

Autumn

There is an immense, painful longing for a broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive account of what we human beings are, who we are, and what this life is for.

Saul Bellow

The first seven weeks of my life, from the moment of my conception in the late summer of 1941 to when I was a two-centimetre-long embryo, were comparatively uneventful. I enjoyed a period of peace and tranquillity that I was not to enjoy again until my late fifties.

In *The Holotropic Mind*, in a chapter called 'Wholeness and the Amniotic Universe', Stanislav Grof says that these early experiences "have strong mystical overtones; they feel sacred or holy. ... In this state of cosmic unity, we feel that we have direct, immediate, and unlimited access to knowledge and wisdom of universal significance." This rapturous period in our lives, a reminder of "Gardens of Paradise in the mythologies of a variety of the world's cultures", can be referred to as 'oceanic ecstasy', which is closely related to Abraham Maslow's 'peak experience'.

This ecstatic feeling normally lasts until the four stages of the birth trauma, which Stan calls Basic Perinatal Matrices (BPM). The BPMs in his model are BPM I, 'Amniotic Universe' "referring to our experience in the womb prior to the onset of delivery"; BPM II, 'Cosmic Engulfment and No Exit' "pertains to our experiences when contractions begin but before the cervix opens"; BPM III, 'Death and Rebirth Struggle' "reflects our experiences as we move through the birth canal"; and BPM IV, 'Death and Rebirth' "is related to our experiences when we actually leave the mother's body".

Provided intrauterine experiences are undisturbed, BPM I normally lasts nine months from conception until birth in what Stan calls the 'good womb'. However, in my case, this mystical state of wholeness prematurely came to an abrupt end, leading to what he calls "The agonies of the 'bad womb'". As a result, in later life, "We may feel open and vulnerable to evil attacks; in the extreme this experience leads to paranoid distortion in our perceptions of the world."

The bad womb came about because of two happenings on 16th October 1941. First, in the morning, my mother visited her doctor to get the results of a pregnancy test as she had missed two periods. She was told that she was, indeed, pregnant; she was expecting her second child. Then that afternoon, she went for a walk with a friend of hers and their children. Perhaps because of her euphoria at learning that she was going to have another child, she decided not to put reins on my brother, John. At that time, it was quite common for toddlers to be harnessed, rather like taking a dog for a walk. But on that fateful afternoon, my mother decided that my brother was old enough to walk on his own; he no longer needed to be reined in and controlled. Supposedly he could take responsibility for his own safety.

However, this was not the case. Having never been taught road sense and enthused by his new sense of freedom, he ran gaily out into the road without looking. At 4:00 p.m. on that fateful day, he was knocked down and killed by a passing army lorry returning home to barracks. This shock was made all the more

2 HEALING THE MIND IN WHOLENESS

intense because of the news that my mother had received that morning. She went from euphoria to deep trauma instantaneously.

The reverberations of this tragic event inevitably passed through to the tiny embryo that I was then, a trauma that was to have a profound effect on my behaviour and relationships throughout my life. As I can now see, this experience was an essential prerequisite to passing through the evolutionary point of accumulation nearly forty years later. My brother had to die—be sacrificed—so that I could reach the Omega point of evolution in Paradise.

This trauma set up a pair of dualistic energy patterns deep in my psyche, which subconsciously drove most of my behaviour during my life until I understood them and could find freedom from the past. For as Rupert Sheldrake pointed out in *The Presence of the Past*, once an energy pattern becomes established in evolution, it tends to repeat itself habitually. And each repetition reinforces the behaviour pattern, until it becomes quite subconscious. It takes much inner work in later life to bring these subconscious energy patterns to the surface; to free ourselves from these mechanistic habits so that we can realize what it truly means to be a human being in contrast to our computers.

The first of these energy patterns was that I experienced my environment as hostile; I did not feel at one with my surroundings. The seven months I spent in my mother's womb after this great trauma were far from being oceanic; I prematurely lost the sense of Wholeness, in which we are conceived.

After I was born, this feeling of hostility became one of nonacceptance. I did not feel accepted by my parents, teachers, and school friends. I thus did not, as a child, develop a sense of self-worth. While this was not very pleasant, it was, nevertheless, essential for my future development.

For normally we acquire self-esteem and self-confidence by being brought up in a loving and supportive environment. In this way, the culture perpetuates itself; ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. But at times of cultural transformation, individuals emerge who are not acceptable to the culture they live in. It is these rebels who are the pioneers of the emerging culture. Not all make it. Some are killed, either by others or by their own hand, and some go insane, ending their lives in mental institutions.

The second energy pattern arose because between four and eight weeks after conception, the human brain is going through a rapid period of growth. And right in the middle of this accelerating growth, I experienced a major breakdown in my psyche. This pattern was to repeat itself on several occasions, often at critical moments in my life. When I went through a period of rapid growth, I would break down.

As I can now see, these two prenatal energy patterns arose in my psyche because they were evolution's way of finding a new direction in which to unfold. But it took many years of self-inquiry to discover this, which I describe in Chapter 3 'Spring'.

Family background

To see how this deep trauma became reinforced during my early years, I first need to describe a little about my family background. Like everyone else, I had a father and a mother, who both had a mother and a father, and so on, back about a billion years through the evolution of the species, to when sexual reproduction began. So evolution throughout all this time has clearly been moving irresistibly towards Wholeness, the union of all opposites, at its Omega point.

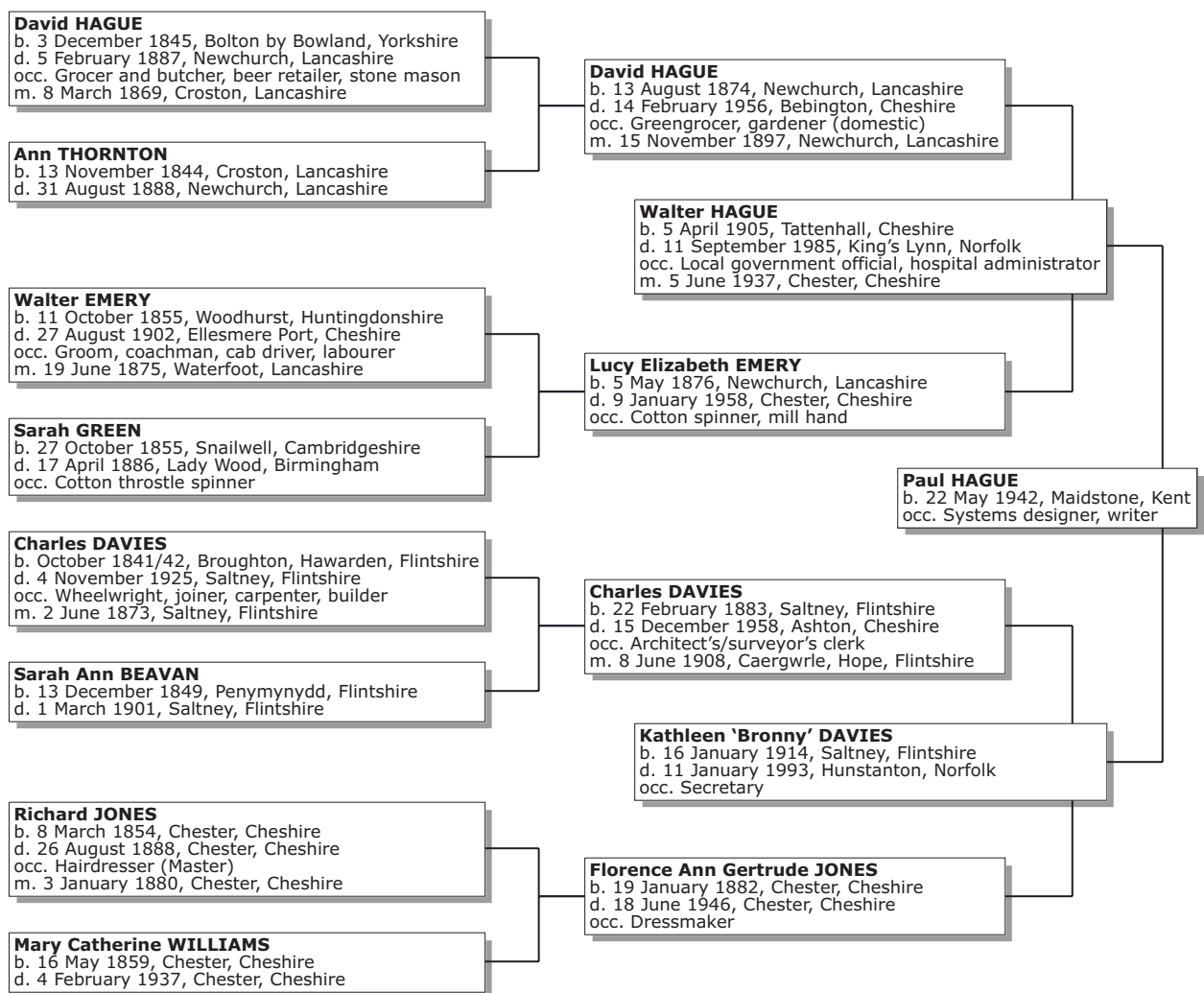
To do this, we must transcend what Paul MacLean called the triune brain consisting of a reptilian and lower and higher mammalian brains, which Arthur Koestler suggests in *The Ghost in the Machine* could be the cause of "the streak of insanity running through human history". As MacLean said, "When the

psychiatrist bids the patient to lie on the couch, he is asking him to stretch alongside a horse and a crocodile.” Such transcendence can arise when we recognize that reincarnation is impersonal. As we are all Wholeness, we all have within us the lives of every being that has ever lived or ever will live. It is an awful lot of past and future to be free from. But it can happen if we are vigilant, living in the Eternal Now.

Returning to my immediate ancestors, on the face of it, my pedigree is no different from that of millions of others. Going back as far as records permit (1538 in the UK)—twelve generations, a tiny fraction of the millions of earlier generations—I can see that I have a perfectly ordinary, run-of-the-mill pedigree, predominantly from agricultural communities in England and Wales. The occupations of my ancestors ranged from yeoman farmers and veterinary surgeons to agricultural labourers, from innkeepers, shopkeepers, and builders to coal miners and factory workers. Nothing out of the ordinary here.

However, when I go deeper and attempt to assess the psychological background of my immediate ancestors, I do find some circumstances that did affect my own development. On their own, these circumstances would not have led me to rebel in the way that I did. But taken in totality, they created an environment that eventually became quite intolerable.

To see this, I do not need to go far back. My early years were, of course, mainly influenced by my parents. And the way they brought me up was affected by their parents’ upbringing. But there is no need to investigate further in any detail. It is only the last two or three generations of human development that had the most influence on my early years. As you can see from this ancestor chart, produced from the family history research I did in the late 1990s, I am three-quarters English and one-quarter Welsh, Flintshire being a county in north-east Wales, adjacent to the English border, near Chester.



4 HEALING THE MIND IN WHOLENESS

The major event in the life of my paternal grandfather, David Hague, was undoubtedly his mother's suicide in 1888, when he was just fourteen years old. My great grandmother, Ann Hague, seems to have fallen on hard times. Her husband, also David, had died the year before of pneumonia at the age of 41. As a result, she appeared to have had very little income and was afraid of having to go the workhouse. In desperation, she drank a quantity of carbolic acid. It was my grandfather who found her dying one morning when he got up, although my father knew none of this.

While Ann appeared to have very little money, there was some money in the family as a whole. Ann came from a long line of yeoman farmers who had lived in a village in west Lancashire for over 300 years. Her grandfather described himself as a 'farrier', a profession that was continued by her father and brother, who called themselves 'veterinary surgeons'.

Ann's husband, David, also did not come from a peasant family. My great great great grandfather, another David Hague (1786-1865), was an innkeeper/farmer in Yorkshire not far from the Forest of Bowland, today designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

(Even though I was born in Kent, in south-east England, my surname indicates my Yorkshire ancestry. For *Hague* derives from the Old Norse *hagi* 'an enclosed piece of land' and many Vikings settled in the north-east of England. In modern Swedish and Norwegian, *hage* means 'meadow' and 'garden', respectively. The word *hedge* is cognate with these words. My first name, Paul, comes from the Latin *paulus* 'little, small'. So my full name could mean 'someone who lives in a small field surrounded by a high hedge'. This is exactly the opposite of the names that Indian children are given to grow into.

It is interesting to note here that *paradise* derives from an ancient Persian word meaning 'enclosed place' from *pairi* 'around'—*peri* in Greek—and *diz* 'to mould, form', related to *daeza* 'wall'. So I have spent my entire life growing out of my name so that I could return to the mystical Garden of Paradise, tearing down all the hedges that separate the various fields of learning in academic specialization and the barriers that we create between the religions, which are quite meaningless in Wholeness.)

In 1817, David married a woman from Haworth, on the eastern edge of the Pennines, two years before Patrick Brontë became rector there, the father of the Brontë sisters. But David and his wife then moved to the west of the 'backbone of England'. Initially, he was a tenant farmer, farming a comparatively large farm of 170 acres (about 70 hectares), while, at the same time, running the village pub. But in the 1850s, when David was about sixty years of age, he bought the freehold of a nearby coaching inn and small attached farm. Not bad for someone who could not sign his name on his will.

David's son and grandson, both called John Hague, followed the family tradition that David had begun, John, junior, inheriting his grandfather's coaching inn and farm when his father died in 1895. This John was the grandfather of the most distinguished member of my family. James Drake, who my father did not know existed, even though James was his second cousin, was knighted in 1973 as the 'father of the motorway' in the UK, also being responsible for the first motorway in England as County Surveyor and Bridgemaster for Lancashire County Council. By an extraordinary coincidence, James' daughter Diana, my third cousin, did the same mathematics course at the same university in the same year as me. But we did not know that we were related at the time and have not met since, although we have corresponded a little.

I know this because when I visited Bolton by Bowland in 1998, the village where David Hague had run the village pub, I met an elderly woman called Jennie Wilkinson, who could remember my great great uncle John Hague, who died aged 89 in 1939, and his five daughters, including the mother of James Drake. It was she who told me that James was as interested in family history as me. Actually, once I had found some

background on my upbringing, it wasn't so much the history I was interested in. It was more the fun of being a detective, following up clues, an investigation that could be quite addictive, as many know.

However, John's older brother, David, my great grandfather, did not seem to be cut out for the family business. He never settled in one occupation for very long. He started out as a shopkeeper in the village where he was born. He then moved to Manchester, running another shop, but also becoming a stone mason, presumably to supplement his income. But this did not work out, for by the time he died in 1887 he had become a brewer's traveller in the village where he was born, and where his father, John, still owned a pub and a farm.

This must have been most unsettling both for Ann and her three children. Indeed, the newspaper report of her suicide said that she had been drinking heavily for the previous fifteen years, and as a result had "behaved in an unmotherly manner for a long while". So even though my grandfather, David Hague, did not come from a very poor family, his early life could not have been easy.

His wife, Lucy, also had an unsettled childhood, but for different reasons. Lucy's parents were born in the Fen country, in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire. Their ancestors had been agricultural labourers for several generations. However, as the result of the agricultural depression of the 1870s, Lucy's parents could not find work on the farms and so moved to industrial Lancashire, where they met and got married, some of their siblings moving to London.

Lucy's father, Walter Emery, seemed to have been good with horses, for his various occupations were groom, carter, coachman to a surgeon, and a cab driver. Her mother, Sarah, on the other hand, needed to work in the Lancashire cotton mills, which were pretty unpleasant from all accounts. Sarah also suffered from ill health. She died in Birmingham at the age of 30 from an operation on her ovaries, an operation that presumably explains why she only had one child. Lucy was just ten at the time, and went to live with her maternal grandmother, working, like her mother, in the mills from the age of fourteen and most probably before.

My grandfather, David, began his working life as a gardener, which was his first love throughout his life. However, after he got married, he tried his hand for a time as a shopkeeper like his father, presumably using money he had inherited from his grandfather. But they did not stay in Lancashire. They moved to Ellesmere Port in Cheshire, where Lucy's father, Walter, was then working as a labourer in a galvanizing works. (Ellesmere Port was an industrial town in the Wirral that grew rapidly in the nineteenth century.)

But like his father, David does not seem have been cut out to run a business. After just two or three years, David returned to domestic gardening, an occupation that he was to follow for the rest of his life. David and Lucy eventually moved to Chester, where they were to live for nearly fifty years, and where my father was brought up and educated.

So what was my father's upbringing like? Well, he was one of seven children (one dying as a baby), living in a rented house, and being brought up on very little money. The family seems to have been quite close, even though David and Lucy lived quite different lives.

David was a quiet, unassuming man, who liked nothing better than to tend his plants, to go fishing for eels in the River Dee, and to go bowling. He rarely went to church. Lucy, on the other hand, was a regular churchgoer, being very active in the Mother's Union throughout her life. Rather surprisingly, given her working class background, she was also a committee member of the local Conservative Association, actively campaigning for the party at election time. From all accounts, Lucy was a bit of a matriarch, being the

6 HEALING THE MIND IN WHOLENESS

dominant personality in the household. This situation was to have a profound effect on my father and hence on both my own and my siblings' upbringing.

Of his brothers and sisters, my father, Walter, was the brightest, being the only one who went to the local high school. He could have gone on to higher education, but because of the financial situation in the family, he left school at fifteen to earn a living. Walter began his career in local government, working in the Chester town clerk's office. Then when he was eighteen he was advised that if he were to realize his fullest potential in this career, he would need to be qualified as a solicitor. This involved leaving home and moving to another town.

Lucy would have none of it. She insisted that Walter continue working in Chester, supporting the household. Indeed, until Walter was married at the age of thirty-two, he gave his unopened wage envelope to his mother each week, receiving 'pocket money' in return. Not surprisingly, he eventually rebelled against this treatment. When he got married, he moved to the opposite end of the country, as far away from his parents as possible. So while my cousins were brought up in an extended family, I was brought up in a nuclear family, having virtually no contact with my father's relatives. It was not until I was nearly sixty that I met my cousins on my father's side of the family for the first time.

My maternal grandfather, Charles Davies (1883–1958), came from a closely-knit community in north-east Wales. All my ancestors on this side of the family going back to the seventeenth century came from this Welsh community, with several interfamily marriages of cousins.

They had a variety of occupations, ranging from farmers to coal miners. The turning point in this branch of the family came through my great great grandfather, James Beavan (1820–1895). James's parents were first cousins, his father being a collier. There is some evidence of mental disorders in this family as three of James's seven siblings were reported in the 1851 and subsequent censuses as 'lunatic', 'idiot', and 'imbecile since childhood'.

James, himself, began his working life as a labourer in the local iron foundry. However, he later became a successful grocer and baker. Then when his only child, Sarah Ann, married her first cousin, Charles Davies, James and Charles went into the building trade, building houses in Saltney, a rapidly growing industrial area in the outskirts of Chester, just inside Wales.

Charles, himself, began life as a wheelwright, like his father, Edward Davies, later broadening his skills to become a joiner and carpenter. This was the basis for his becoming a builder. So my grandfather, Charles, was born into a quite well-to-do family.

Both James and Charles were keen Liberal Party members, supporting their local member of parliament, William Gladstone, the British prime minister at various times between 1868 and 1894. Charles was also a devout Methodist, following the teaching of his father, Edward (1807–1881), who was a lay Methodist preacher. However, my grandfather, Charles, did not follow this line. He rarely went to church. Charles senior was well-loved by his family, his grandchildren describing him as "a kindly, generous old man, very liberal in his outlook on life", except when it came to alcohol, for he was "very anti-drink".

Charles junior was the cleverest of six surviving children and the one closest to his father. Despite this, for many years he distanced himself from the rest of the family, perhaps as the result of his class-conscious wife, Florence, née Jones, who found his family extremely trying at times. For the Davies family, fiercely independent, could be quite argumentative.

Florence Jones, my maternal grandmother, came from the city of Chester. Most of her great grandparents had moved into the city at the beginning of the nineteenth century, coming from Cheshire

farming families and from as far afield as Yorkshire, and perhaps Birmingham and Ireland. Despite the fact that the surnames of Florence's parents were Jones and Williams, there is no indication that the family originated in Wales, just around the corner. (My great grandmother didn't seem keen on changing her surname—Jones and Williams being the second and third most common surnames in England and Wales after Smith—to a more distinctive one. When her first husband died, she married another Jones, also a hairdresser.)

In Chester, this branch of the family had a wide variety of occupations in the nineteenth century, including cordwainer, turnpike toll collector, publican, baker, cabinet-maker, tailor, baths superintendent, and hairdresser. Florence, herself, was a highly skilled court dressmaker. Because of this, she and Charles married in secret in 1908. It was a condition of her employment that she be single. So she would have lost her job if she had revealed that she was married.

As far as I can tell, Florence was the dominant personality in the household, making the major decisions about religion, education, and work. In this respect, she seems to have been a bit of a traditionalist, in contrast to her husband, who, like the other Davies's, was more of a freethinker. For instance, a Roman Catholic priest, who lived next door, persuaded her to change my mother's proposed Christian name. My grandmother wanted to call her eldest daughter Bronwen, a delightful Welsh name from *bron* 'breast' and (*g*)*wen* 'white, fair, blessed, holy'. But the priest said that this was a heathen name, not a Christian one. So throughout her life, my mother was known as Bronny, although her official Christian name was Kathleen.

Florence was not reticent about expressing her opinion when she thought that someone was doing something of which she disapproved. Most particularly, she told my mother on her wedding day that she was making a mistake marrying my father. Florence was right; my parents spent forty-eight unhappy years living together. For, despite the fact that my parents were devout Christians, a religion that preaches love and peace, the predominant atmosphere in the family was one of bickering and argument. It became so intolerable that I eventually withdrew almost completely from my family.

Overall, I have the impression that neither of my grandfathers really knew how to love their wives, a situation that characterized my parents' marriage. So as my mother was unable to find love from her father or her husband, she sought love elsewhere, from her male friends, which made my father very jealous, although I doubt if these liaisons were any more than flirtatious. She also cravingly sought love from me, who had become her eldest son.

Early years

Being interested in the circumstances of my birth, I asked my mother several times during her last years about what she could remember. She could remember nothing, not even the time of my birth, which is not normally recorded on birth certificates in England as it is in some other countries. I have read that when someone suffers bereavement during pregnancy, then the full expression of grief is delayed until the baby is born. This appears to have been the situation in my mother's case. For myself, passing through the various phases of the birth trauma was almost a non-event, a relief from living in what had become a distinctly hostile environment.

What happened next was highly significant for my future development. Essentially, my mother did not see me as the unique human being that I am. Rather, she saw me as a replacement for the son she had lost. Thankfully, my parents did not give me my brother's name, as had been common in earlier years. For instance, my great grandmother, the one who committed suicide, lost her first-born son, also called John,

8 HEALING THE MIND IN WHOLENESS

when he was just one-year old. But then she and her husband also called their third son, John, after his grandfather.

Even though I was given my own unique name, the overall effect of this treatment by my mother was that I never felt accepted. She had beatified my brother, symbolized by an angelic photograph of him hanging in our living room. So there was nothing I could do to please my mother. She was constantly comparing me unfavourably with her idealized son. As a consequence, I never received the unconditional love from my mother that Erich Fromm talks about in *The Art of Loving*.



To receive my mother's love, I had to be perfect in her eyes, which, of course, was impossible. Nevertheless, as an infant, I tried to do so, leading me to develop a pleasing disposition, draining me of my own power, having difficulty in saying 'No' even when it felt right to do so. The other side of this coin was that I inherited my father's kindly disposition. My relationship to my mother also led to an ambivalent attitude to demanding women, at once being attracted to and repelled by them.

As I grew older, my mother would even talk about my 'failings' to my friends who visited, saying to them that she was sure they would not behave in the way that I behaved. Not surprisingly, I stopped inviting friends round to our house. It was too embarrassing to do so. Of course, none of this did anything to help the development of a healthy ego, necessary to function reasonably effectively in the world. But this was also a blessing in disguise. For, as I was later to realize, how can you develop a healthy ego in a sick society?

Reinforcing behaviour patterns

My mother, like my father, was a highly anxious person, a propensity to anxiety that was not helped by my brother's death. This anxiety was further intensified by two significant events during my childhood.

The first occurred in 1945, at the end of the Second World War. During the War, the beaches on the south-east coast of England had been out of bounds to the public. But as soon as peace was declared, thousands of people swarmed to the beaches, which were full to overcrowding. My parents and my younger brother Robert (born in 1944) and I joined them on Margate's long sandy beaches, paying our first visit to the seaside when I was three years of age.

Being a rather curious boy, I became interested in a lorry that was picking up the seaweed that had accumulated on the beach during the previous six years. I started to follow this lorry, very soon losing touch with my parents on the crowded beach. Not surprising, this was most distressing for both my parents and me. Eventually, a passing motor-cyclist found me crying and took me to the local police station, where I was reunited with my parents.

Then when I was seven years of age, I joined the church choir at the church my parents attended. Now at this church, all the new choirboys had to go through an initiation ceremony. This involved being bent over a U-shaped gravestone and being beaten by the other boys. I was going to have none of it. So I escaped from them, running across a nearby road, where a passing car knocked me down. As I remember it, the car received more damage than me. Its headlight was broken, but I was merely shocked, not hurt physically.

Of course, these two incidents reminded my parents of the accident when my brother was killed eight years' earlier. As a result, I became even more protected than previously. Far from being empowered by my mother, I was being smothered by her. I was more or less forbidden to go anywhere.

The search for Love and Peace begins

In a way, this suited me. I did not really fit in with my school friends. While I enjoyed the little adventures we used to have, I did not like the way that the boys fought with each other and bullied the girls. From a very early age, all I wanted in life was peace and quiet.

But I was not to find love and peace within my family either. My parents never learnt the art of loving. My mother was seeking love from my father, which she never received from her father. But my father did not know how to love. For love cannot exist where there is fear and anxiety, emotions that drove much of my father's behaviour, most particularly his fear of death. My father assuaged his fears through his religious beliefs; he was a Christian fundamentalist, believing in the literal truth of everything in the Bible, impossible as this sounds.

So the public image of our family was quite different from the reality at home. Superficially, we appeared as a perfect Christian family, much admired by others. My father was at various times churchwarden and chairman of the parochial church council (PCC) of Maidstone parish church, the main church in the town, built in 1395. My mother was actively engaged in charity work, initially with the Family Planning Association (FPA), and then with the Save the Children Fund when the FPA decided to give contraceptive advice to unmarried couples, much to her disgust.

So people would come up to me and say how lucky I was to have such wonderful parents. I hated this, for I could see that the truth was quite different. In actuality, we were a dysfunctional family, living quite hypocritical lives, within what I now know to be a dysfunctional society.

I saw this hypocrisy in my parents' church also. In church, the priests would preach love and peace. I remember one sermon in particular when the priest talked about the four words for *love* in Greek, which I was to later discover were made famous by C. S. Lewis's *The Four Loves*. But when people came out of church and went for tea and biscuits in the church hall afterwards, I heard much argument and conflict. The conversation was far from peaceful; not one of the four loves was evident.

And why were there so many divisions within the Christian religion? I saw much conflict between the Catholics, Anglicans, and nonconformists, such as Methodists and Baptists. Even the Church of England was not a homogenous whole. There were high and low Anglicans, close to the Catholics and nonconformists, respectively, with middle-of-the-road Anglicans in between. What was the point of all these divisions? What meaning did they have? These divisions did not reflect a religion that preaches love and peace. So why couldn't all the Christian religions unify so that there were no divisions between them?

As I was unable to find peace in my external world, either within the family or outside it, at the tender age of eight years of age, I began to search for the root cause of conflict and suffering in the world. In this respect, it is no coincidence that I was a war baby born in a war zone. For my earliest memories, albeit subconscious, were of a violent and hostile environment.

I know that the War had a profound effect on my later development from one of my earliest conscious memories. I was about five or six at the time, sitting in school. Suddenly, there was a screeching noise overhead, and I saw a squadron of fighter planes roaring across the sky in formation. This sight brought up an intense fear in me. The first thing I asked my mother when she met me at the school gate at the end of the day was "Mummy, has the war started again?" She assured me that it hadn't.

That was a relief. But as I grew up, I realized that the end of the war did not really bring peace and harmony. I could see that even those who preached love and peace were in deep conflict. Why is this? Why

10 HEALING THE MIND IN WHOLENESS

is it that we human beings cannot live in peace and harmony with each other and our environment even though we all long for it more than anything else?

Finding the answer to this question has been the central theme of my life. One of the first things I discovered as I looked into this question was that conflict arises when people with different belief systems or identities meet and cannot find a common ground. For instance, each country at war with others believes that God is on its side. So, I reasoned, if I could see the world from the other guy's point of view, all conflict would disappear. I therefore imagined that I had been born in France, Germany, or Italy and wondered what the world would look like then.

Also, although I did not meet or see many black people in the early 1950s in England, I was nevertheless aware of the tensions that arise from differences in skin colour. To avoid all these tensions, I dreamt that one day people of different colours would intermarry so that all human beings would be a golden brown in colour.

The ability to look at both sides of every situation is something that we generally acquire around six to eight years of age. Jean Piaget called this phase of human development 'concrete operations' for reasons that we do not need to go into here.

This ability to see the other person's point of view is well illustrated by a simple experiment. First show a child a piece of card painted yellow on one side and blue on the other. Then hold the card between you and the child so the child can see just the yellow side, with the blue side facing towards you. If you then ask a six-year-old, "What colour am I looking at?", the child will reply "yellow". But by the time that it is eight, the child invariably replies "blue", showing that a fundamental transformation in consciousness has taken place. (Actually, Piaget used a more complex test. But this example suffices to make the point.)

This approach to learning has been the guiding principle in my life ever since. Sadly, however, it has frequently got me into trouble with both the authorities and my peers, governed by either-or thinking, which has dominated human learning for thousands of years. They did not want me to grow up and develop a both-and approach to relationships and learning. I was pressured to look at just the yellow side of the card, like a six-year-old. The blue side was something that most people did not want to look at.

Because of my insistence on looking at both sides of every situation, I did not completely lose my natural intelligence, my innate innocence, as so many of my contemporaries did. Most particularly, I was able to wonder about the greatest conflict in the culture within which I had been born, the centuries-long war between science and religion. I realized that the key to healing this great schism lay in reconciling the differences between God and the Universe.

What led to this insight were the opening words of the prayer that Jesus advised his followers to say, "Our Father which art in Heaven ...". But what did this mean? Father is the first part of the Christian trinity, 'God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit', and Heaven, to an eight-year-old, was the Universe, the skies above us, in outer space. Indeed, I even toyed for a while with the worldview that must have been prevalent in Jesus' time: the Earth is a flat tabernacle, with Heaven above and Hell below. What, I wondered, would it be like to walk to the edge of the Earth and fall off, like falling over a cliff?

Now the words *God* and *Universe* both denote Wholeness in some sense. But no one in the culture I was being brought up in could tell me what the relationship is between God and the Universe. This was a desperate situation. For unless the concepts of God and the Universe could be unified, I did not have an overall context within which to determine what is true and what is false. My life thus had no foundation, no overall framework that would give meaning to my life.

But seeking to heal my shattered, fragmented, and split mind in Wholeness reinforced the prenatal feeling that I was living in a hostile environment. For at eight years of age I began to question the fundamental beliefs and assumptions of the culture I lived in, beliefs and assumptions that provide many with a sense of security and identity in life. So many felt threatened by my questioning, often reacting in a fight or flight manner, behaviour patterns that continue even to this day. It is very difficult to find anyone ready and willing to listen to what I have to say or to read my writings. My deep longing to live in love and peace with my fellow human beings has led me into almost total isolation.

Adolescence

As a consequence of the confusion around the concepts of God and the Universe, my schooldays were far from happy. During the period between the ages of eleven and twenty-two, there were only three years that I would describe as happy: the first year at a new school at eleven, the first year in the sixth form at sixteen studying mathematics and physics, and the first year at university at eighteen, majoring in mathematics. In all the other years, I was in a state of depression, finding it very difficult to concentrate on my studies or to relate to my parents, teachers, and fellow pupils or students.

I can only really make sense of these happenings from a cosmic perspective. This was Life's way of ensuring that I learnt as little as possible at school and university so that when I came to start afresh at the very beginning at the age of thirty-eight I had very little to unlearn.

Of course, I did not have this cosmic perspective at the time, nor did anyone else around me. It is only because I can see the Whole at the Omega point of evolution that I am able to see my life in its overall context. This means that even if my parents and teachers had attempted to discover the reasons for my poor performance, which they didn't, they would not have done so. Specialists, like child psychologists, work within far too narrow a framework to really understand what is happening to us all, both as individuals and as a species.

So any rational explanations about human behaviour within the traditional Western framework are extremely limiting. Nevertheless, cosmic happenings become manifest at the micro level. So in this section, I describe my development during this time as I understand it today.

As, in Reality, there is no division between my inner and outer worlds, it is important to note that neither the inner nor the outer can really be called causal. Furthermore, as there is no division between cause and effect in Reality, any separation of cause and effect is just an abstraction.

With this proviso, when I look at the patterns during my adolescence, I can see that the breakdowns that occurred at the ages of twelve, seventeen, and nineteen following the three happy years during this period were a repetition of the breakdown that I suffered as a seven-week-old embryo. But each breakdown was brought about by different circumstances: by my doubts about Christianity, science, and mathematics, logic, and economics, respectively.

Religious doubts

The first major breakdown in my life occurred at the age of twelve. It was a very big bump. In the previous year, I had moved to Maidstone Grammar School, a selective boys-only state school with a strong academic tradition going back to 1549, when it was founded "to teach Latin grammar to Maidstone's students" in the reign of King Edward VI, who founded many such grammar schools. At the time, its

headmaster, W. A. Claydon, was one of only seven headmasters of state schools on the Headmasters' Conference, representing many of the public (private) schools in the UK.

I much enjoyed this year, having quite a few friends, coming near the top of the class, and winning a school prize. I was thus in a small group of boys who were potential candidates to go to Oxford or Cambridge University, which was regarded as the pinnacle of academic achievement and the principal aim of the school.

This was not to be. What triggered my breakdown the following year was my confirmation into the Church of England. This rite of passage occurs at what the Church of England calls 'the age of discretion', presumably implying that one has a choice whether to be confirmed or not. But I had no such choice. My parents demanded that I be confirmed; they would brook no dissension.

So even though I was becoming more and more disillusioned with Christianity, I was required to attend weekly meetings with one of the priests at the church in preparation for my confirmation. Actually, this gave me the opportunity to look much more closely at my doubts. I was particularly sceptical about the story of genesis in the Bible as it did not fit in with Darwin's theory of evolution, and about the virgin birth and the resurrection.

On the other hand, there were some aspects of Christianity that I found most attractive. Most particularly, the admonition to 'love your neighbour as yourself'. This fitted well with how I wanted to live my life; I wanted to find a way of making a worthwhile contribution to my fellow human beings.

So I was in a state of some confusion. I remember thinking that maybe I would become a priest when I grew up. For priests were people who seemed to have compassion, to care about other people. But I did not want to be a Christian priest, preaching superstitious nonsense. To try to resolve this confusion, I naively began to express my doubts to my father. I was particularly interested in discovering why Christians speak so much about love and peace, but spend so much time fighting each other.

My father became very angry at my questions. For him, I was not only questioning the word of God, I was also not respecting his authority as the head of the household. He felt very threatened, because, as I now know, I was questioning his immortality symbols, which gave him a sense of identity and security in life.

The more I spoke to my father about love and peace, the angrier he became, his anger sometimes turning to uncontrollable rage and violence. He would strike out at me, both with his hands and with sticks, especially when I grew fifteen centimetres taller than him. He also psychologically abused me, telling me that I was the Antichrist, not a fit person to be living on this planet, never mind in his household. On a number of occasions, he threatened to throw me out of the house. As the result of this treatment, I too became angry and frustrated. I desperately wanted love and peace and answers to my questions, questions that I was not even permitted to ask. This had several effects.

First, my sense of self-worth became highly negative; I began to develop an inferiority complex. My mother had told me since I was born that I am not good enough. Now my father was giving me a similar message, but expressed with great hatred. I simply was not acceptable to either of them. Nor was this all. My school friends discovered my anger and frustration and started to tease me, in an activity they called 'hag-baiting'. As a consequence, I lost the friends I had had the year before, becoming utterly alone. No one could answer the questions that were burning inside me, not my parents, priests, or teachers. It was quite devastating.

Not surprisingly, I was unable to do much work at school. Within one year, I fell from the near the top of my class to the bottom and was demoted from the top to a lower stream, where I stayed for the next

three years. During this time, I took solace in mathematics and music. There was a sense of certainty in mathematics, in contrast to all the other subjects. So I didn't really have any questions about this subject at the time; it was just fun. Musically, I sang in the school and church choirs until my voice broke and I played the violin in the school orchestra, which prevented me from going completely insane.

Academically, it was my mathematical abilities that kept me going. My teachers thought that I still had a chance of going to Cambridge University, despite my lack of progress in the other subjects. So at fifteen, I started learning Latin again, which I had dropped when I was demoted two years earlier, and which was a prerequisite for both Oxford and Cambridge Universities at the time.

But first, I needed to pass the basic requirements needed to go to university. Because of my depression, this was quite a struggle. In my first public examinations at the age of sixteen, I passed in just mathematics, physics, chemistry, and English language, barely scraping the pass mark in the last two. I failed in French, Latin, and English Literature, which meant that not only was Cambridge out of the question, without French as a foreign language, I could not go to any university.

Nevertheless, as my mathematics result was excellent, I was not thrown out of the school. I was allowed to go into the sixth form, resitting French and Latin in my first term there. This time I scraped a pass in French, but failed Latin once again, which meant that at least I had some chance of going on to higher education.

Scientific doubts

My first year in the sixth form at sixteen was a sunny period in what was otherwise a very stormy secondary education. Extracurricularly, I was selected by my music teacher to lead the second violins in a county youth orchestra he formed to perform Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, an opera Britten wrote for school children. Although I was never particularly accomplished as a violinist, this greatly enhanced my confidence. It was very rare during my adolescence for anyone to boost my self-esteem.

Academically, I dropped the subjects I was no good at, concentrating on just mathematics and physics. Being able to focus attention on just the subjects I enjoyed, I was awarded the school mathematics prize in my first year in the sixths.

But then I began to look more deeply into the nature of physics, just as I had searched for meaning in Christianity as a twelve-year-old. For some strange reason, it seemed that physics studied the very large and the very small, with chemistry and biology in between. Most curious.

At the large scale, there were two competing theories about the physical universe at the time: the big bang and the steady-state theories, the latter being promoted most particularly by Fred Hoyle. Intuitively, I favoured the steady-state theory, because it was more elegant. I did not like the idea that the physical universe was created at some arbitrarily fixed point in time. This didn't make sense to me. I was sure that another explanation would eventually be found for the evidence that supported the big bang theory.

At the time, I was not thinking any more about the possible union of the concepts of God and the Universe, and the possibility that this union would resolve the controversy that existed between these two competing theories. By the time I was sixteen, I had become terrified of the Christians, a terror that inhibited me from even thinking about the nature of God, especially in a scientific context. Nevertheless, I was not prepared to discard the concept of God altogether. I felt that the Absolute could not be ignored, and that whatever it might be would one day be accommodated within science. So I was more an agnostic than an atheist at this time.

On the small scale, a chart on the wall of the physics lab at school triggered further doubts about physics as the fundamental science. This chart showed the main subatomic particles known at the time, a precursor to what is today known as the 'standard model of fundamental particles and interactions'. However, at sixteen, I could see that the notion that there exists one or more fundamental particles as the building blocks of all matter in the Universe was absurd. For as soon as one group of physicists claimed to have found the most fundamental particle, another group would attempt to prove them wrong. This process could theoretically continue indefinitely. So we could never know when we had found a so-called most fundamental particle. Yet, even today, particle physicists persuade governments to build them multibillion-dollar particle accelerators searching for the 'God-particle', known as Higgs boson, or the 'mind of God'.

These doubts about the fundamental atomistic assumptions of the physical universe, which we have inherited from Leucippus and Democritus some 2,400 years ago, led me to ask a question that was later to be of central importance: what can we know about knowledge that is beyond the frontiers of science at any one time? I liken this question to the one that Albert Einstein asked himself at a similar age: what would we see in a mirror if we travelled on a beam of light away from the mirror. The answer to this question being, of course, that we would see ourselves at the moment that we left the mirror. Time for such a traveller would have stopped.

Regarding my own question, I was quite aware of the evolutionary nature of scientific knowledge and that sometimes deeply held theories needed to be abandoned in the light of the evidence. Copernicus's heliocentric view of the solar system was the prime example that I was aware of at the time.

So I felt sure that my doubts would one day be resolved. But not through science as we knew it then, and for the most part even today. This led me to another breakdown at the age of seventeen. Not as dramatic as the breakdown I had suffered as a twelve-year-old. But it was severe enough for me to fail the mock physics exam I took as a rehearsal for the public examination that I needed to take before going to university. This was quite a shock, which I managed to recover from quite well. In the event, I managed to pass my exams with satisfactory grades, which enabled me to go on to further education.

Socially, I felt as isolated from my fellows as at any time during the previous six years. My contemporaries did not seem to be interested in the questions that I was asking. And certainly my parents and teachers were not.

This isolation was well recognized by my teachers. During the second year in the sixths, it was customary for boys to be made prefects (this word was actually spelt *praefect* at my traditional school) to assist the teachers with enforcing order and discipline. The prefects were even permitted to beat boys, just like in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes published in 1847. At first, only the more confident boys were made prefects. But gradually, more and more boys were promoted, so that by the end of this last year at school, I was the only one in my year who was not made a prefect.

As I can now see, the reason was that I felt that I was still living in the hostile environment that I experienced as the result of my brother's death. In social terms, I was terrified of all human beings, having a huge inferiority complex. Under these circumstances, I simply could not have handled boisterous juniors. I had no authority whatsoever.

Looking back on my schooldays, it is a wonder that I survived at all. But there was always a life-giving, spiritual energy present within me that kept me going against all the odds. I felt a sense of destiny, and knew that one day I would find answers to the fundamental questions of existence and that my fellow

human beings would accept me. At the time of writing, the first of these goals has been realized, but not the second.

Doubts about mathematics, logic, and economics

So it was off to university. But which one? As Cambridge was out of the question, I had to choose between London and one of the 'red-brick' universities in the provinces. In this respect, there was only one choice. I wanted to be as far away from my parents as possible. And London was far too close for comfort, only 60 kilometres from where my parents lived. There was a distinct danger that my parents would attempt to visit me in London. In the end, I chose to go to the University of Nottingham, whose mathematics department had a fine reputation and which was 270 kilometres away from my parents, reasonably out of reach. So just as my father moved away from his parents when he got married, I moved away from mine as soon as I had the opportunity.

In my first year at university, I was required to take a subsidiary subject, in addition to mathematics, in which I was majoring. There was little point in taking physics, as this clearly could not lead me to the Truth. But what else could do so? In the event, I decided to take a pragmatic approach. As I thought I would be entering the business world after graduating, I decided to learn something about that world by studying economics.

The course consisted of three series of lectures, on macro- and microeconomics, and on something called 'industrial economics'. To this day, I do not know what this was. The lecturer would come into the lecture hall on the dot of 10:00 one day each week, stand behind a lectern, and deliver a prewritten lecture in a dull monotone. Occasionally, he would finish a minute or two before his allotted fifty minutes were up and he would ask if there were any questions. Amazingly there were some people who were still awake and who asked questions.

But it was the lectures on macro- and microeconomics that showed me the absurdity of economic theories. Perhaps I should not have been too surprised. I had already discovered that science and religion are based on false assumptions. So why should economics be any different?

The central concept of macroeconomics, I discovered, is the gross domestic product (GDP). But what does this number mean? It is the aggregate of the prices of all the goods and services sold within a country in a year. So the price of loaves of bread and of guns, for instance, are added together to obtain this number. It is rather like saying that you have 17 items by adding 9 apples to 5 battleships to 3 hire-purchase agreements. It was utterly illogical. Furthermore, as was later pointed out to me, car crashes are regarded as a positive contribution to the GDP.

What then is the meaning of price? Well, I learned about this in microeconomics. The central concept in this respect is the demand curve, which plots the demand for a product against its price. Generally, the lower the price, the greater the demand, but this is not always the case. So the GNP, as the aggregate of all these prices, is a crude measure of people's needs, wants, and desires. The GNP is thus as much a psychological concept as an economics one.

And what is the relationship of prices of goods and services to their value? The cost of production also affects prices. But here again, we see numbers being aggregated that have no meaningful relationship to each other. Most particularly, accountants regard the cost of human labour as just another cost, like premises, machines, raw materials, travel, and so on.

So in today's economic system, we do not value human beings as human beings. To the economist and the accountant, human beings are treated in exactly the same way as machines, to be disposed of when the needs of the economy demand it. Furthermore, because prices are expressed in terms of money as the lowest common denominator, there is no distinction made in the system between the value of food, which we need to live, and drugs, which poison us.

This led me to wonder about the central concept of economics, money. As a student, I never found a satisfactory explanation of this very strange entity. In retrospect, I can see that the cause of my confusion is that in today's economy money acts both as unit of measure, like grams and inches, and as a commodity being bought and sold. I could return to this vitally important issue in Part III of *Wholeness: The Union of All Opposites* if there is any benefit in doing so.

As I have never been able to learn any subject that did not make sense to me, not surprisingly, I failed my economics exams at the end of my first year. However, I did quite well in mathematics, coming in the top ten per cent of my year. I thus was allowed to continue on the honours course in my second year, with a reasonable expectation of graduating with a good honours degree.

But this did not happen. For the third time during my adolescence, I broke down, having great difficulty in concentrating on my studies. It is difficult to say what was cause and effect here; there wasn't as clear an external trigger as there had been for the earlier breakdowns. But the upshot was that I became disillusioned with my great love, mathematics. At the time, my understanding of mathematics was not good enough to rationalize this disenchantment. Again it is only in retrospect that I can understand what might have happened.

Basically, I did not have much interest in applied mathematics as it applied to the physical universe. Rather, my passion was for pure mathematics. But this stopped being fun. At university, pure mathematics became very abstract and inward looking. The emphasis was on rigour, which could only lead to rigor mortis. In this environment, intuition was disparaged, even though intuition is key to any creative process, including the development of mathematical theorems.

As I now know, my mathematics teachers were concerned with rigour to give mathematics a sound foundation. But from later reading such books as Morris Kline's *Mathematics: The Loss of Certainty*, there is no agreement among mathematicians about what constitutes the foundations of mathematics. There is as much argument between the various schools in mathematics as there is between the schools in any other discipline.

In retrospect, perhaps I objected to the way that mathematics was being taught because my teachers were trying to turn mathematical proof into a mechanistic process, not a creative human one. Although I did not learn about Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems at university, I have since discovered that a human being's ability to see the truth of a mathematical theorem is more powerful than a machine's ability to prove that theorem.

However, I cannot say that I even intuitively knew this as an undergraduate. But as I was destined in later life to develop a sound foundation for not only mathematics, but also for all knowledge, it was vitally important that Life prevent me from learning too much at university. As I can now see, it is only with a both-and approach to learning, rather than Aristotle's either-or approach, that we can establish an unshakeable foundation for all our activities.

To this end, there were two topics that I learnt about that would prove to be important influences later in life. The first was that I took a short course in mathematical logic. But what I saw there mystified me

deeply. Logic is supposed to be the science of reason. So logic should really be studied within psychology. But what I was being taught in mathematics was highly complex and artificial. It did not seem to bear any relationship with how I actually think, learn, and organize my ideas.

Secondly, I was particularly fascinated by the principle of duality in projective geometry. For in projective geometry, a curve can be regarded both as the locus of a moving point and as the envelope of a moving line. By replacing points with lines and vice versa in a particular problem, the reciprocal problem is obtained. This means that theorems in projective geometry come in dual pairs, applying equally to the original problem and to its reciprocal. It was these two aspects of logic and mathematics, which gave me the idea of the Principle of Duality in integral relational logic nearly twenty years later, which subsequently became the Principle of Unity, the fundamental design principle of the Universe.

In the meantime, I still had to get through the last couple of years of my formal education. On the surface, all appeared to be well. I was singing in the university choir, playing rugby, going on hikes in the Peak District at weekends, and generally enjoying the company of my fellow students, at the superficial level, at least. We did have some talks about the meaning of life late into the night, as students do, but I found these unsatisfying, and did not participate very much.

But academically, I was struggling. As I had failed economics, I still needed to pass a subsidiary subject. In my second year at university, I therefore switched to statistics, which was perhaps a slightly better bet. However, because of my depression, six weeks before the exam, I still had not learnt anything about this subject, even though I had diligently attended all the lectures. Yet I had to pass this subsidiary if I was not to be thrown out of the university. Somehow I managed to summon up enough concentration during these intense six weeks to learn enough to get through. I obtained some past exam papers, which told me the topics that were most likely to come up. I focused my attention on these, which did the trick.

But this did not work the following year, when I sat my finals. I had almost completely lost my ability to solve mathematical problems, and so failed my degree outright. This plunged me into the depths of despair, driving me to the brink of suicide. For without a degree, I had no chance of getting a worthwhile job.

I thus returned home to my parents having no idea what to do with my life. They attempted to help me in the only way they knew how: through their church. They arranged for me to have a few meetings with one of the curates, Donald Reeves, who was later to become well-known as the rector of St James's, Piccadilly in London, often appearing on television.

Donald also arranged for me to meet a psychiatrist, whose name was Frank Lake, as I remember. As I have since discovered on Wikipedia, Lake was the founder of the "Clinical Theology Association, whose primary aim was to make clergy more effective in understanding and accepting the psychological origins of their parishioners' personal difficulties". In writing this chapter, I have also discovered that he "believed that the first trimester of embryonal development was the most important part of one's life", and as such he had very similar views to Stanislav Grof. He was also associated with R. D. Laing, who considered that so-called mental disturbances are as much to do with the family as the individual, not solely biochemical, as is still widely believed, not least by the drug companies who profit by this deception.

I had just one meeting with Frank Lake, but we did not talk about my prenatal trauma, because I had no knowledge of its significance at the time. Rather, he told me that he thought that my mental disturbances were probably caused by my relationship with my mother, which did not please her too much. Of course, not knowing my entire ontogeny, as I know it today, he was quite mistaken in his diagnosis. And what was true for me must also be true for many others. How little we still know about what causes us to behave as

we do. The human psyche, which represents some 99% of the Universe, let us say, is the last great unexplored territory of human endeavour, far more significant than outer space, which is where many people focus their attention, the latest space endeavours being widely reported in the media. There is almost no mention of the exciting discoveries that people make in their inner worlds.

Then one of the senior lecturers at the university—Margaret Jackson, as I recall—agreed to give me some extra tuition, which would enable me to take my finals again. With the help of these caring people, somehow I managed to pass my exams at the second attempt. I have no idea how. To this day, I struggle with the simplest of mathematical ideas, which were once second nature to me.

Nevertheless, I had got my piece of paper, the entry ticket to the world of work. But I was utterly ill-prepared for this big step. Having been told throughout my childhood and adolescence that I am an unacceptable member of the human race, I was shattered, with very little confidence or self-esteem. If I were to build a career, which would enable me to get married and have children, I needed to forget everything that had happened to me during the first twenty-three years of my life, including my gestation, and start afresh at the very beginning.