

## Chapter 15

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### On the Roads of Time<sup>1</sup>

*It's troublesome that I'm with minutes,  
They have confused me immensely.*

A. VVEDENSKY

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This chapter deals with meditation directed at expanding our concept of Time. Going along various roads of Time, we tried to learn more about ourselves and the world into which we are submerged.

#### A. Experimental Procedure

We had twenty-five meditation sessions. They differed radically from those described earlier both in the meditation technique and in the characteristics of the participants.

The sessions were thematically divided into the following categories:

1. *Time—the nature of Time.* It was suggested that the subjects inwardly experience Time, enter it, become it. Six sessions were devoted to this task.
2. *Fullness of Time.* The suggested experience was the stopping of Time. Two sessions.
3. *Time—Who am I?* It was suggested that the participants try to become aware of themselves by listening to personal Time. Three sessions.
4. *Time—Name.* The suggested experience was the concept of Name<sup>2</sup> as a cosmic, extratemporal essence of personality. One session.

<sup>1</sup> Written in cooperation with J. A. Drogalina.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of the *Name* is one of the most ancient ideas in religious philosophy. A whole chapter was devoted to the problem of the Name in an earlier book (Nalimov, 1981a). The Christian conception of the Name is elaborated by Bulgakov (1953); as a matter of fact, the *glorification of name* was officially condemned by the Orthodox Church at the beginning of the twentieth century.

5. *Time—Cross*. Here we return to the topic touched upon in Chapter 14 but give it another interpretation by suggesting the revelation of the most ancient symbol of our unconscious through Time unlocking the circle of great Silence. Note that the only session was carried out on Easter day.<sup>3</sup>
6. *Time—Bell*. The suggested experience was Time as entering the Bell—a symbol of Time that had often occurred during the preceding sessions. It was our first attempt at a cyclic meditation in which we returned to what had been seen earlier. One session.
7. *Time in the Gospels*. The image of Time was evoked by fragments from the four canonical Gospels containing the word *Time*. Four sessions.
8. *Time—its revelation through concentration on the expanding point*. One session.
9. *Time as merging of the past, present, and future*. Three sessions.
10. *Time—*as reexperience of the meditation experience of Time by Alexander Vvedensky.<sup>4</sup> The poem by Vvedensky quoted below, in section E, was read. One session.

And now a few words on the techniques of our meditation sessions. The first four sessions on theme 1 were free flame meditations (for details on flame meditation see Rogers, 1976*b*). The rest of the sessions (two of which also related to theme 1) were carried out with the help of auto-training (AT), but from session to session the AT text and the accompanying music essentially changed: when evaluating the response of the participants, we tried to strengthen the verbal and musical effect, being quite aware of the fact that the AT text should be chosen in accordance with the peculiarities both of the theme and of the group of participants (we can hardly hope to compose an optimal text invariant with respect to the group structure). At the end of the AT text were included words pertaining to the meditation theme. For example, to prepare the participants for theme 2, we included the words of Eckhart on the fullness of Time quoted above (see Chapter 11, section D). For themes 3 through 5 we used excerpts from the apocryphal Gospels of Thomas and Philip; in the last session devoted to theme 5 we made use of several poems by Gumilyov of a reincarnation character; these are partly quoted in Chapter 16. Music accompanying AT was always of a religious nature: fragments from Gregorian chants and from the works of the Polish com-

<sup>3</sup> Another technique of meditation over Time, proceeding from a different problem formulation, is given by Tarthang (1977).

<sup>4</sup> A. Vvedensky (1904-1941) is known mainly as an author of nursery rhymes. Actually, he was a poet-philosopher. In the 1920's he belonged to the union Oberiu (Union of Real Art), a group greatly concerned with the problem of Time.

poser Penderecki, music of *paneurhythmy*,<sup>5</sup> Japanese temple music of the twelfth century (Gaku), Częstochowa monastery music, Russian choir music of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries (performed by the Yurlov choir), etc. The room was always darkened; on the table in the middle of the room, a large candle was burning; later it was put out. For us AT was always a procedure that facilitated entrance into the state of meditation.

Now a few words about the participants. They were mostly professional artists. The first session was carried out in Vilnius with a group of young painters. Beginning with the fifth session, a kernel group of four artists was always present. As before, immediately after the session the artists made small sketches, usually in color, and later reproduced them as paintings. Here we faced a sudden difficulty: the artists' visualizations became very dynamic, apparently as a result of the meditation theme. What we received from them was only a most vivid fragment of their visions. This fragment was accompanied by an expanded verbal text and sketches. One of the artists drew a succession of small pictures surrounding the principal image on two of his paintings: a display of the sequentially changing images, though fragmentarily given. All in all we had at our disposal about one hundred paintings, to say nothing of the sketches.

The dynamism of visualization is a good thing in itself, for it enriches the experimental results; at the same time it was the cause of many troubles both in the presentation of material and in its evaluation. Its variety cannot be reduced to a compact record convenient for publication.

To avoid making this chapter inadmissibly cumbersome,<sup>6</sup> we are limiting ourselves to presenting the verbal records of a single participant who participated in all the sessions. We also include only one painting by each of the four artists in our kernel group. Verbal records accompanying the paintings contain not so much our own explanations as those of the painters themselves.

## B. Verbal Records

Theme: *The Nature of Time*. Flame meditation, in silence (four sessions).

Suddenly in the flame of the candle there appears a cross, a shining cross. It is transformed into a star. The candle has converged into a

<sup>5</sup> Modern mysteries revived in Bulgaria and, it is said, continuing the tradition of Bogomils (see footnote on p. 109).

<sup>6</sup> We have also prepared an expanded version of this chapter including almost all the material we obtained. This version is intended for readers who wish to undertake an independent analysis of the experimental results.

shining point. It started to emit broad rays forming an eight-pointed star. Then around the central point appeared many shorter rays forming a dense shining halo.

At the sound of the word TIME in empty half-dim space without depth there appears a big black bell. It occupies almost the entire space. The bell begins to shine like a candle. It emits rays—yellow, golden, and bright. The shining bell starts diminishing and by and by sinks into the depth, into a deep space which was not there before. The bell becomes a receding star. The star moves farther and farther away, leaving behind space filled with soft light . . . No fog—there is now soft space; no bell—there is instead a shining yellow point, a star, in a far away, deep, and soft space. (Record 1)

A spiral has burst out; its spires are shining with bright, iridescent colors. Inside the spiral there is a dark core. The spiral starts rotating on a revolving core. It is rotating like a top, more and more rapidly, and then suddenly bursts out, disintegrating into sparkling drops. The space is filled with the rain of multicolored, needle-shaped, sparkling little cores. They are shining with pure iridescent colors . . . Then everything is gone. (Record 2)

For a long time my consciousness was quiet and peacefully empty. Suddenly I saw myself in the black clothes of a monk standing in front of a burning candle in a huge dark stone temple. Then it was as if I entered the candle, which became a shining temple itself. (Record 3)

Deep inside there burst out the idea that Time is the fire of the World. The World is burning out in the fire of Time. This seemed very important. Together with this preserving image I saw a big black bell. It was slightly tilted, and in it a big clapper sounded the alarm. Silence inside, the time of the quietly burning candle, while outside—the sound of alarm provoking disarray. (Record 4)

Theme: *The Nature of Time*. Meditation prepared by AT (two sessions). In the first session relaxation was achieved by means of AT accompanied by fragments of *Paneurhythmic* music; in the second session we reproduced the instructions for *energy meditation* (see Rogers, 1976b). The formulation of the meditation task included Eckhart's words about Time (see Chapter 11, section D).

I heard the measured sound of a church bell. Dark night; it is snowing heavily. The snow starts whirling around. It forms a large dense torus. The torus becomes colored: on the dark blue background red and blue stripes are winding around it. Everything is whirling and rotating, and I am standing in the center, immobile. The torus is elongated into a huge gray crater whose apex is lost in the boundless perspective, and in its apex there is a shining point, as a goal. But it is not clear where I am. Perhaps I turned into the crater converging to the point. (Record 5)

At the sound of the word TIME the light in which the guide called me to dissolve started to darken to twilight. Deserted highlands in twilight. The landscape is almost black, though far away one can see white mountain tops. A temple. It is invisible, as if immaterial. Within the temple it is dark. I enter the Temple and feel there the presence of a gigantic but invisible figure—the Demiurge of the World. He makes a sound and this sound counts off the Time—different Times: the principal Time and many other Times. There is something somber and majestic about Him. He does not create the World, nor does He govern it—He only changes Times, and then everything goes by itself, as it can or will in these Times. Long do I stand listening to the principal, universal course of Time. Then I leave the Temple, or, to be more correct, the Temple of Time goes away through me. And I again become myself. (Record 6).

Theme: *Fullness of Time* (two sessions). In the first session relaxation was achieved by a modified version of AT accompanied by the medieval Japanese music Gaku. In the second session breathing and energy meditations were used, preceded by Polish medieval religious hymns. In both sessions task formulations included the words of Meister Eckhart on the Fullness of Time (see Chapter 11, section D).

It is dark. In the darkness of twilight lies the Earth, immobile in the funeral procession. The darkness is condensing and there appears the figure of the huge winged angel, dark but friendly. He is the guard at the exit from the darkness and silence. He does not block the way, though he suggests that one should return back, into Time. (Record 7)

In an Egyptian temple I am sinking into ritual sleep. Somebody light and invisible takes me by the hand and firmly holding it leads the way.

In semidarkness I am passing through a somber mountainous landscape. Again the road is blocked, as before, by the huge black Angel. But now his wings are unfolded and lifted; he turns into his wings, and now there is a passage opening through him: the passage to a gigantic black bell. The big clapper is slowly and regularly beating against the inner edge of the bell. I enter it and become the bell, Time . . . I am Time, and this is agreeable and easy. I feel I can change time and if I do this, then certain silhouettes emerge in the mist, they even seem familiar, though I do not recognize them. But I do not feel like changing anything. It is very nice, pleasant, and easy to be one's own time.

At this moment I hear the voice of the guide: "Fullness of Time" and I feel I must go farther, to the cone formed by the bell. I reach the edge point of the cone and feel again the warmth of the leading hand. I must go through this point and enter another, diverging

cone. From this latter cone I see the space filled with shining mist. It is Silence, the Void. The hand holds me firmly. I understand I am standing at the exit from life. This is a new and powerful sensation. It seems necessary to cease completely being myself and enter this Nothing. Then something will be opened. This must be the end of life. But the guarding hand holds me firmly and allows me only for an instant to glance at the abyss which I must become. Then the way back. Passage through the point. The way in the cone of the bell—but now with my lateral vision I see some people. They got stuck here, and are glued to the walls of the cone.

The exit from the bell. The heavy black wings are lifted again; I am treading on rocky mountain ground. The sun is rising behind the mountain. But the most important thing is that I have the feeling of my contact with Nothing. And this seems to be very significant. (Record 8)

Here we believe some comments are desirable: *The Fullness of Time* is distinctly perceived as the entrance into another reality. This entrance is blocked before us and is guarded by the guard of life. Another reality may be terrifying, though it is perceived not as the end but as the transcendence of the familiar reality. In this way we perceive leaving life in the depth of our consciousness.

What is described above can be compared with the books by Moody (1975, 1977), *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (Budge, 1967), and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Bardo thödol, 1960).

Theme: *Who Am I* (three sessions): energy meditation, Eckhart's text on silence. The third session was carried out half a year later than the first two: breathing exercise to Penderecki's *Stabat Mater*; Gumilyov's poems of reincarnation character: "In Those Days," "The Gray Indian," "Stockholm."

Again, as in the previous session, I am approaching a large Bell; but there is no guard any longer—the entrance to the Bell is now opened for me.

The Black Bell begins to get lighter, everything around is woven of light. Its sound becomes the emanation of light. I easily enter the Bell and become it. But now I am tracing with my eye not the diverging cone of the Bell (as before) but the spiral of its body. There, inside the spiral, semidarkness. Again I see the mountainous landscape in twilight. On the top of the mountain there is a Castle. I am in the chapel of the Castle. A few candles are flickering. The service is going on. All of us are dressed in gray. I feel light, strikingly clear, and solemn. Suddenly other, bigger candles blaze out. It becomes clear: we must go outside where huge red fires are alarmingly burning in the

night. Our clothes become white. The Bell's light is mingled with the dawn slightly glimmering behind the mountains. (Record 9)

It seems I have again easily entered the Bell of Time. But this time it was so familiar that I do not concentrate on this.

I entered the point, the apex of the Bell. In front of me there is a mountain in twilight covered with snow. On the top of the mountain I see a Gothic temple, immaterial, woven of slightly glimmering threads of green. It is in the white mountain snows.

I enter the temple, and the guide says, "Out of the silence a word will be spoken to you . . ." Silence. I am the silence of the green temple. Either I am within it, or it is within myself. I understand: different Times and different Ego come to this temple.

I come up to a blue cone of light and try to enter its crater. I enter: the shore of the blue sea, marble columns on the shore. It had been my temple, and I had been its priestess. Then I had been penetrated with love and gentleness. This is the lost part of my soul. I strive to recall it. But the guide says, "It is time to come back." (Record 10)

I saw myself as an elder (mentioned by the guide reciting the poem by Gumilyov) in white linen clothes. He was drawing ornamental lines on sand. Suddenly the bell began to sound (as a response to a sharp change of tone), and the ornament turned into a road through ages. It was twilight, and I was a wanderer walking along this stony road winding across gray highlands.

I was walking for a long time—I don't know where. Suddenly everything shuddered and was lit by the bright sunlight. I saw the shore of a Southern sea. Very familiar marble columns (I often see them in my recollections) and a group of people in light white clothes. I knew that I, then a woman, was to be among them. For an instant I saw her image. The sound of the bell was slow and melodious, rather like a harp. We were listening to the Teacher.

Then the bell started to sound the alarm. The sea, the storm, an ancient ship. And a long way in the darkness, in the mist, in storms. Nothing can be discerned. The bell has calmed down—now it sounds as in a church. A Northern medieval town. I, now a man, a common man, am going along narrow streets and enter a Catholic cathedral. Its interior is common and very familiar. (Record 11)

We are again going to comment on these records. We see that the mechanism of formation of religious myths giving rise to the idea of reincarnation is reproduced fairly easily and is provoked by quite simple means. Perhaps this is to say that the preparedness for reincarnation recollection is not hidden by many layers of the unconscious but is situated somewhere rather close to its surface. We are ready to open up our ethnogenetic memory and perhaps also our phylogenetic memory. This should be emphasized not only for culturologists but also for those who study the psychology of scientific creativity.

Theme: *Name* (one session). Breathing meditation; music, Czesłochowa liturgies; text, fragments 10, 11, 12, 49, and 59 from the apocryphal Gospel of Philip (Till, 1963). These texts revive the ancient, by now lost concept of the transcendental nature of the Name. Below we quote three fragments from the Gospel, typical of its style:

12. One name alone is never uttered in the world—the name the Father gave to the Son.

49. O, if I could /receive/ a symbol which /archonts/ could not have stood, —this name!

59. . . . But if someone has received the Holy Spirit, he has the name as a gift.

And here is how these bewitching words were reflected in meditation:

Black Southern night. Sandy seashore. Somebody is preaching near the marble columns. I hear his words—they are the words pronounced by the guide. The Name is a ray of light emitted by the star; it is revealed when the word is uttered. We all are within this ray; it is so bright that nothing can be seen except this cone of light. The light becomes blue and soft. My Name is the name of this star. I feel it within myself or myself within it. For a moment everything becomes incomprehensible, quite different, in the incomprehensibility of this other world in an instantaneous contact with it. *But then I am again on the sandy shore. I am walking in the starlit Southern night filled with my Name. My burden is lucid, no matter whether it is light or heavy.* (Record 12)

In this way are experienced Texts which lay at the source of our culture and are separated from us by almost twenty centuries. How easily and joyfully do we return to our past!

Theme: *Time—Cross*. The session took place on Easter day (one session). Breathing meditation; music, Gregorian chants, Christmas carols (Polish choir music of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries). The meditation task was determined by the day of the session. The stimulating text: fragment 67 from the apocryphal Gospel of Philip. The text from the Gospel begins with the following words (Till, 1963):

67. The truth did not come naked into the world, but it came in images in symbols. It (the world) does not receive it (the truth) otherwise. There is resurrection and the image of resurrection. They should be truly revived through the image. What is resurrection? And an image through an image—it also should be revived . . .

And here is the meditation response to these words:

In a deserted mountainous landscape there appears the Cross. It



starts to sound and glimmer with blue light. The ray from the Cross goes upwards to a blue star.

It is possible to enter the ray, and so I enter it. There is no deserted land any longer: I see the blue glimmering silvery space. In it there is a hardly discernible ornament of a shining web. On the web I see a small spider, or a scarab; it shines like a diamond. It is engaged in something—very business-like and efficient.

This is a friendly spider, it is mending holes in my web. It is myself, the web is also myself or my destiny. I can't go any farther until the holes are mended—they go down into a dark, frightening depth. I hate to part with the spider-scarab. Then the sensation of lightness and complete liberation. As in childhood, after the Easter matins. (Record 13)

Theme: *Time in the Gospel of Matthew*. Relaxation: flame meditation in silence; breathing meditation accompanied by Polish music of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; text, fragments from the Gospel of Matthew containing the word TIME accompanied by Penderecki's "Passions According to Luke."

Christ came down to the Earth as the silver, shining, transparent rain. The rain is accumulating on the ground as silver dust. The wind of time started to disperse the dust, scattering it over the ground, over its fields and roads, mixing it with the road dust and choking up the road ruts with it. The storm now stopped, now swept up the silver rain mixed with the ground dust with a new force.

And in the dusty mist, every now and then appeared a fuzzily outlined figure in a long white cloak. It seemed that somebody invisible, indiscernible, was trying to gather the silver of the rain and compose the ornament. But the wind was dispersing it. The wind growing more and more furious is dispersing it. (Record 14)

Theme: *Time—Past, Present, Future*. We give here only the record of the first session (all in all there were three of them). Relaxation: flame meditation in silence; breathing meditation accompanied by Polish Christmas carols and a Haydn string quartet.

An angel flying in the sky—he is not seen but only felt with a striking clarity. His large silver wings, flapping, scatter a silver path across the sky. Silver snowflakes glimmer with flickering iridescent sparks.

I see myself as a boy and later, too, in the future—see vaguely, in the mist of silver dust. I recognize myself in those standing behind the silver dust. But they do not interest me, they are alien.

The wings close up the path, there is now a ring in the shining sky. Then they unlock it in a sphere. The sphere goes upwards into the

sky, expanding, and now only the iridescent sparks remind me of it and signify it. It was easy and good to feel oneself the dust of the silver path—it was carefree. There was only freedom. (Record 15)

Theme: *Time—meditation over the poem by Alexander Vvedensky.* Relaxation: flame meditation in silence; breathing meditation accompanied by Polish music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Text, the poem by Vvedensky (partially reproduced in section E of this chapter) without musical accompaniment. The session was finished with music by Bach.

The candle is burning on the table.

The candle becomes Time. Pure Time. I also become Pure Time, a vessel for Time. My breathing, my consciousness are now the flickering flame of the candle.

The candle moves away. I am moving away from myself. The candle is moving away into the sky. Into the dark nocturnal sky. It becomes smaller and smaller, brighter and brighter in the blackness of the empty sky. The candle becomes a star. It glitters with changing lights—yellow, blue, and green. The glittering star begins to dissolve in the sky. Everything around lightens and becomes silvery. All is filled with the drops of shimmering light.

This is the Time of the Universe, the bosom of the World. (Record 16)

### C. Paintings

As we already said above, we reproduce here only four paintings (see Color Plates 5–8). The verbal records for these four paintings are presented with the paintings (following p. 196). Verbal records for fifteen additional paintings follow. The first two records are for paintings by Lithuanian artists; the remainder are for paintings by the four artists in our kernel group.

**Artist: Grushas Bronus.** Title: *The Bell.* Theme: *The Nature of Time.*

The painting shows a multicolored spiral-shaped bell with the predominance of yellow in a complex color space. The chime of the bell is spreading like white drops of light. The correspondence to the above records is striking: in record 1 the bell is first black, and then it begins to shine; in record 2 a spiral disintegrates into drops; record 4 also describes the bell but now sounding the alarm, and the disarray injected by the space around the bell in this painting also resembles the alarm.

**Artist: R. Dubonis.** Title: *Rhythm of Space*. Theme: *The Nature of Time*.

The painting has restless rhythm accompanied by the birth of the material world (represented by black boulders) and of life: an eight-pointed cross inscribed in a double circle. The intensive rhythm can also be seen in paintings of other artists who participated in the same session (these paintings are not described in this book). In one of these paintings the rhythm quiets down, having produced a capsule-like world. We have an impression that the nature of Time could also be revealed through the myth of the origin of the world. The painting can be perceived as the alarm announcing the birth of the world.

**Artist: V. S. Gribkov.** Title: *The Break-up of the Universe*. Theme: *The Nature of Time*.

Two pictures were produced. On the first one, break-up in the black frame of the universe; a big yellow bell is swinging; rhythm of yet empty but already split colorful space; behind the space, perhaps born from it, is a small yellow sun; the earth is yet in the darkness behind the frame of the universe. The artist describes what he has seen as follows:

Black gates which I was going to enter are torn overhead by a white (sparkling) disk, and in it a glittering yellow bell (bronze, not gold). Blurred sun in the upper right corner.

The second painting appears as Color Plate 5.

Title: *The Scarab*. Theme: *The Nature of Time*.

The myth of the origin of the world is completed by a picture representing a multi-membered scarab against a yellow background (again the color yellow). The scarab goes forward (to the right and downwards); at the same time it is dominated by a rotation symbolized by the circle. Each member of the scarab sets its own rhythm. Below are two crossed hands—peaceful and serene. On each hand there is a ruby: “My hands are crossed with two rubies,” the artist wrote on the picture. Crosses that appear under the scarab also seem ruby. The world in its two facets: rebellious and quiet. The image of the scarab from this picture echoes with that of the spider-scarab (record 13) which emerged in the session devoted to the theme *Time—Cross*.

Title: *The Star*. Theme: *Time—Cross*.

The artist gives the following comments on his picture:

The horizon distinctly divides the space into white (above) and dark—black and blue (below). In the center there emerges a star with eight points. The bottom point is a clear-cut white triangle crossed

with black lines. The top point is a yellow triangle, the light. *The black bottom seems to interfere with my urge* to move into the depth, and this feeling is preserved to the end of meditation. At the end of the meditation I saw a white cross that seemed to be a road on which people were moving one by one.

Title: *Heraldry*. Theme: *Time as merging of the past, present, and future* (the third session).

This painting proves to be a symbolic reflection of an expanded field of images provoked by the poems of Gumilyov: "We are not in the world . . .," "You remember the palace of giants," "Descendants of Cain," "On the Way." These poems were recited during the session to the accompaniment of Penderecki's Psalms of David. Here is what the artist writes about the evolution of his fantasies:

I relaxed slowly and gradually, and enjoyed it. The music created the feeling of harmony and peace.

Images started appearing, first vague, but plenty of them. Fragments of indefinite symbols and unsteady, but concrete, objects. I am sailing in a black gondola along a blue canal; the blue sky. A blue key appears in the sky; then its outline becomes red and shining. New features are added to it; it seems to be mobile. It is transformed into a cross and begins to shine on a white triangle (one angle downwards); then a red triangle is wedged into it from above. The space around is shining blue. The white triangle is crossed with brown lines. A new melody. I have a feeling of some trouble. But it is nice to let my imagination run free. In general I have a feeling not so much of great revelation, but of *extreme* easiness of *fantasies*. I am sailing in the gondola into a cave. The gondola is now edged with red, and there is a red bow on the stern. Then I cut the canvas I am working at with my nose and sail farther. A small black dot surrounded by the shining pink. Suddenly this circle bursts out, and I am inside the glittering blue. I feel very light. All troubles have remained behind, but I am not flying or soaring; I simply am. Again, an unpleasant sky in front of me—pink, yellow, violet. But I overturn it with my palms, tear it through. Behind this shimmering sky I see a soft green meadow (the past). Silvery sky. Girls in white clothes with silvery sparkles and long silvery hair are whirling around. I am also whirling without touching them or paying any attention to them. I am going past them, and farther!

The consciousness has gone.

I am swimming, it is very pleasant to swim . . . The distance is agreeable, but I am not willing to go far away; I am afraid to swim from my shore. In the distance there is white sand and soft-blue sky. Suddenly the sand is covered with a white smooth canvas, with unstable gray letters quivering on it. Suddenly I am near this distant

shore. It is pleasant to throw part of the canvas over myself. The canvas is unexpectedly light. The letters turn into wavy lines, like the threads of a tissue. A very tender rosy sun is rising—one can look at it easily. I am wearing a rosy cloak. The sun is a rose with closed petals. The shore is not sandy any longer; it is covered with soft green grass. Candlesticks with burning candles are standing on the palms of hands; then the fire is burning on the palms. But perhaps these are the flowers of a lotus. I am walking. The sunrise is behind my back. A blue cloak is fluttering on me, as if blown by the wind. I feel I am imagining all this, but it feels nice and it is easy to imagine things.

Now the radiance has gone. I see a blue tulip in front of me. I pick it up. I smell it, but there is no smell. Then I grind the flower with pleasure between my palms. The moisture repealing the dryness of the bright light feels pleasant to my palms.

**Artist: A. Dyachkov.** Title: *The Lightning*. Theme: *The Nature of Time*.

Artist's comments:

Meditation as oblivion. The image is constantly changing. The lightning (hard) either white against a black background, or black against a white background. Suddenly I broke out of meditation—came to my senses. First I felt my heart aching; then the sensation was gone, forgotten.

Title: *The Spindle*. Theme: *Fullness of Time* (the first session).

As follows from the artist's comments, the picture reflects the concluding moments of the meditation:

Pyramids in the shape of marquees against the red glow; phosphorescence behind the pyramids. Red clouds look very real. Then I was transferred (I grasped this immediately) to the ancient East. To the right on the foreground the Assyrian figure of a winged lion. Further a long wall against the greenish-blue sky. Behind the wall the radiance of the white glow. Then I seemed to be transferred to Egypt. I was inside the closed circle of a wall. Dark sky. In the middle of the stone wall was a fluorescence shaped like a huge spindle.

Title: *The Angel*. Theme: *Time in the Gospels* (the first session—the Gospel of Matthew).

The meditation images are broken. I am ascending above the Earth. I see radiance in the distance. Under myself there is a road going far away, to the radiance. In front of me in the space I see a large three-dimensional flying cross (a carved Orthodox kind). The cross is shining with a golden glow. Then it turns into the figure of a golden angel who is also shining. I see wings on his back. Then the angel

turns into a glowing disk (UFO). The disk flies rotating over the radiance, over the Earth. The disk turns into a gigantic shining dagger of a cross-like shape and hangs over the radiance on the Earth. Now I discern this radiance to be the lights of the night city.

Dyachkov's third painting, *The Labyrinth*, is shown in Color Plate 6.

**Artist: N. Obukhov.** Title: *The Phallic Temple*. Three paintings all relating to one session. Theme: *Fullness of Time* (the second session).

Artist's comments:

When the introductory words were pronounced, I saw images of a beautiful organ ascending upwards. Then the organ started to transform into a many-arched Gothic construction rapidly growing upwards. I saw the wings of a black angel (black wings) against a red stripe; then suddenly the middle of the wings was lined by a narrow pointed white stripe.

There appeared a diminishing door with a black rectangular hole, but I was afraid to enter it. Then somewhere from the left a luminous body began to appear insistently; it filled the whole space. By and by it moved to the left upper corner, and from the right emerged a cross with crucified Christ. This image remained for a long time; then the space started to fold up along the axis of the cross, and the sun became black.

Now there was a completely black space in front of me. Terrifying. Some time later a white shining dot emerged, which moved, rotating with an enormous speed. I speeded along with it, more and more quickly. I had a horrible feeling that in a moment I would be smashed into smithereens. I was deadly frightened. In this fright my body suddenly unfolded like a fan representing the spectrum of color converging to one point. I see the white top of a cliff; on it is a white horse head with a flying mane. The mane fills up the whole space and turns into the white space.

The next painting by Obukhov, *The Crown*, is shown in Color Plate 7.

Title: *The Flower*. Theme: *Time as merging of the past, present, and future* (the third session); text, poems by Gumilyov mentioned when describing the painting *Heraldry*).

This painting shows a mandala: the female womb in the middle of a flower. The artist did not write an explanation but told us that when his son, a boy of five, had seen the picture, he had said: "This is the place from which babies are born."

**Artist: B. Safronov.** Safronov's first painting, *Sequential Images*, is shown in Color Plate 8.

Title: *The Winged Serpent*. Theme: *Time in the Gospels* (the Gospel of Matthew).

Artist's comments:

Something is flying, either wings or luminous flows and a strange fuzzy spot in which one can discern once an eye, another time an ear emitting light . . . now there is a town . . . a building is transformed into a bushy branchy tree; like an explosion, the crown of the tree is spreading upwards . . . A bright ray is coming from above, from the ray there shows a wing, then a tree again with fluorescent fruits, and the ray of light is winding round it . . . Then all turns into a big glowing bird or an angel.

Title: *The Crystal*. Theme: *Time as merging of the past, present, and future*.

Artist's comments:

The dot was at first black against a black space, but later, when I entered the dot, I became lilac or violet, and the space around me was shining blue. Everything started to merge and became iridescent. The opalescent greenish circular glow appeared and melted away . . . At the moment of "birth" everything was illuminated by a bluish-golden radiance and it was shining up to the moment when the awareness of "today" came. When my "sight" went to the future, there appeared bright, intensive radiance from above—this golden-blue radiance emanated from the top of my head. First there emerged a shining triangle without distinct boundaries, with fuzzy edges, filled with a blue glow . . . A striking sensation of merging with light: of weightlessness and a feeling of being directed (by myself)—all this is merged again in a bluish-silvery mist. It resembles the plasm producing stars.

Title: *The Ring of Power*. Theme: *Time—Meditation over the poem by Vvendsky*.

Artist's comments:

I did not perceive the words of the text and now have no idea of what was read, but at the same time I completely lost myself and did not feel myself any longer—I was dissolved. Only at each shift of "extra-temporal" and "extra-spatial" layers, I felt the newly emerged sensation and the new merging and dissolution in these cosmic spatial layers to be a new birth, a "turning inside out" of myself and the space . . . At some moment, I don't now remember exactly when, there appeared a black winged monster that flew into me and swallowed me . . . I got into the rotation of the black space in which the rays of "light" were also black. Black threads plaited this black space into an intricate ornament. They formed a strikingly beautiful

We considered the two words disk and circle synonymous. In our diagram the circle with a hole in the center represents an independent symbol—a *targer*. The sun is also separated by us as an independent symbol.

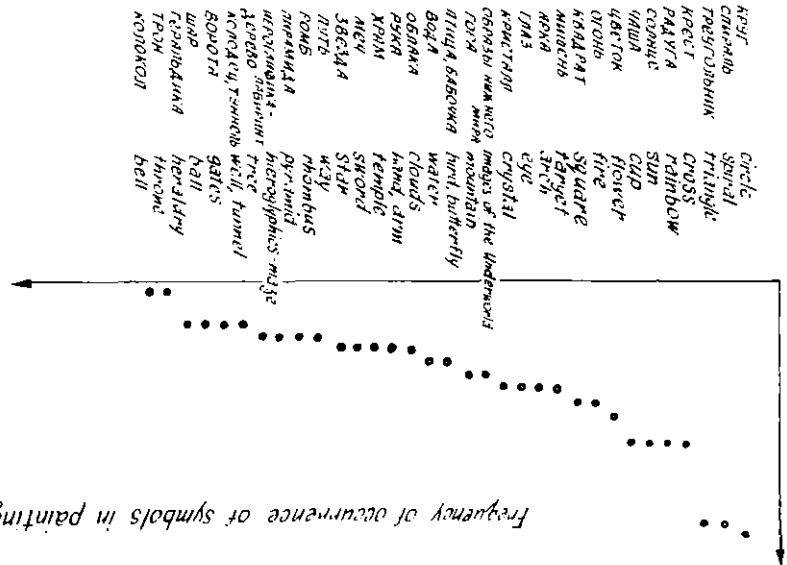
*Disk*: The sun; renewal of life; perfection; divinity; power. . . The

We shall confine ourselves to a few comments. The first place on the frequency diagram is occupied by the *circle*.<sup>7</sup> In the broadest interpretation this is a mandala, whose semantics was dwelt on in detail in Chapter 12 (section C). In an effort to deepen our comprehension of the semantics of this word, we quote the pertinent fragments about it from the encyclopedia of symbols (Cooper, 1978):

To complete this section, we give (see Figure 15.1) the frequencies of occurrence of the most simple symbols in the paintings which can be selected easily and unambiguously. These are either geometric symbols or those easily derived from them, e.g., the sun, an eye, a tree, etc. We did not consider complex mythological symbols or symbolic representation of dynamics. For the construction of the diagram, the entire manifold of the paintings at our disposal was used.

crater, a flower which seemed to have been calculated with a mathematical thoroughness . . . I broke through these spaces into new worlds flying to meet me—or was it myself who was flying to meet them?

FIG. 15.1. Frequency dendrogram of symbols composed on the basis of the paintings.





disk with a hole in the centre denotes the circle of the cosmos with the centre as the Void, the transcendent and unique Essence . . .

*Buddhist:* The circle is the cycle of creation, the centre of Void . . .

*Chinese:* The sun is the "sacred disk"; heaven; divinity; spiritual and celestial perfection . . .

*Egyptian:* The sun god Ra; power; renown . . .

*Circle:* A universal symbol. Totality; wholeness; simultaneity . . . the Self; the unmanifest; the infinite; eternity; time enclosing space, but also timelessness as having no beginning or end, and spacelessness as having no above or below; as circular and spherical it is the abolition of time and space, but also signifies recurrence. It is celestial unity; solar cycles; all cyclic movement; dynamism; endless movement; completion; fulfillment; God: "God is a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference is nowhere" (Hermes Trismegistus).

The second place on the frequency diagram is occupied by the symbol of the *Spiral*. The above-mentioned encyclopedia describes it as follows:

*Spiral.* A highly complex symbol which has been used since paleolithic times and appears in pre-dynastic Egypt, Crete, Mycenae, Mesopotamia, India, China, Japan, pre-Columbian America, Europe, Scandinavia and Britain . . . It variously represents both solar and lunar powers; the air; the waters; rolling thunder and lightning; it is also a vortex; the great creative force; emanation . . . It can also signify continuity . . . The spiral also shares the symbolism of the labyrinth and the danced, or walked, "maze" . . . Spirals, or whorls, are associated with the spinning and weaving . . .<sup>1</sup>

We are not going to continue here the semantic analysis of the symbols discovered in the paintings. The inquisitive reader can go on with it with the help of the encyclopedia (Cooper, 1978).

From our material described above, it becomes fairly evident that the first two symbols of our frequency diagram are directly related to the concept of Time. But in order to demonstrate the relation of the remaining symbols to this concept, we had to make a thorough analysis of their semantics from which we are going to deviate here. It is important to emphasize that our symbols represent a selective sample of their entire existing variety. In particular, our sample almost completely lacks symbols personified by animals—a fish, a tiger, a lion—though their semantics is rich and their frequency of occurrence in the cultural monuments of the past is fairly great. We also have but a few symbols denoting parts of a human body. Such a widely used Oriental symbol as lotus is also absent in our sample.

<sup>1</sup> This fragment includes as explanatory the words which we select as independent symbols: *water, hieroglyphics, labyrinth, the sun.*

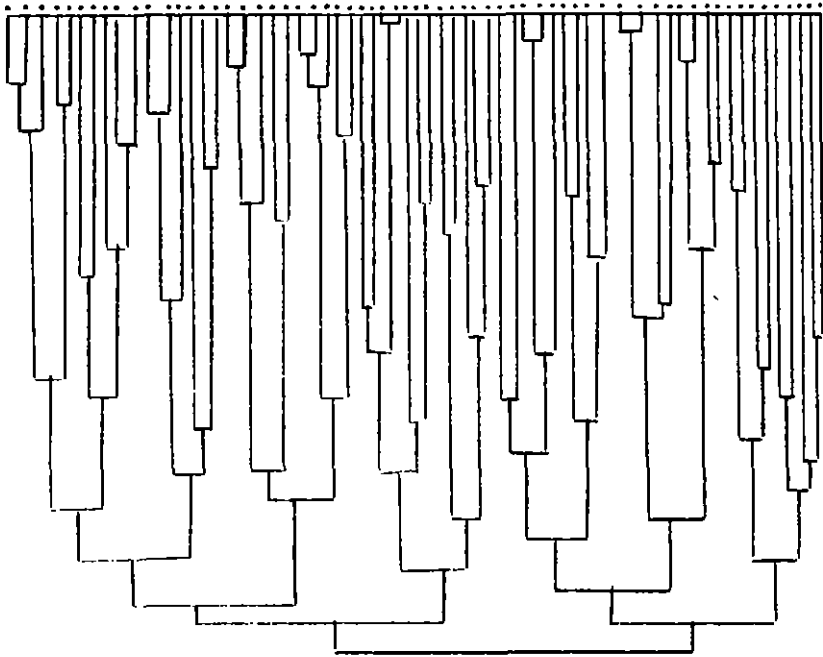


FIG. 15.2. Dendrogram of distributing 64 paintings among clusters in a 15-dimensional space (for each object-painting were determined 15 values of the nominal variables characterizing absence or presence of the color attribute and its intensity on a 4-level scale). The points on the abscissa correspond to the paintings. On the ordinate  $\chi^2$  distances between clusters are plotted in an arbitrary scale. The dendrogram characterizes the structure of color interrelations in the group of paintings under study.

And now a few words concerning the way the ideas of Potentiality, inseparably linked (as was many times said above) with our perception of Time, are reflected in the paintings. Above (in Chapter 9) we emphasized the revelation of Potentiality in the myth about the omnipresence of Light in Matter. Light thrown in the dark (inert) Matter proves to be the initial creative force: this motif can be found in India, Iran, and Egypt, and in gnostic texts. The personification of Light thrown in Matter is the symbol of semen, or the sperm; a ritual attitude to sperm can be found in many ancient mysteries. In this case the symbols of Potentiality are phallus and vagina. The Judeo-Christian culture has made these symbols sound obscene, but in the depth of consciousness they are preserved in their spiritually sanctified purity. Thus, phallus and vagina turn out to be

<sup>1</sup> We proceed here from the last chapter of the learned and brilliantly written book by Eliade (1976).

synonyms for Light. Both of these symbols kept occurring in the paintings of our artists, either unambiguously or in a veiled form.

The internal perception of Light, the symbol of Potentiality, and its color display are constantly present in the meditation states. This can be observed in the verbal records and in the paintings of all the three experimental series. Light and also flight (or its attributes, for instance, wings, etc.) are the manifestations of the meditation states, and this makes them close to the states of mysteries. These attributes, we dare say, can serve to diagnose the altered states of consciousness.

Being unable to dwell here on the color symbolism of the paintings, we would only like to note that the distribution of the paintings into clusters in a 15-dimensional color space (with the selected  $\chi^2$  metrics); obtained by statistical analysis, is essential in itself as evidence that in the experiment embracing more than 60 paintings<sup>10</sup> a certain color structure was formed (Figure 15.2). In other words, a picture is not merely a set of objects: they are arranged into a structure by the unity of the theme.

We hope that further research in this direction will enable us to penetrate deeply into the levels of consciousness concealed from direct observation.

#### **D. Comments**

The vast experimental material obtained in our research and only partly presented here needs thorough analysis which could turn into a substantial independent study of an interdisciplinary nature requiring the participation of anthropologists, culturologists, art critics, psychologists, and psychiatrists. Here we shall confine ourselves to brief comments.

First of all, we would like to underline the community of symbols occurring in the records describing the experiencing of Time. In the entire material obtained in our experiments, the following constantly recurrent images can be selected.

*Time as rhythm:* intensive rhythm—the alarm; pulsating circles; a flying drop-like spot; waterfalls of stones.

*Time as dynamism of space:* boundless space; rotating space; breaking-up space; a slit; a black hole.

*Time as a bell:* a black bell; a spiral-shaped bell; a bell sounding the alarm; a crater; a diverging cone.

*Time as a spiral:* a spiral disintegrating into sparkles of light; a red-hot

<sup>10</sup> We included in the cluster analysis only the paintings presented in the standard form (no sketches were taken into account).

spiral; a spiral—the fire of the world; spiral-shaped sparkling roads; lightnings.

*Time as a temple*: the temple of Time; an Egyptian temple; a phallic temple; a pyramid; a castle; an organ; a staircase boundlessly going upwards; an arch; a tunnel.

*Time as expansion of the myth*: an angel; a black angel; a winged lion; large black wings; a guard, a feeling of his hand; a triangle; a rocket-like soaring up cross; a fire pillar in the shape of a woman; a diamond; an eye; a shining star; a sword; a scarab—the rhythm of its members; a spider mending a web; crossed hands; the hands of the woman—the mother of the World; feminine womb in the middle of a flower; a crown; a snake; a peacock with its tail spread; soaring spindles.

*Time as light*: vibration of light; color and colored light; colors smoothly turning into one another; glaring combinations of colors; the dominance of yellow; the dominance of black.

It would be extremely interesting to make a detailed historico-cultural analysis of the entire variety of the symbols that occurred in our experiment. It also seems tempting to carry out similar experiments with representatives of other cultures, e.g. Moslem or Buddhist. Will these experimental results essentially differ from ours?

Verbal records, paintings, and explanatory texts to them may serve as the basis for composing psychological portraits of the participants. Here we shall touch on this subject only cursorily. It seems that our small group of participants can be strictly divided into the three types of consciousness.

The first type is characterized by mythological patterns of the unconscious which are most distinctly manifested by the participant whose verbal records have been given above. His texts represent a sequentially developing myth with the recurrent images of a knight, angel, temple, and castle. This myth pertains to the Medieval or Hellenic past. Mythological patterns can also be found in the paintings and explanatory texts of the artists A. S. Dyachkov and N. V. Obukhov, and sometimes in those of B. P. Safronov. But these myths pertain to another past—Egyptian or Mongolian. We see that those experiencing the meditation feel their participation in the ethnogenetic past in a different way. Psychologically, this helps them to discover features of the personality previously unnoticed.

The second type of patterns could be called poetic-symbolic. This is especially typical of the artist V. S. Gribkov. His vision is full of graceful poetic images that resemble the poetry of Aleksander Blok. His images are refined, soft, and romantic. But this is true only of his meditation experience. The artist's professional style is quite different.

The third type of patterns is astral. This is the well-known world of surrealist (sometimes threatening) dreams, reflecting the unconscious anxiety and discontent imprinted in the lower levels of consciousness. It is obviously characteristic of the artist B. P. Safronov. His meditation consists of the sequential astral visions: a severed head, a scanning ear, a vibrating eye, the space turned inside out. This also reminds us of the pictures by Dali though, in contrast to the latter, in Safronov's professional paintings astral moments are far from being dominant. The contact with the astral world can also be observed in the paintings of other artists, though to a lesser degree. For instance, one of the paintings by V. S. Gribkov (not included in the book) has the image of a grayish-green frog in a rhomb, with a tadpole inside (does this not resemble Bosch?). However, for Gribkov these are but unpleasant episodes. Only the participant whose verbal records were given above seems to lack the astral images completely.

Of interest also are the motifs of suppression. A participant whose records are not given here has a constant motif of being sealed by the cross. Dyachkov's paintings are full of tense colors: the dominance of black and gray; black is combined with blue. Overcoming of tension: in one of Gribkov's paintings he cuts the tops of waves with a sword, and feels good. Accessibility or inaccessibility of the entrance into Nothing are the indices of the depth of personalization, alienation from the whole, participation in the ultimate reality.

We are not going here to develop the theme of psychoidentification: it could be the object of a thorough and profound study. We believe it could open up much broader prospects than those of psychoanalysis. What we are dealing with is not the analysis of personality but its *revelation* in its deep self-awareness.

For us, the authors of this book, it is essential that, on the one hand, we have succeeded in seeing the variety of symbols of Time—a bell, a spiral, a shell, lightning; on the other hand, and this is especially important, we have experienced the contact with Nothing and learned how other people experienced their contact with it.

The chapters about Time, Nothing, and Reincarnation within this book represent the conceptual completion of this series of meditations. We were writing these chapters while taking part in meditation sessions devoted to the problems. The content of these chapters—their main ideas—were maturing gradually.

Our interest in the problem of creativity made us watch ourselves closely as the book was being written. However, the results of these observations cannot be distinctly formulated. Only one thing is certain: we had an impression that meditations prepared our consciousness; they seemed to prepare it for the spontaneous emergence of new concepts of

Time. The inner work was constantly going on, even in sleep. The evidence for this assertion is a dream which can be described as follows:

Perhaps this was a dream. When one dreams, one always wakes up, but not into here, but into there, into another reality. The dream can also turn into a spontaneous meditation. This is what happened today.

The *clock* has always been one of the most significant symbols of my dreams. It is through its appearance, in good repair or damaged, that I used to foresee coming events, sometimes threatening, sometimes favorable.

And so I saw the clock again . . . a familiar clock . . . an alarm clock, on the shelf. But the clock hand was moving very fast, counting off hours like minutes. This troubled me. I got up and checked all the other clocks—the same thing everywhere. *Hours pass like minutes*. I checked the time by the telephone—again the same. Then I saw that the minute hand was moving very slowly: *minutes pass like hours*. So it has become clear: Time is splitting.

One must now live in two *Times*: one time is passing faster than usual; the other, more slowly. If this is so, it signifies that one Time is going *forward* and the other *backward*. But the clock, being a mechanical device, cannot show time going backward. It is only a human being who can live both forward and backward, in a psychological aspect. Man seems to do exactly this, but he is unaware of these two directions: he submits his consciousness to the mechanical manifestations of life. The absurdity of the way the clock was going turned out to be a symbol, a koan to be solved in meditation following the dream.

Time is a loop coming from one point. This point is the beginning of life and its end. At any segment of the loop, a person moves to the node in both directions at once: forward and backward. This motion in different directions naturally has different speeds: at first the forward motion has a greater speed, then *vice versa*. The break of the natural correlation of the speeds is one of the manifestations of deeply disharmonious life.

When a person gets in the node simultaneously from both ends, this is the end of life: he passes onto another spire of the spiral of the cone situated in a three-dimensional spatial concept of Time. The Time of one life is two-dimensional (a loop in the two-dimensional geometry of Time), while the reincarnational sequences of lives represent realization of life in a three-dimensional geometry of Time.

*They say that very old people recall their childhood easily and in great detail*: they are coming to the node of life in their backward motion. The exit from life is difficult if a person has come to the node from one direction, but has not yet reached it from the other.

Perhaps a person following an intensively spiritual path can within one lifetime psychologically pass from one spire to another. If this is

really so, the three-dimensional character of Time becomes a tangible and controllable reality for him. Reincarnational recollections also represent the faculty to enter consciously the third dimension of Time.

Sleep itself, a deep sleep with meaningful dreams, enables us to control the speed of motion in both directions. This accounts for the ability to foresee the future and experience the remotest past as the present.

Perhaps this is what happens, in the psychological aspect, with culture: it also moves backward and forward. This can probably explain the infantile features of youths and even of adults in a highly developed scientific-technological society. Again the motion to the node in both directions. Outwardly this splitting is perceived as schizoid culture.

We have cited the above dream with the subsequent spontaneous meditation only to show how we can sometimes watch our own course of thinking. We call the interpretation of the dream spontaneous meditation—it immediately followed the dream, occurring at the moment of awakening. The beginning of the interpretation is still mythological. But gradually it starts to include familiar phrases. It ends with reasoning of a waking rational character.

The dream and meditation can be regarded as the interpretation of the words from the Gospel of Thomas quoted as an epigraph to Chapter 6, which constantly came to mind during the waking-hour ponderings over the problem of Time: "For where the beginning is, there shall be the end."

This dream can also be viewed as the revelation of the recurrent images from the series of meditations: Time as a spiral, a spiral shell, or a bell whose crater one could enter. But perhaps the ancient symbols—archetypes—the wheel of life, the snake biting its tail, the swastika in its original meaning as a symbol of the Sun Wheel—also convey a similar content.

It seems relevant to consider here to what degree human consciousness is prepared to accept the idea of the closed Time which was lately formulated in cosmogony (Davies, 1977; Misner, Thorne, and Wheeler, 1973). What we have in mind is the conception of the cyclic Universe which allows its reversion, i.e., backward motion in time. But the idea of a Universe symmetrical in time requires an exclusively coordinated conduct of its innumerable atoms. This accounts for the temptation to regard Time as reversible, i.e., to believe it possesses the topology of a circumference. Then, according to Davies (1977):

To regard one big bang as "the beginning" and the other as "the end" is mistaken. They are both in a sense "beginning" consistent with each other. (p. 197)

To our mind, this resembles the words from the Gospel of Thomas quoted above. Further Davies wrote:

The idea of a cyclic world is at least as old as Aristotle. In more recent years the general theory of relativity has yielded a number of situations in which the future histories of objects apparently join up with their pasts. It has never been clear just how physically meaningful such situations really are, but the implications of such possibilities for philosophy are profoundly disturbing. Free will in a closed-time universe could not exist. The condition of a system could not be changed at will because its future would also be its past. So its present condition would depend on its *future* behaviour, which is what we seek to change! (p. 198)

We can, of course, say nothing about the reality of the idea of closed Time. For us it is important to emphasize that somewhere in its depths the human consciousness is prepared for such a perception of the grammar of Time. This fact makes us ponder over the reason that we prove to be prepared (on the level of our unconscious) for the ideas that cosmogony only now starts to consider scientifically. The answer to this question is the concept of the present as the conversion of the past according to the future (see Chapter 8). In this multiplicative model the present is *symmetrical*<sup>11</sup> to the past and future: these two differ only on a level of interpretation which is arbitrary. In a psychological aspect, the existence of the present in the grammar of Time serves to reconcile us with the symmetrical nature of Time. By the way, it is noteworthy that seventy percent of the paintings of one of our participants (the artist A. Dyachkov), produced after meditation over the theme Time, contain a spiral as a symbol of cyclicity.

## E. Concluding Remarks

We are often asked whether the records cited adequately reflect reality. It seems to us that such a formulation of the question is not valid. Here, as in physics, the world is revealed through its interaction with the receiver. The participant fixes what he has seen on the screen of his mental vision—he acts as a selective receiver. His interaction with the semantic field is primarily determined by his preparedness for the interaction.

However, we would like to emphasize the two following circumstances

<sup>11</sup> A psychiatrist participating in the discussion of the paintings drew our attention to the fact that the painting shown in Color Plate 6 could be interpreted as a horizontal hourglass whose two symmetrical parts symbolizing *the past* and *the future* are connected with a shining yellow spot symbolizing *the present*. In other words, this picture testifies to the fact that the artist's consciousness acknowledges the symmetry of *the past* and *the future* broken by the shining *present*.



which make us treat the results obtained in earnest. The first is that on the frequency diagram (Figure 15.1) all the upper places are occupied by symbols directly pertaining to the concept of Time. The second thing is that the records of the participant whose verbal records were quoted strikingly resemble those of the participant Jim quoted in the book edited by Milner (1978). The similarity of records obtained in experiments carried out in different countries and by use of utterly different procedures testifies to the fact that we contact here certain invariants of the deep levels of consciousness.

Meditational study of Time can in no way be regarded as finished. Many interesting problems may yet be formulated. For instance, will artists be capable of learning to see and depict the world without it being wrapped in Time? Will they find new expressive means to depict human contact with Nothing? How will Time be perceived in meditational experiments by physicists-theoreticians professionally studying the problems which require the search for a new vision of Time and Space?

When we discussed these problems with the theoretical physicist A. A. Grib, it also seemed desirable to introduce meditation as an exercise for students attending a course of lectures on contemporary theoretical physics. Few students are prepared independently to transfer highly abstract knowledge of contemporary physics to the level of their unconscious and thus open up for themselves a new angle for viewing reality. Yet, only people who manage to do this have a chance to become scientifically active researchers.

It also seems attractive, while studying the nature of Time, to enter more deeply into the semantic field of the Universe than has been done in our experiments. However, it is not clear whether we shall succeed in penetrating into the nature of Time, though in science this question continues to emerge. Recall that Gödel (1949a) found a solution with closed time for Einstein's gravitation equation: the world line of existence crossed its own past.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the poem by Alexander Vvedensky quoted below is the result of meditation over Time.

#### *Conclusion to "The Bells"*

It's unbearable. For whom? For me. How? Unbearable. I am alone like a candle. I am seven past four, eight past four, like nine minutes past four a candle ten minutes past four. Not a trace of the moment. Neither four o'clock. Nor a window. But all is the same . . . Then the night comes for. Time rises above us like a star. Look, it has become visible. It rises above us like the night. Christ has risen from the dead—the last hope.

<sup>12</sup> The model with closed time caused a heated discussion in both its ontological and mathematical aspects. While for Gödel (1949b) the idea itself of time proves illusory rather than not. Einstein, in his turn, suggested that this solution by Gödel be removed from consideration as not having a physical sense.

*Introduction*

All that I am trying to write here about Time is strictly speaking incorrect. There are two reasons for that.

1. Any person who did not comprehend Time at least a bit, and only he who did not comprehend it, comprehends it at least a bit, must also cease to comprehend all existing things.

2. Our human logic and our language slide over the surface of Time.

Nevertheless it is possible to assert some principles of our superficial feeling of Time and they will make clear the way into death, into twilight, into broad incomprehension.

If we feel the wild incomprehension we shall know that nobody can oppose it with anything lucid. Woe is us, who started to think about Time. But then, with the increase of this incomprehension it will become obvious for you and me that there is no woe, no us, no thinking, no Time.

*Objects*

Our house has no Time, our everything has no Time. Even the present, the present time, of which it has long been known that it does not exist, the man did not give to the object. So it turns out that the house, and the sky, and the forest do not exist even more than the present.

When a person lived in his own nail, he was upset, he was crying and moaning. But once he noticed there was no yesterday, no tomorrow, that there is only today. And having lived through today, he said: so what? Neither do I have this today, nor does he who lives in the man that hops like mad, that drinks and eats, who sails in a box, who sleeps on the grave of his friend. We are in a similar position. So what?

And he started to contemplate peaceful neighborhood, and in the wallsides of the vessel of time God showed himself to him.

The words by Vvedensky quoted above seem to be the most absurd ones ever said about Time. But the nature of Time is such that meditations on absurd ideas about Time perhaps offer a better chance than any other text to break through the familiar web of naiveté and to perceive Time in all its incomprehensibility.

• \* • \* \*

We have traveled along the roads of Time in this experiment and experienced the windings of this way:

It's troublesome that I'm with minutes,  
They have confused me immensely.