanism; that you are the body or the thoughts behind the body, or the mental subject. All of these things are strictly ideas that occurred to you and you assumed they were correct formulations. *Actually, what happens is that the mind borrows the notion of "I" from the Absolute and identifies it with the body.*

You know when you are aware, either through conscious effort or from just sitting in quiet meditation. You know your awareness. However, the ultimate is to know that he who is aware is is pure consciousness itself. Prior to that, the man who is aware thinks he is aware, as a being, as a person. This shift is a mysterious, perhaps chemical opening. It's really difficult to say what finally wears down that last veil of ignorance; that makes the difference between someone who practices awareness, who likes to be aware, who feels himself to be aware, and the other "person" who suddenly knows himself, who is aware of himself as the Self; who is pure awareness itself.

This movement is a movement into wholeness and openness. Just as the other process took place: the movement into concretization, into the world of objects, there is also a kind of gradual movement – only from the mind's relative point of reference – back to the center, to the pure consciousness, which you already always were anyway; to the realization of that. The Realization has no movement itself.

The Realization begins to re-explain the whole world to you in a mind that is not clouded; this TREMENDOUS disease called dualism. It's nothing but a mental affliction. Everywhere you go, you take the Absolute and you're holding this screen in front of yourself, and pretending that the things your senses are describing to you are actually out there and real – but they're not. You're always witnessing the Absolute. And the only thing that can be witnessing it is the Absolute. You know all this, intuitively, even now. You know that you are behind your thoughts.

Witnessing is a wonderful stage to come to. We pass through it constantly many times. At a certain point, you feel that that witness is all you are. But that's the stage that takes a very long time to get past. As long as you're in that witness stage, you're always going to still be in that duality. You feel the witnessing, but you still consider the objects to be apart from you. You still feel distinct. You have to finally get past that point. This is the only significant thing I have to tell you: that you see that the objects themselves are nothing but pure consciousness. In that place, there's no more difference. That at-homeness is the feeling...

Q. Are we ever truly outside of our minds, or is even this awareness we are trying to cultivate really a subtle mental construct also?

Yes, it is. What is most important is to look at the whole stream of life experiences as closely as you can. The details don't matter. We always take things as being at a distance; as though they were objects that are out there and that these things are happening to us as being the subject-object. We have to bring the picture a little bit closer. We have to see that the whole thing is happening only inside ourselves and that it's all appearing within consciousness. This is bringing the world, the perspective, very close to you. You feel yourself as being in the background of consciousness. So, if you do that, which is just a pure kind of seeing, you are in awareness at that point. You

don't create that. You just find yourself in that. You're not trying to hold or maintain the awareness. You're simply aware. You're in openness without a point of view. You are listening without there being a listener. What happens is you can objectivize the awareness, which is a very dangerous thing. Your job is not to do anything, but merely to see. You have to be very quick to see even that trick of the mind occurring. Otherwise, it becomes another object and it can't be real awareness.

Then, living in that as it flows, you have to see these objects that are appearing and disappearing, and tell: Where did they come from? How did they come? We will see that they are happening because the senses themselves create them. But they're not real. We often think that there is a tangible and genuine object out there in a real world impressing itself upon the senses and to the mind. But it doesn't work that way. It works the opposite way. There is awareness of consciousness, which flows through an inert part of knowledge, which is totally mechanical. Because of the way they function, they, in their outward movement towards reality tend to give reality to form, to space, to time. If you see that that's how reality is being formed – and it takes a very sharp awareness to watch that as it's going on, you will see that in fact you are creating this, you are dividing the world into bits and pieces, and then assuming it has absolute reality in itself. It's a kind of mental trick that goes on. In order to do this, you have to stay very close to the situation. This thing becomes paramount. You won't get stuck in any of the particulars or the outer limits. It becomes a question of the very way in which reality is being constructed by the mind.

This becomes a TREMENDOUS puzzle, and highly engrossing. You want to know what the hell is really going on!: is there a reality out there, or am I making it up, or where is it? You begin to feel you don't know. You watch this process as it flows, as well as in your in-between spaces, when it's just pure awareness. At a certain point, you will ask yourself the key question: "*Who am I?*" You will say: "Either I am one of those objects, or I am the consciousness behind it". It's just a question of disidentifying yourself with this body-mind mechanism, which is creating a reality of its own, and really identifying with the only other thing it can be, which is the background of all that. Then you will know. All of a sudden, you will cross a certain threshold. You're in a safe place at that point. There is nothing left that is outside of you. It all comes back into the wholeness, of itself.

Q. Did you experience this Realization as death?

There is no time and space in the Absolute sphere. That is the absolute truth. In the relative sphere, it is only time and space and that has truth only within its own sphere. But the relative sphere is wholly dependent upon the Absolute sphere, so ultimately it has no validity whatsoever. So, with it goes crashing, not just you as a person dying, but the whole world of objects dying; the whole thing dies. There's nothing left but awareness, by itself.

Q. The path can be very treacherous. There are some high level plateaus. How can one ever be certain that full Realization has genuinely occurred?

You're right – it can be very tricky. If there's any one touchstone to this thing, it's the feeling of your movement unfolding closer into Truth. I don't like to use the word "return", because it implies there's someone who returns. But, there is an opening. Instead of movement into greater clarification or more substantial certainty in truth,

there is a movement into greater solitude and unfoldment. Until, ultimately, the movement is into pure consciousness itself. In the end, there's nothing left.

Q. You become the ultimate subject?

No—even the ultimate subject too is a concept. The Tao that is the real Tao cannot be named. It's not only beyond the whole, it's unlimited in its Being. It is in itself a totally formless thing. Awareness is a movement back to itself, to its absolute place. You have nothing but that, and even that can't be named. The experience is like falling backward into what seems to be the void of this (dissolved mental world of relativity), into Yourself.

Q. Can we experience that clear awareness outside of the mind now, or is that possible only in the final Realization?

No, no. You already do, when your mind is not in movement, when it's between two thoughts or two states, or if you are in deep meditation; you taste this awareness. You don't realize that at that point *you are looking into your real Self*. You see it as a moment of awareness. And that's a part of the problem, because you still think you are the person experiencing that. But you will more and more disidentify with the functioning of the body-mind self and identify more with pure awareness as yourself. You will then see that the things rising and falling in your mind are your own creations. And then you'll realize they are you, ultimately. Then you will feel completely comfortable. You won't have any sense of alienation or discomfort anymore.

You have to see that you are clinging to the idea that you are an individual person in the world. This is the illusion. It's the only thing to wake up from. The events of life are not as large as you think. It's only because you see yourself as very small that you've given them credence and importance and absolute value. When you see yourself as the utter background of everything, those things become infinitely small. You almost can't even see them anymore. Then later, you will see that they don't even exist as separate entities. But you have to bring "the world" very close to yourself to realize that. As long as you keep looking at things from a distant perspective [from within experience], you will never see what the actual origin is of everything that is happening. You have to look very closely. There is a chance at that point that the sleeper will suddenly awaken from the dream.

Get as close as possible to your actual experiencing. Stay away from all theory, all philosophy. That is all still of the mind. Really watch how life flows within you and in what that life is flowing. Watch the unfolding of awareness in the background of it. Then, at a certain point, you're forced to make a hard choice and ask yourself: "Who am I?—the foreground or the background?"

At the end, you realize that everything is you. It's like the goldsmith seeing every object in his shop as being gold; not the objects of art made of gold.

To complete this section, like a signature on a self-portrait, and to provide the larger context for my involvement with Rose's teaching and the consequential writing of this paper, I need to mention an experience that happened to me at the age of 19, and the philosophical concerns which preceded it. This will explain why I could recognize the veracity of his message—and from where it came.

As a child of Holocaust survivors, experiencing life through an innately melancholic sensitivity, and raised with no supportive religious infrastructure whatsoever nor finding a satisfactory ex-

planation for this soul-staggering event later from any angle, my nature and perspective developed within a mind-set of extremely grim existential insecurity at the unknowing, at my ultimate groundlessness. From that first moment when, as a child, I found a book about Adolf Eichmann that my parents had forbidden me to see and saw in it the photographs of the piles of shriveled childrens' bodies being bulldozed into a snowy ditch and the skeletons of those who had been burned alive in the crematoria—and realized that, in truth, I was one of those people and nothing more, with no justification for believing I was any better, less vulnerable, or more favored by “God,” I felt intensely that my entire life, of already uncertain value, had been rendered utterly worthless and I had to find the state of knowing that would answer once and for all the many essential questions posed by this monstrous experience. I have not viewed this specifically as a Jewish issue, nor cultural, political, or exclusively psychological, but ultimately spiritual. What admittedly began as an ordeal of personal pathology, in time I grew to regard the Holocaust as a metaphor for life itself; for our shameful estrangement from Truth and the harshest possible confrontation of the darkness in which we are lost. It has been the standard against which I have measured all possible answers to life. Any god that could not survive *that place* would not be worth finding.

I was unable to lie to myself, at least about the big things. I knew intuitively that the whole fabric of conventional life as embraced by the masses of humanity was a colossal work of fiction (although I was still victimized by it) and all the values—both religious and mundane—put forth to buffer us from the madness and despair were only more make-believe meant to further obscure our meaninglessness. I realized that the psychic context which enables most people to continue living and believing in themselves is the state of being ignorant of their ignorance, all the while stagnating within an imaginary paradigm. I have been forced to be aware of my fundamental ignorance, which taunts me from all sides. While knowing nothing for sure, in a world of pseudo-values and fraudulent answers, my philosophy of life became a stubborn: “none of the above.” Much of the material in the Albigen System, consisting of insights which Rose had diligently compiled over a number of years critiquing the many categories and forms of maya on the human level, constitutes a total philosophical gestalt I starkly recognized when I was 12. Ever since, I have felt as a living corpse, the proverbial Wandering Jew, wandering intently in a state of shock, a ghost with no home or name, looking for the true Final Solution.

For reasons the full extent of which are unknown to me, once the trauma of absolute doubt initiated the split, the damage to the heart and mind was beyond healing. It went off the scale entirely. From that point onward, even gaining everything would be too little, too late. I have known that the only possible answer must be on the other side of death; the death of the one who has the problem born of incomplete perspective.

In tracing the origin of this “one,” I find that my sense of self as a distinct ego, as apart from its being just a functional point-of-reference in experience, started from out of this trauma (although, of course, there had to be some latent seed of ego to begin with around which this experience could wrap itself and become a “personal” issue). A violation created me; the awareness of something apparently very wrong, which generated the question: “What is the whole picture—what’s it all about?!” the growing fear that there is no truth, besides absurdity and tragedy, and the urge to wrestle with the issue regardless. My very existence became Po Shan’s “doubt sensation.” This status becomes Zen in that the greater the (seeming) violation, the greater is the transcendence needed to contain it. The maximum gap between being and non-being requires an absolute reconciliation to answer it. One complication in my case is that my ego-mind has been especially difficult to relinquish, as esoteric texts all advise one to do, because it developed specifically as a vehicle or means by which to find truth, not as an obstacle to or substitute for it, and so resists dissolution for the same reason as why it should be.

Each person's path takes a different course. Due to my nature and issues, my philosophic work has of necessity paralleled Jim Burns' direction of inquiry as much as Rose's, in my own unique blend. The three main questions at the core of Rose's search were: Who am I?, Where did I come from?, and Where am I going? The primary concerns of the masses seem to be: How can I get rich?, How can I be admired?, and How can I get laid? The basic issues prompting my quest have been: What is validity?, What is justice?, What is the meaning of life (or more precisely: What is the nature of the appreciation by the final observer of this mass-experience, and who is this Final Appreciator?), What is the meaning in life (in other words: What is the purpose or objective of life?), Whose universe is this?, and, experientially, What is the basis of all existence and being – the final resting place? In short, a plaintive, collective: Why?

In fact, the magnitude of this perplexity was one reason why Rose's teaching intrigued me so strongly when I encountered it. I have had many questions that apparently cannot or at least have not been answered on the human mental level (and the option of a simple religious faith that an attitude of piety alone would result in a deferred salvation in the afterlife was not satisfying to me). To track down the answers to all of them, even should this be possible, might take centuries – and even then their sum total might not be the real answer for which I have been looking behind it all. Rose attested, however, that there is a "key," a central or ultimate position of viewership and root of beingness where all issues are resolved and everything is known, and that taking the shortcut to this home base should be one's real priority. Furthermore, his claim that this goal is attainable by anyone who is serious enough to make the proper efforts and that the way is progressively validated by one's immediate experience made this a prospect which was worth my commitment.

As the notion of God as a loving and just Divine Parent was irredeemably refuted by the evident facts, my obsession with the horror (which Logotherapy only partially addressed) was in that I felt no philosophy of life could be considered true and complete unless it adequately accounted for the meaning of the apparent suffering of the innocent (i.e. the protest of Job), and that the truth of this must be known; not only accepted on faith as a concept. I was later to recognize that all this has been a koan serving to force comprehension, proper self-definition, and ascension to the correct vantage point on experience.

Years before encountering the teachings of Rose and Advaita, I had determined that the essential question in this koan was: What is the "connection" between the Observer and its observed Creation? I was aware of being both a character in a story and the watcher of this story, but did not have the overview that would explain their relationship and be their shared ground of being. Because of this, my strange curse has been that of having no home or identity either on Earth or in Heaven; both being knowingly invalidated. Plus, as part of my progression in the sequence of self-observation in the analysis of motivations, I gradually stopped in my tracks entirely and demanded to know: Why should I play the game at all, regardless of whether I win or lose, fair or unfair? Who is playing this game, and using "me" as a pawn? Indeed, if I am nobody, who then is the one concerned? Simply put, the primal issue I have faced in my life is: What remains after the self, the world, and one's god burn up in the oven – and this is witnessed? Anticipating Rose's teaching, my answer and functional identity became: the awareness of a question asking a question. Because of the symbolic meaning in this conclusion, in my experience the metaphor has become apparent that the Holocaust is the modern Crucifixion.

Due to my initial identification with my intellect (at least on the conscious level, and then only as a tool of investigation, not the expected domain of the answer) and not suspecting at the time the imperative to trace back the anterior awareness from Reality passing through me as being the essential methodology, my inquiry at first took an "outward" direction; the intention being strict philo-

sophical integrity. I began to search for an objective God who is not-me when I was forced to realize that the human “I,” with all its desires, convictions, and sense of identity, was negated absolutely (in my case, by the Holocaust – which means a burnt offering up to God), and so knew that “I” could not be the final answer, nor could any possible conception of mine of “god.” The Truth was something to look for, not something currently known. Perhaps Auschwitz was meant to wipe the slate clean; to serve as the final sieve of human illusion and subtleties of ego. It has compelled me to start the search from zero-conviction state; to negate even the ego that would identify with some concept of truth and so superimpose that over the Truth. This is why I had always reflexively rejected those false forms of meditation or religious belief that I suspected to be only another sly category of mind, a pretty filter over one’s inner vision, meant to be used as an object for the ego to enjoy or a barrier to block out the horror. The insecurity of existing within this uncompromising unknowing, with no foundation, selfhood, or justification for faith, has been most difficult to withstand. Yet, while I cannot claim to have been a spiritual giant like Rose, I believe I have managed to be a tall midget.

Actually, even in this, there was one final conviction remaining: that all is false...all is hopeless. This state was a difficult limbo from which to escape – until I realized that this too is an ego of belief and I was better off not believing or disbelieving in any unknown god or human assessment, but to search cleanly for whatever really is.

I had conceived of the path as my needing to find objective Reality distinctly apart from “myself,” as life made it brutally obvious that I (the ego-self) was an invalid standard of measure, and that my own definition and rightful place in the scheme of things would then be found only as a function of that. I did not know at the time that this was another route for coming to the same conclusion about the requisite nature of the path that Rose would later teach: that of rigorous impersonality in determining the facts, inner and outer – until these categories are seen to be the same...seen by *what* one was really looking for all along.

The problem was I did not realize at first that the clean context of aware inquiry I had wanted to foster was not entirely separate from the “I” (the ignorant, fallible, human lump) which I had wanted to escape, for in fact, this “I” contained – or was contained in – this exact same awareness of mind also, and so the self (small “s”) that was feared to be an obstacle to the inquiry into the nature of things later was seen to become a part of that very same objective inquiry, by something anterior to both. Only later did the understanding come about that it is this same ray of awareness passing through both the “God” I was searching for and the “me” doing the searching; the ego being the common obstruction to their unitive discovery. As I learned from Rose’s teaching, whichever is initially designated one’s goal – to see the truth or to become the true seer, the search could rightly proceed from either end of the channel, if done honestly, and end up with the same final realization.

In retrospect, I could see that the question in me motivating the search has evolved from: Why the horror? (or What is justice?), to: What does this all mean? (or Why did God create the universe?), to: Who wants to know? (or What is the real Self?). This sequence is somewhat analogous to Rose’s progression through “the Dream,” “the Dreamer in the Dream,” and “the Dreamer of the Dream.” Again, anticipating much of what I found in his teaching years later, “God,” to me, has not been regarded as a benevolent theological figure, but a direction of inquiry towards greater reality; towards more *being*.

From that day when childhood was terminated, I have known a sadness and loneliness that seems without end; the sun’s warmth and light blocked by the smoke from that chimney at the end of the world. I have lived a quarter century as the man in Edward Munch’s most famous painting. My core state-of-mind has been like it is one minute before midnight on New Year’s Eve, in a nightmare; living always in the feeling as of falling in a dream, into a bottomless void. I feel – admittedly melo-

dramatically, but nonetheless genuinely – as if I carry the ghosts, cries, and destinies of millions within me.

This bit of autobiography has been necessary in order to indicate my state-of-mind at the time of absolute doubt and the intensity of the vector aimed back through the center of it. Then, an experience occurred which defined the course of the rest of my life.

It was a December 24th. Christmas was in the air. I was filled with the mixed emotions of longing and futility that the holiday seemed to exemplify. A girlfriend and I were in a botanical garden. Psychologically, I was at a point beyond hope, and even beyond despair. In a particular sense, I had given up completely and existed in a locationless neutral zone, yet with the desire for an answer remaining firmly somewhere inside, underlying all mundane movements of the mind and heart. I had no expectations.

She suggested we take LSD. I had never experimented with it before and knew nothing about what it was supposed to do. My only vague sense about it was that it enabled magic to happen. Although at the time I was not familiar with the term “paradigm,” I instinctively knew that the dimension of reality (as it were) in which humanity existed as a psychic experience was false, and only a delusory sub-category of what Reality might be. I certainly did not assume that any drug could take me to Reality, but I suspected it might be able to “crack the cosmic egg” of the paradigm of the normal enough to allow me a glimpse outside it; to find myself in an open space where the search for totality might continue less impaired by convention and ego.

I mention this drug involvement hesitantly, as I am fully aware that most scientifically inclined readers, as well as the devoutly religious, automatically discount any experience induced by a chemical as having to be inherently invalid and illusory, leading more likely to hedonism or psychosis than Revelation. I do not argue this point from the outside in, but only present information from the inside out. That a small percentage of subjects in a controlled research setting have gone through similar or identical transpersonal experiences, with the same subsequent convictions, adds unneeded corroboration to my certainty that what happened to me was not some personal dementia or generic flight of fancy (Grof, 1975).

In addition, I consider what took place to be in a category by itself and, strictly speaking, not a “drug experience.” This is because the experience did not entirely occur within the relative mind dimension (“mine” or that of humanity), but after a period exited it. The drug served essentially as a catalyst, a “hammer” on the shell of that cosmic egg; not an agent for creating only another category of fictional mind-stuff.

During the early phase, while passing through the mind, there were no hallucinations of any kind; no absorption into the usual kaleidoscopic phantasmagoria that drug “trips” generally entail. There was a distinct – though undefined – sense of “I-ness” present throughout this phase, and this “I” was never wholly drawn into any of the contents of the mental realm it witnessed. It did not care to. Years prior to encountering Rose’s key principle of “reversing the projected ray” (that is, once I graduated from the intellectual level of search to the Fourth Way), I had the intuitive sense that whatever the truth was I was looking for, it would not be found “out there” anywhere in the manifested world, nor even anywhere amidst the complex convolutions of my consciousness. As the feeling-presence of my own being strengthened, there developed the sense (even if only subconsciously) of needing to pull back further and further into the anterior awareness which contained me, which is partially why the mind-stuff being sorted through did not undergo any hypnotic distortions to seduce my attention and hence identification. Entertainment and entrancement by fascinating diversity was never my intention in the experiment. Finding a more real point-of-reference (again, years before ever having encountered this principle), was.

A seeming contradiction is further clarified here. What had previously been intended as objective, “scientific” inquiry as a strategy for evading the inherent limitations and distortions of the ego-mind (this was before I had begun to seriously question who was doing the searching—and in Whom) gradually became this impersonal descent into extreme subjectivity, for the same reason. Their common denominator was the need to find the definition of Reality, apart from me (meaning the ego-mind “me”). While I innately feared the nihilistic oblivion of egocentric solipsism, I began to appreciate the gnostic possibility in the paradigm shift toward pure mysticism. Thus, what was at first a philosophical search for the meaning of experience became then inverted to an ontological search for the substratum of experience—in other words, the experiencer. I found that this course resulted in getting away from the trappings of mind also, but now by going behind it, not in front of it.

To continue, my primary reason for discounting the drug factor as intrinsically invalidating the subsequent experience is that the most significant aspect of this experience occurred outside the somatic mind realm and so was beyond the reach of where a drug could have any effect. Strictly speaking, what finally happened was not even an “experience”, as it was wholly non-relative and non-dualistic, and had no experiencer. As such, nothing from the world of illusion could touch it. Once the “rocketship” transported me out of the universe (forced through the gap of the synapses, into Space?), both the rocketship and the universe disappeared (i.e. Wittgenstein’s ladder).

The entry into the change in state-of-mind was so intense and my clinging to normalcy so minimal by that point in my life that there was no resistance to the inversion of consciousness as it occurred, nor could there have been.

There was a progression—or regression—to the experience. One of the first things I noticed was that there was complete disassociation from the body. The body was still fully operational in its own domain. It was not insensate. I simply recognized that the functioning of the body was an experience in consciousness, as was the ego-self that had up until that point always largely identified with it, and that I was aware of this, as though the psycho-physical gestalt was something seen on a mental screen in front of my inner vision.

It should be added that prior to this experience, I knew little of esoteric or spiritual philosophy, beyond vague generalities and concept-structures, but with no practical means advised for their verification. All my studies of mainstream psychology, academic philosophy, and conventional theology gave no hint that what I was beginning to realize for myself could exist. Similar to Rose’s preliminary status before his “accident”, I was maintaining no bundle of celestial imaginings that might give birth to an ersatz experience. I am simply relating what I found.

The next thing I noticed was that my mind and that of my friend seemed to be linked. Verbal communication was seen to be as inferior a mode of conveying meaning as was the linear thought that would generate it. There was the sense that I could know her mind directly and she could possibly “see” into mine as well, depending upon her degree and direction of attention. I picked up some thoughts from her and asked (in words) if this was what she had been thinking. She nodded “Yes” (with the knowing implication in her eyes: “of course I am”). This was apparently an elementary instance of the direct-mind rapport I would later read about from Rose.

There followed a sequence of fundamental insights about my nature as a human being. Major lifelong psychological patterns were seen directly, as a whole, from outside myself in a way I had never been able to see them before during all my years of introspection from within myself.

At one point, my friend began feeling insecure and wondered aloud if we were being “cool” being there in the midst of the people strolling about us, as if perhaps we were somehow behaving

inappropriately, considering our mental state. I was more detached than she and knew that outwardly we were completely unchanged, and no one was even looking at us.

I then stopped to specifically look at the people walking by on the pathway in front of us. From my now "other" vantage point, I could see that these people were robots. This was not perceived in the sense that they were moving stiffly or lacking in personal warmth, but in their being totally identified with themselves as they found themselves to be and having no awareness of their existence from completely outside themselves. Even their subjective experience of their very humanness was essentially mechanical. This assessment was years before my encountering the term "robot" in the Gurdjieffian and Albigen teachings. I looked at the people and "their thoughts were on their faces", as Rose remarked in one of his poems.

I then realized I had spent most of my life wondering if I was being "cool" or appropriate in other people's eyes, when in fact the issue was totally meaningless, as other people were even less real than "I" was, they were wholly asleep within their own private dream and so could not see me, and my own inner observer was the only judge there could be anyway. All else was a projection of my own tainted self-judgment. Although I would later be forced to return into "John" and be subject to his damaged psyche once again, these and other insights have always been maintained somewhere behind the mind, and his psychology has been gradually adjusted accordingly.

My friend and I were sitting on the ground. After awhile, we got the notion that it would be good to walk around a bit—but were perplexed to find ourselves remaining where we were sitting. In a particular sense, we found it impossible to move of our own volition. We were not paralyzed nor numb. The body continued to work perfectly well. We both simply realized at the same time that we had no independent will of our own in life and never did, but had only believed we did. We were not individual characters separate from the world, making self-generated choices about conduct, nor were we a mental ego-self apart from, yet animating, an obedient body. The entire world, with "us" in it, was recognized to be one, indivisible panorama, and its Master was outside it. I said to her (or was aware of its being said): "You know that we can't get up and move until God makes us, don't you?" and she said "Yes, I know". I was aware that this was the first time in my entire life I had ever used the word "God", except when swearing, that I knew exactly what I meant by "God", and meant what I said literally. "I do not live but that God lives in me" was known to be a reality. As soon as we both totally surrendered to our helplessness, the seeming duality was reconciled and we found ourselves standing up readily.

We were facing a tree. I had long wondered what the Biblical Tree of Life was meant to symbolize. Given our circumstances of date and location, as well as state-of-consciousness, I was interpreting our situation as the psychic archetype of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There was some basic mystery needing to be understood, to end our exile. I gazed at this tree before us, wanting to apprehend its silent message to me. I felt like the disciple who pondered the flower in the Buddha's hand and intuited its meaning; too obvious to be seen by all but the innocent. I was not quite able to appreciate the immanent reality of this tree-as-teacher—I was evidently not yet ripe enough myself, but did pick up an "almost" sense about it, of what Life might be.

What proceeded next was an automatic sorting through of the contents of my mind. There was a reviewing of some of the major events, people, and values in my life; examining each one, and then watching it be eliminated. This process was analogous to the proverbial seeing of one's life pass before one's eyes before dying. As this introversion deepened, I could see more and more vividly how every component in my life, whether an actual experience or a resultant thought-structure about some experience, was an object in consciousness, viewed as though on a screen in front of me. Experiences recalled from different moments in my life were all perceived to exist at once, in this timeless

moment of seeing. I could see that they were not real; not as real as I, as the viewer, now was. I saw that nothing had any objective reality to it; not the world, and not John either. Their existence was all as an extension of me, although I did not yet fully know this “me.”

One at a time, each component of my mind was disassembled and dissolved. At the same time, every form and category of mind content was recognized to be one thing; one cohesive gestalt on a singular mental plane. Gradually, my mind was nearly emptied out. The distinct vision I had of this mind was like what is seen when the film at a movie theater accidentally catches on fire and burns up; the images melting away, until only the white light on the screen remains.

It should be clarified that, by this point, the “my” whose mind was being seen was not that of the individual human being who started out the experience. Although, in entering death, some people are said to cling tightly to themselves and are reluctant to disidentify with whom they have gotten used to believing they are, my relinquishment on the human level was much easier, due to the already tenuous nature of my preceding psychological state. The character of “John Kent,” in fact, died relatively early in the experience. As he was being psychically disassembled, there was a moment of sad, fond mourning at the loss of who “I” once was, like wistfully lamenting the death of an old friend who had done his job and was now put out of his misery. His final passing was only barely noticed, and then was quickly forgotten. Afterwards, there was no memory that he had ever lived (i.e. “silence is forgotten...”).

While this phase was occurring, I was also aware of the possibility of entering “bliss”; of releasing from my locus of finite selfhood entirely and dissolving into the totality of being – but did not. Why? Perhaps the habitual contraction of my ignorance and fear of groundlessness even then was holding me together as a substanceless “I.” It would require further work back on Earth to remove this final barrier out of relativity. There was possibly also fear (in whom?, in the still vulnerable seeker?) of the risk of captivated dispersion into manifestation while rootedness in ever-aware Essence had not yet been attained.

The mind which was undergoing these changes was that of “mind”, in a generic sense. There was no longer any entity left who could pretend to claim sole ownership of a plot of the indivisible mental dimension and call that a person. The one seeing the changes was *myself*.

The relentless momentum of introversion brought me to a stage that was now no longer connected in any way with the physical dimension: either my immediate environment or the universe as an objective structure. The rest of the journey took place strictly inside (although “inside” and “outside” were non-existent categories by this point).

There was the direct realization that there is no such thing as time, as a real happening. There is nothing called “time” that can pass, and the space that would contain it (or be contained by it) does not move. There is only Here and Now, and “I” was in that. Likewise, once there were no more objects left in consciousness, there was also no distance, location, or positioning of myself as a viewer. All these things were clearly seen to be conditional factors within relativity, or mental interpretations, but which had no independent reality of their own, as there was no fundamental ground of being for them as a reference point. (For example: The velocity of the Earth’s movement through space is always calculated in relation to the Sun as a fixed point-of-reference – but is the Sun itself immobile, or does it not also move within the galaxy of which it is a part? How can speed be measured as an absolute value when time and space are relative? What would be the difference between an object traveling through empty space at a million miles per hour, or standing still? How would one know? Does the universe as a whole have a still center-point anywhere as the final standard of measure? How would one know? *Maybe it is all center and motionless.*) Because of all this, it was not only

impossible but would have been meaningless to determine “how long” the final phases of this experience lasted, according to some “absolute” clock. There was the vivid recognition that one second was equal to a billion years, and neither really passed, once there was no longer any motion nor anywhere to go.

As I watched all the contents of my mind dissolve and fade away, leaving behind only the original, latent mind-dimension that had given rise to them, and how all the experiences of life and objects in the universe were mental projections from some central or anterior “cosmic womb”, I was able to trace my way back to this source of the projections. I believe this matrix was what Rose would later refer to as the prop-room of Creation. I had the implicit understanding that every possibility of relative existence was born from this place. I could have gone off in any imaginable direction, to any point in “time”, and created any object, experienced any form of life, or witnessed any drama. In essence, I experienced all the potential components of experience. This was in the sense that once one knows all 26 letters of the alphabet, no word is entirely foreign (i.e. Rose’s claiming: “I know everything”).

Although there were no distinct, linear thoughts by this point—nor anyone to think them, I knew there could be no final satisfaction in going down any of these infinite dead-ends, and that it was best to not even “enter” this place to play around with these “adventures into endless possibilities of myself”, as Rose had put it. A side-trip that could have lasted eons (in those worlds; not Here) was quickly bypassed, with a subtle turning of the attention. I was being drawn backward, away from manifestation.

As this last dimension of mind was transcended or emptied out (by my having rejecting it), I experienced my being implode on itself. “I” found myself in a place that could no longer even be called a dimension. It was the state of absolute nothingness. It was not oblivion, like in a coma, as there was still awareness of this nothingness; an awareness without location or identity. It was not a state of floating in empty space. **There was nothing—*not even space***. There was only an undefined “me”, in unknowingness. I suspect this was similar to what Merrell-Wolff described as “Consciousness without an object and without a subject”.

There was no question—nor could there ever be—about the validity of the experience of this “place.” It is impossible to convey or appreciate this through words. To explain: In order for there to be the possibility of any kind of error in experience, there would need to be a state of consciousness, with some form of content, and an experiencer or observer of this consciousness that is separate from it. This is the level or domain where a drug could be a distortive influence, of either the nature of the vision seen or in the perception of it. In the final state experienced, there was no duality of any kind. There was no mental content witnessed and no witness apart from or behind any “experience.” The experience was of **being aware in the oneness of nothingness—IT WAS VALIDITY**; the very basis of is-ness. There was no meaning to the concept of measuring it, to assess its accuracy or room for delusion. It was as if there was only one yardstick in existence and there was nothing else more “authoritative” or objectively real with which to measure it. The yardstick measures itself, as it is the only standard.

It is at this point where encountering Rose’s poetic descriptions of his Experience evokes a powerful memory in me...of a something that was entirely, overwhelmingly *other*. When he has said: “Nothing mattered...once I became...more deeply...”, “Where within Thee have I dissolved myself...Where have I left my I-ness, and now having left it, who is it that cries out to Thee?”, “The keeper of the House is gone, and all that remains testifies that he never was...All is within that House, swelling it to burst its comprehension...And the world will not contain the reaving sorrow of this House”, “The mind that grasps the collapse of all things is a mind made of nothing, sensing nothing;

for space is upon us and all about us...and the memory of that which screams at the void...”, “The eminent I-ness melts into the embraces of oblivion, languishing into it...My spark of life falls through the canyons of the universe...”, “Look beyond my wordlessness, my fractured mentality, for I have been back there freezing and exploding, burning and drowning...”, “I have looked on death and lived, but my life is as empty as death; I have been dumbstruck, and crawled from the sacred unknown, bearing the look of horror and regret and pain...”, and “Oh tender I-ness, forgive me...”, I know what Rose has meant by these things. I have recognized his words, for I have been there too. I have been in hell. I have been insane. I have been dead. Yet, still I remain, but do not know this “I.”

This was as far as the journey went. After being awhile in that placeless place without time, “I” gradually returned through the different levels of mind, until finding myself back on Earth, in a body, “in” John, in time once again, and left to wonder for the rest of my days about the riddle of my seeming existence and what Reality ultimately is.

I have also wondered further what this experience signified in itself and how it has fit in with the rest of my subsequent path. I did not “find God” in the sense of a final, comprehensive answer, other than in discovering a deeper part of (my) being. There was no “other,” yet “I” was not the omniscient All. My original questions about the Holocaust, the meaning of life, etc. were not answered, other than in eliminating the cause for the questions, as well as the questioner, and any substantive context for an answer (i.e. “I am the beginning and the end, I am the bowman, the arrow, and the victim”; “gone is the hate and love, joy and sorrow, gone is the one and its many...”). Possibly the real reason why they were all set up for me originally was to make me forsake the quagmire of normalcy and propel me onward – or rather backward. And, possibly the questions are still answerable...when everythingness is known as well.

My assessment is this: In that final state of the experience, when only “I” was left, in awareness, but with no fundamental ground of Being, I did not have the intuition or spiritual maturity to “turn around” and see who was “behind” me or “containing” me (so to speak). This state is the extremity of point “F” on the top line of Jacob’s Ladder. I knew there was nothing but me, but I did not know who I was. My only conviction about it is that I was *in the shadow of the Absolute* but did not know it, and was not yet able to realize that **I am that**, ultimately. Rose is indeed right: you do not know anything (for sure) until you know everything.

After a group rapport sitting once, Rose said to me: “You have (kundalini) light in your head – but you have no head.” By this I presume he meant I did not have sufficient “being” or spiritual capacity built up yet to apprehend or to appreciate the Reality that was within reach. Likewise, I believe the experience was to let me know in no uncertain terms what my spiritual “status” was in entering this life – perhaps indicating where I had left off last time – and the starting point from where I need to continue the work in this life.

The full meaning of this next statement cannot be adequately communicated, but it must be mentioned. In the outer world, the most extreme or introceptive phase of the experience may have lasted an instant or an hour. There was no way to tell and the issue had no meaning whatsoever. However, there was – and is – the distinct understanding that the dimension of mind (and what lay beyond the mind) that was touched in the experience is an ever-present Reality, now and always, even though not readily perceived while our being immersed in this mundane, relative dimension. Although the remaining effects of the drug wore off several hours later, and one would naturally assume the “trip” was then over, there was – and is – the unmistakable conviction that *this trip never really ended*. It continues to this moment. In the truest sense, I am still “on” it. The daily drama goes through its petty fluctuations on the surface of life, but the Real Journey continues, behind the scenes.

I was given a “glimpse through the veil,” as Rose put it. The “out-of-body” experience that would give many seekers a sense of self-transcendence was for me an “out-of-universe” experience – the transcendence of the entire projected relative dimension itself. This experience served to inform me as to what the real issue in, or behind, my life is, and the task that must be accomplished in my time here remaining. I feel I am racing my death to the intersection and do not want it to get there before I do. My conviction is that everything I have done (or has occurred to me, depending on my point of view) since that experience has had one purpose only: to develop that anterior “being” or soul-capacity that would be able to contain the final Realization, if and whenever that should become attainable (its happening is either impossible or inevitable – I don’t know which). I do know that the whole of my life since then, and for the rest of my life, is a vector to prepare myself for going back to that place – and finishing the trip next time. That is my appointment and I do not know how many more grains of sand remain in the hourglass before death confronts me again with the final question.

As to how this drug-initiated experience differed from a “real” spiritual experience up to that same level of realization, I do not know. Nor do I know how much of my stopping seemingly one rung short of the goal is due to the unavoidable obstruction of the drug-catalyst as a factor, and how much because of my own limitation in spiritual maturity or “ripeness” at the time. Transmission from an Enlightened guru may not have been able to take me beyond that same level either, if my being was not ready.

The issue should also be addressed as to how all this relates to the Psychology of the Observer teaching. The sequence of my inner odyssey through the different realms of Mind was much like in *The Three Books of the Absolute*, although without reaching the final Realization. Rose has explained that the “mountain experience” consists of one’s discovering the universe does not exist except as a mental projection which is witnessed, but one does not yet have enough of a vector or soul developed so that one could realize oneself to be the totality, including nirvana and this samsara both. There is still the experience of oneself as being an individual ray of awareness who is witnessing an illusion projected out from some undetermined, unsuspected source, anterior to oneself. However, the Self that is the ultimate ground of all existence is still unknown.

My best guess is that I did pass through this “mountain experience.” I did experience exactly what Rose has described. However, the sequence progressed beyond this to where there was no longer a universe or any form of consciousness remaining to be seen, as that had all been resolved back into some primordial mind matrix (perhaps this was what Rose calls the Manifesting Mind), nor was there any distinct mental entity left to witness this absence of everything. Possibly the final state in which “I” found myself was the no-mind of Zen: the awareness of nothingness. I can only speculate that what Rose means by the Unmanifesting Mind is **what was aware**, and what would also be aware of everythingness, once the All is realized. As to the Absolute – I dare not even speculate. Regardless of all the above conjecture, the import of that experience remains clear to me to this day. I started out in Disneyland. I ended up in Auschwitz. Then I made *the trip* and saw everything destroyed completely, including me. The only thing that has remained is a constant, gnawing, nostalgic yearning for something else...something undefinable. Rose has provided a likely map to it. Now, my life is a process of becoming, towards a meeting with death. All now is endgame. This is my autobiography in a paragraph. I keep in mind the urgent quest my waiting essence demands, as well as the inevitable destiny to which it points. Nothing else really matters.