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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF *EMBODIMENT: An Explanatory Framework for the Exploration of Reincarnation and Personality Survival*

NOTE: This outline summarizes the contents of the longer paper which I have submitted for the consideration of the participants in this conference. This summary is less discursive, and it suppresses some of the more technical considerations involved, particularly those concerning my revisions of Whitehead's metaphysical apparatus. On the other hand, it does a better job of bringing into focus the most important ideas and conclusions.

In some minor cases, the logic of this outline differs from that employed in the original paper. In those cases, this outline, which is the result of reflection subsequent to the original writing, should be considered to supercede the logic of the original.

- I. The purpose of this paper is that of developing a framework of explanation within which the phenomena of *reincarnation* and *the survival by the personality of bodily death* (hereinafter referred to as "personality survival") can be fruitfully explored, and can become intelligible in a conceptual universe which is also consistent with the results of modern physics.
- II. In order to be able to account for reincarnation and personality survival, this framework must meet several criteria:
 - A. It must give a satisfactory account of the mind/body problem. Personality survival and reincarnation are only intelligible if the mind can both inhabit a physical body, and yet also come to transcend it in time and in space.
 - B. It must give a satisfactory account of the nature of the personality and, in particular, of the continuity of the personality – both within and across lifetimes. It is sometimes overlooked that the continuity of a personality even within one lifetime is a mystery, and the resolution of that mystery is intrinsic to an understanding of reincarnation
 - C. It must find some way to make the existence of the personality outside of the body intelligible, and, in order to this, it must support a doctrine of the subtle worlds (hyleic pluralism)
- III. There are several philosophical approaches which *cannot* meet these criteria
 - A. Materialism
 1. Materialism is completely unable to respond to the mind/body issue. No one has ever figured out how dead matter can become conscious life. This is the famous "hard problem."

2. Scientific materialism insists that the *real is the measurable*. But what is measurable is only a tiny portion of what we actually experience, and we can easily imagine worlds in which measurement is altogether impossible. These worlds will be discussed further later in this paper. The restriction of the real to the measurable makes it impossible to give an adequate accounting of the subtle worlds.

B. Idealism

1. Idealism has a difficult time accounting for the stubborn facticities of life, and often relegates all determinate existence to the status of an illusion that is inflicted on an illusory self. As materialism tries to solve the mind/body problem by doing away with mind, idealism tries to solve the problem by doing away with matter.
2. Idealism has a difficult time accounting for the *experience* of personal continuity, and for the differentiations among differing personalities.

C. Dualism

1. Dualism is a philosophy like that of Descartes, who posited two primary ontological realities – *res extensa and res cogitans*
2. Dualism allows the existence of both mind and body, but it makes them each independently existing ontological ultimates, so that there seems to be no way of accounting for their interactions.
3. Dualism easily collapses into monism:
 - a) It collapses into materialism when it is seen that the mind has no causal effects on the real world, and is thus epiphenomenal and essentially irrelevant
 - b) It collapses into idealism when it is realized that matter has no causal effect on mind.

IV. Panexperientialism

- A. Panexperientialism is, as far as I can tell, the only basis on which the explanatory framework we require can be built.
- B. Panexperientialism holds that matter and mind, energy and consciousness, are both inextricable elements of any real entity in the universe.
- C. Panexperientialism understands the real as the ultimately concrete. All abstractions are abstractions from this ultimately concrete reality. Both mind and matter are such abstractions. They are elements of the real, but the real includes in its complex being all factors that can be abstracted from it, even those that are mutually contradictory. To assume that matter is alone real, to assume that mind is alone real, or to assume that mind and matter are two independent realities – all of these assumptions involve the “fallacy of misplaced concreteness,” the confusion of an abstraction from the real for the concrete reality itself.

V. We will build our explanatory framework out of materials derived from the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead.

- A. Alfred North Whitehead’s metaphysics is particularly well suited to our purposes because it was developed, from the beginning, to provide a framework within which relativity and quantum mechanics can be understood. It is becoming increasingly recognized by scientists as a useful set of coordinated concepts within which they can interpret their work.

- B. If we can account for reincarnation and personality survival in terms of Whitehead's metaphysics, we will have succeeded in accounting for reincarnation and personality survival within a metaphysics that is also capable of accounting for the results of modern and post-modern science.
- VI. The central idea around which Whitehead's metaphysics is built is the idea of "actual occasions." This paper shows, in a preliminary way, the coherency and adequacy of the idea of actual occasions. It builds up, on the basis of that idea, a theory of personality, personality survival, and reincarnation.
- VII. Actual occasions
- A. Actual occasions are the entities that the world is made out of. Actual occasions are the final real things. Everything else in the universe is to be accounted for in terms of individual actual occasions, and societies of those occasions.
- B. Physics tells us that the world is made out of events – spatiotemporally extended energetic blips. Every event is an actual occasion, seen from the outside.
- C. A very natural way of decomposing our own moment to moment experience is into "drops of consciousness" – experienced events that include a quantum of spatio-temporal duration. As William James taught us, we either have a whole drop of experience, or no experience at all.
- D. Actual occasions are events on the outside, and drops of experience on the inside. In this way actual occasions make experience, or what we usually call consciousness, an intrinsic part of every determinate reality.
- E. An actual occasion comes into being by a process of "concrecence"
1. Concrecence is the way in which a determinate reality comes into existence through the resolution of a field of possibility into a perfectly definite form. This is analogous to the collapse of the wave function in physics.
 2. Concrecence goes through four large phases
 - a) Feeling
 - 1) Every actual occasion feels its past.
 - 2) In an ontology of actual occasions, every occasion is an experience that makes itself available to subsequent occasions by means of a form that it has attained. This form (the "final satisfaction" of the occasion) becomes "objectified" in future occasions. On the outside, this objectification is an efficient cause, or a transmission of energy. On the inside, this objectification is an experience of a past experience, a kind of impersonal memory, or a transmission of feeling. In general, efficient cause, transmission of feeling, and memory, are the same operation in an ontology of actual occasions.
 - 3) An actual occasion which is causally effected by a past occasion is said to have a "prehension" of that past actuality. Prehension is the most primitive sort of interaction among actualities.
 - b) Imaginative interpretation
 - 1) An actual occasion begins with diversified experiences of a multiplicity of past occasions. We call this the "material prehensions" of the occasion. The occasion also begins with a set of possibilities. An occasion incorporates possibilities through "conceptual prehensions."

- 2) As the occasion moves towards determinate being, it must weave all of its material prehensions and all of its conceptual prehensions into a unified whole, a coherent individual moment.
 - 3) It does this by the formation of “propositions,” or combinations of actualities and possibilities (one such proposition might be verbally expressed as “*that* group of occasions in my past is a ball.”)
 - 4) This process of unifying the various prehensions into a single, final determinate moment, is an act of imagination.
- c) Decision
- 1) There are many ways in which the imagination can order the experience of the past and the anticipation of the future. In the process of becoming determinate, many of those possibilities must be eliminated. This elimination is a process of decision.
- d) Final satisfaction
- 1) The ultimate outcome of the interpretations and decisions is a complex proposition, the final satisfaction of the occasion.
 - 2) This complex proposition is “superjected,” which is to say that it is made available to all future concrescences as an efficient cause.
3. Every actual occasion is a process of feeling, imagining and deciding.
- F. An ontology of actual occasions rehabilitates the Hermetic Principle. It makes all events analogous, so that both the experience of a moment in my stream of being and the inner experience of the minutest flash of a sub-atomic occasion are the same *type* of thing. This means that I can learn about the nature of all real things by examining my own nature.
- G. An ontology of actual occasions accounts for the differences among occasions (obviously moment in my stream of experience is not the *same* as a sub-atomic flash) by a doctrine of “grades.” A sub-atomic occasion is of a very, very low grade. An occasion in the stream of my consciousness is of a relatively high grade. Higher grade occasions are different from lower grade occasions in that they emphasize and further elaborate later phases of concrescence. Low grade occasions essentially transmit feelings from the past unchanged; mid grade, or living occasions, introduce a great deal of imaginative novelty; high grade, or mental occasions shape their final satisfaction by complex deliberations regarding a range of possible choices.

VIII. Causes in a universe of actual occasions.

- A. The proper understanding of fully concrete actual occasions requires a rehabilitation of Aristotle’s four causes: the material, the efficient, the formal and the final.
- B. In order for any concrescence to be *initiated*, all four causes must be operative.
1. *The Material Cause.*
 - a) The material cause in a universe of actual occasions is what Whitehead calls “creativity.”
 - 1) Creativity is a name for the fact that concrescences keep happening.

- 2) Creativity is defined as *the process by means of which the many become one and are increased by one.*
 - a] In concrescence, the many past actualities and the many possibilities become one determinate experience, or one specific event.
 - b] Each concrescence, as it terminates, becomes a new member of the many.
- b) Creativity is the common material cause for all actual occasions.
2. *The Efficient Cause:*
 - a) The efficient cause is the power of the past to shape the future.
 - b) Efficient causes operate through material prehensions.
 - c) Material prehensions are at the same time efficient causes, experiences of past experiences, and impersonal memories.
 - d) In order to come into being, a concrescence must have a position in spacetime. In the paper which is here summarized, I suggest that the *formal* cause specifies the position, but I am now thinking that the *efficient* cause might more reasonably be given this function.
3. *The Formal Cause:*
 - a) The formal cause is the field of possibilities among which the ensuing concrescence will decide as it becomes actual.
 - b) The formal cause specifies a set of possibilities relevant to the specific past of the concrescing actuality. If the formal cause includes possibilities never before realized, then there can be the *emergence* of new qualities in the creative advance.
 - c) The formal cause specifies a “scheme of indication,” or a spacetime.
 - 1) As the concrescence forms the various propositions that make up its middle stages, each proposition that pertains to past or to future actualities must be able to indicate *which* of those past actualities it pertains to. There may be propositions (such as “ $1+1=2$ ”) that are wholly abstract, but any proposition (such as “*that* ball is red”) which is at all concrete must be couched in terms of a scheme of indication.
 - 2) All of the prehensions in a concrescence must share the same scheme of indication.
 - 3) In addition, in order for a current concrescence to prehend the propositions which constitute the objectifications of past actual occasions, the two occasions must also share the same scheme of indication.
 - 4) The scheme of indication is the spacetime which binds the concrescence to its past, and which bind the various propositions formed within the concrescence into a coherent whole.
 - d) The formal cause of a high grade actuality may, under certain conditions, affect the formal cause of a lower grade concrescence such that that the formal cause of that lower grade occasion is a superposition of the formal cause of the higher grade occasion onto its own formal cause. This doctrine is, as we will see, necessary for accounting for the phenomena of autopoiesis, or *embodiment*.

- e) Note that in this ontology, every actuality has its own formal cause. In other times we might have said, every actuality has its own secret name.
 - 1) Science proceeds on the assumption that all actual occasions share a common formal cause, the field of “natural law.” This is a reasonable assumption when societies of low grade, inorganic occasions, such as those constituting the physical world, are being considered. Low grade actualities share a great uniformity of formal causes, and so the differences among them may be neglected. But the higher the grade of the actualities involved, the more diverse are their formal causes.
 - 2) *The future of the parapsychological sciences depends, in part, on developing ways of working with causal interactions in the formal, as well as the efficient, mode.*
 - f) There is an interesting interaction between the formal cause and the efficient cause of an occasion.
 - 1) An efficient cause is the final satisfaction of a past actuality as it is objectified in a new concrescence.
 - 2) This objectification may be very full and concrete, or it may be very abstract. E.g., my objectification of the person that I was a moment ago is very concrete, but my objectification of the chair on which I was sitting is relatively abstract.
 - 3) The more resonance, or harmony there is between the formal cause of a current concrescence and the formal cause of an occasion in its past, the more concretely that past actuality may be objectified in the present. (Of course other factors, such as spatiotemporal distance also influence abstraction in objectification.)
 - g) Whitehead suggests that each actual occasion gets its formal cause directly from the ultimate ordering principle in the Universe.
 - 1) Note that in an ontology of actual occasions in which each actual occasion has its own, individual formal cause, there must be something that coordinates these formal causes in order for any interesting and harmonious order to emerge in the creative advance. If every occasion made its own decisions based on possibilities that were not, to some extent, held in common with other contemporary actualities, the world would devolve into utter chaos.
 - 2) Whitehead calls this ultimate ordering principle “God.”
 - 3) Since God exercises only formal causation on the world, God is not coercive, but persuasive.
 - 4) *Our current technology is based on coercion by means of efficient causes. This ontology points the way towards a technology based on persuasion. Such a technological mode would put us into greater harmony with the divine.*
4. *The Final Cause:*
- a) Modern science tries to form explanations without an invocation of final causes. In the absence of final cause, there is only necessity and chance.
 - b) When a decision is made among alternatives in the absence of a purpose, or a final cause, then the choice must be random, an operation of chance.
 - c) But when we look into ourselves, we know that we are driven by a sense of purpose. By the Hermetic Principle, we are justified in inferring that

all actualities are driven by purpose. Thus there are no random happenings, rather there are purposeful choices made among specific alternatives, i.e. free decisions.

- d) The final cause of every actuality is the aim at maximum enjoyment of value for itself and for the occasions in its relevant future. As the final satisfaction of an occasion becomes more complex and more harmonious, its enjoyed value becomes greater.

IX. The grouping of occasions,

A. A personality is a specific grouping of actual occasions. In order to understand that particular grouping, it is necessary to have a sense of the various ways in which actual occasions in the creative advance can group themselves or, in Whitehead's terminology, the ways in which actual occasions can participate in "nexus."

1. There are three kinds of nexus:

a) Non-social nexus

- 1) Non social nexus are groups of actual occasions which are involved in networks of mutual efficient causation.
- 2) Non social nexus include, for example:
 - a] Sub-atomic particles not involved in atoms
 - b] Clouds of gas
 - c] Crowds of people on a city street

b) Societies with personal order

- 1) A society with personal order is a nexus of actual occasions so arranged that there is only one member of any such in any given moment, and so that each member of the society can identify another member of the society in its own immediate past as its predecessor.
- 2) The human personality is built around a personally ordered society of high grade, mental occasions.
- 3) There are two factors which must be in place in order for personal order to be possible:
 - a] First, the occasions involved must be of a high enough grade so that its scheme of indication permits the differential recognition of various occasions in its past, and can allow one such occasion to be designated as its predecessor. The lowest grade actualities in our universe that have this characteristic are the occasions that are embodied in physical atoms.
 - b] Second, the various members of a personally ordered society must share the same formal cause. (In the paper here summarized, I suggested that the formal causes must be "sufficiently similar." I have since come to the conclusion that they must be identical.)
- 4) Personally ordered societies of actual occasions which share the same formal cause can objectify very fully in one another, and so a society with personal order is a kind of tube in the creative advance through which efficient causes are powerfully propagated, or in which memory is strongly canalized.

c) Autopoietic societies

- 1) Autopoietic societies are nexus of occasions which:

- a] Separate themselves off from the surrounding environment.
 - b] Act and feel as a single individual
 - c] Exhibit a coordination of spontaneities among its member occasions.
 - i] In a living body, each cell and each organ has its own individual existence, and its own freedom. Nonetheless, the exercise of these various freedoms results in a coherent overall functioning. Thus, an autopoietic society exhibits a coordination of spontaneities among its members.
 - ii] This can only be accomplished by some coordination among the formal causes of the various occasions involved.
- 2) In this paper, it is suggested that an autopoietic system comes into being through a three stage process.
- a] First, some nexus of lower grade occasions must, under the impulsion of the final cause of its various members, move towards self-organization. In the physical world, this might be, for example, a group of molecules organizing into a dissipative system. But the self-organization here is still non-social – i.e., it can still be accounted for in terms of efficient causal interactions. The science of complexity studies systems at this level of self-organization.
 - b] Second, the coherent situation brought about by the self-organization of those lower level occasions creates a situation which either initiates a new personally ordered society at a higher grade,¹ or else it attracts the attention of a higher grade personally ordered society which is already in existence.
 - c] Third, that higher grade society superposes its own formal cause onto the formal causes of the lower grade actualities involved. In this way, all of the lower grade actualities come to share in the formal cause of the higher grade society. It is this superposition that creates the conditions under which the spontaneities of the lower grade occasions can become fruitfully coordinated, and under which an entire system of actualities can act as a single agent.
- 3) When a higher grade, personally ordered society enters into this sort of relationship with a system of lower grade actualities, we call this a relationship of *embodiment*. We say that the higher grade personally ordered society – a personality – has become embodied in a system of lower grade actualities – it's body.
- 4) In the physical world, atoms are unique in that they are embodied in lower grade occasions that are not personally ordered. In this way, atoms define the lower bounds of the macrocosmic order. All other autopoietic systems in the physical world are “corpuscular,” i.e., they

¹ Whitehead sometimes seems to suggest that a sufficiently rich initial data is the key factor which can, given the proper material, formal and final causes, precipitate the concrescence of a high grade actuality. If the higher grade personality is already in existence, it would have to be existing in the subtle worlds. This idea is further discussed below.

are constituted by lower grade actualities that are already personally ordered.

- X. The definition of personality.
- A. In a strict sense, a personality is just a personally ordered society.
 - B. When, however, in a looser sense, we refer to a human personality, we are referring to a mental grade personally ordered society that is embodied in a corpuscular hierarchy of other, lower grade societies.
 1. The main, mental thread of a human personality is embodied in a system of lower grade mental societies such as those that synthesize the data from the various senses and organs. Those, in turn are embodied in societies of cells, which are themselves embodied in systems of atoms, which are, finally, embodied in sub-atomic occasions.
- XI. An account of reincarnation
- A. We have now seen that the continuity of personality within a single lifetime involves a linear succession of occasions each of which shares a common formal cause with other members of the same society.
 - B. We generally assume that a personally ordered society must trace a continuous trajectory through spacetime. However, consider the following examples:
 1. I am drugged and awoken many hours later in a different city. My dominant personality has the experience of abrupt transition from one location in spacetime to another location in spacetime.
 2. Star-Trek like matter transporters are invented. I can now move from place to place instantaneously. This does not, at least in the imagination, disrupt my sense of personal order.
 - C. Thus a personally ordered society need not experience spatiotemporal continuity as a condition for its ongoing existence.
 - D. If, let us say, at the end of a lifetime, the dominant, personally ordered society ceases to exist, there is no reason why it cannot pick up again in an entirely new set of circumstances. It might now find itself in an entirely new body. All that is required for this to take place is that God, the ultimate source of order, should provide a new personally ordered society with the same formal cause as it gave to a previous personally ordered society.
 - E. The new “incarnation” would then experience a particularly intense efficient causal influence from its previous incarnations.
 1. This efficient causal transmission might, particularly if the new body is in a spacetime location sufficiently similar to the spacetime location of its previous body, have effects on the formation of the new body such as inducing distinct birthmarks which would reflect the circumstances of the previous death.
 2. This efficient causal transmission might, without becoming conscious, induce such phenomena as phobias related to traumas in past lifetimes. It could also lead to such phenomena as childhood genius.
 3. This efficient causal transmission might, under suitable circumstances, come to the surface as conscious, past-life memories.
 4. In any case, this causal transmission would operate in the depths of the psyche, and the have the effect of giving the new incarnation a kind of

wisdom which comes from accessing its past, usually unconscious, memories.

5. This kind of efficient causal influence among successive incarnations would be an important part of what is referred to as “karma.”
- F. A fuller and deeper understanding of the specific mechanisms of reincarnation and karma awaits a fuller and deeper understanding of the transmission of formal causes through the creative advance.
- G. Note that this explanation of reincarnation is logically independent from an explanation of personality survival. There may be reincarnation, and there may be personality survival, but either of these phenomena may take place without the presence of the other.

XII. An account of personality survival

- A. Personality survival involves the continuation of the personality without the support of its physical body, but with conscious continuity of memory, clear continuity of personal characteristics, and with some means of communicating with personalities that are still embodied.²
- B. It is assumed, on the basis of the negative findings of science, that these disincarnate personalities are nowhere in the physical world. It is further assumed, on the basis of information gained by communicating with such disincarnate personalities, that they are someplace interesting – a place in which they can communicate with each other, with embodied personalities, and with other beings that are not incarnated in the physical world at all. The question is, *where is it that these disembodied personalities have their post-mortem existence?*
- C. The answer to this question requires the development of a new understanding of the nature of spacetime. This paper suggests that:
 1. Spacetime is *not* a neutral container in which events transpire. Rather, each actual occasion is itself an atom of spacetime. Each actual occasion houses its entire past and is, in turn, housed in future occasions. Outside of actual occasions there is, as Whitehead says, simply nothing.
 2. Actual occasions are ordered into spacetime domains by a shared scheme of indication, which allows them to form propositions concerning each other.
 3. This shared scheme of indication also serves as a set of potential routes for the transmission of efficient causes.
- D. Based on this understanding of spacetime, we can see that our lives are actually played out not in the physical world alone, but in a more complex system of at least three different worlds.
 1. We define a “world” as a system of actualities, mutually external to each other, interacting through a shared scheme of indication, i.e., a shared spacetime.
 2. The *physical world* is the world of low grade, inorganic occasions.
 - a) These occasions interact through a spacetime which can be fruitfully described by a uniform, metrical geometry (e.g., Euclidean geometry). The discovery that the scheme of indication employed by all low grade

² Unless disincarnate beings have some means of communicating with embodied beings, they would be, in principle, entirely unknowable to us.

actual occasions is a uniform, metrical geometry is the principle discovery underlying the science of physics.

- b) A detailed analysis shows that *measurement* is only possible in a physical world.
 - 1) Measurement always requires the comparison of an entity to be measured against a rigid rod (a ruler), or a periodic oscillator (a clock). Measurement is only meaningful if the rod is actually rigid and if the oscillator is really uniformly periodic. This level of uniformity can only be achieved by nexus of low grade, inorganic occasions.
 - 2) Further, measurement is only meaningful if the length of the ruler or the period of the oscillation is the same “over here” as it is “over there.” This requires that the scheme of indication supports the existence of parallel lines such that analogies among distances and durations are possible among different spacetime regions. This is a condition that only obtains among occasions that are bound by a scheme of indication that can be characterized as a uniform, metrical geometry.
3. The *vital* (or astral) *world* is the world of medium grade, or living occasions.
 - a) Causal effects among living occasions are strongly conditioned by factors other than contiguity in physical spacetime. For example, I decide to behave differently the next time I am angry. That decision may have a causal effect on my behavior at some indefinite future time and place. The causal effect is conditioned less by spatiotemporal contiguity in the physical world, and more by some kind of morphic resonance among the two occasions involved.
 - b) In general, the scheme of indication that contextualizes living occasions is some combination of two different factors:
 - 1) First, a non metrical geometry.
 - a)] Living occasions outside of physical bodies seem to experience “scenes,” as in dreams. These scenes involve geometrical extension, but do not permit of measurements. Most probably they are structured around a projective geometry in which parallel lines are undefined.
 - 2) Secondly, a scheme of morphic resonance, which connects successive occasions *not* by spatiotemporal contiguity in a geometrical scheme, but rather by resonances of form and feeling tone.
 - c) In general, higher grade occasions objectify more fully and concretely in one another than do low grade occasions. In essence, all living occasions are bound into networks of mutual empathy. We experience these networks of empathy strongly within our own bodies, where the entire body can be affected by the discomfort of just a few cells. In the vital world, this kind of empathic connection is the rule, rather than the exception. In effect the whole vital world is, in this respect, like the inside of a single body.

- d) The clarification of the scheme of indication which binds low grade actualities into a world allows for the accomplishments of modern science and technology. *A proper understanding of the scheme of indication which binds living occasions into a world would be the foundation for a detailed understanding of the precise causal interactions which are involved in reincarnation and personality survival.* It would also, I think, open up entirely new domains of human technology.
 - e) The living occasions of human personalities already have their existence in the vital world. Though they have their own existence in vital worlds, they participate in the physical world by *embodying* themselves in a hierarchy of occasions that is ultimately grounded in systems of low grade, inorganic occasions.
 - f) There are most probably vast regions of the vital world that are unconcerned with events in the physical world. Only those living occasions (such as the occasions of a human body) which are ultimately *embodied* in systems of low-grade actualities, participate meaningfully in the physical world.
 - g) Some other vital world entities participate in the physical world indirectly, through their interactions with physically embodied living personalities. Disincarnate human beings participate in the physical world in this way.
4. The mental world is the world constituted by high grade, mental actualities.
- a) Geometry is largely irrelevant to the scheme of indication which binds mental grade actualities into a world. The causal interactions here are determined by resonances of meaning, and by participation in common purposes. Because geometry is of such minimal importance here, the scheme of indication of such a world is literally beyond the reach of the geometrically conditioned imagination.
 - b) Actualities in the mental world participate in networks of mutual telepathic interchange.
 - c) The high grade actualities involved in the human personality are mental occasions existing in the mental world, but embodied in systems of living occasions that are, in turn, embodied in systems of inorganic occasions.
- E. The post-mortem life of a human personality takes place in the vital and mental worlds, as here defined.

XIII. The human life cycle:

- A. The conceptual apparatus outlined in this paper allows the formulation and testing of numerous hypotheses concerning the exact life cycle of a human individual. In this paper, I have used this conceptual apparatus to give expression to some Theosophical ideas on this subject.
- B. We begin with the assumption that the Soul, or the core of the reincarnating individual, is some entity outside of the three worlds we have so far described.
- C. At the beginning of a given lifetime, that Soul embodies itself in a simple system of mental occasions, those mental occasions embody themselves in a simple system of vital occasions, and those vital occasions embody themselves in a zygote. The mental and vital occasions involved at this early stage of the life

- cycle need have no relationship with the mental and vital occasions that figured in any earlier lifetime.
- D. Under the impetus of local circumstances, and conditioned to some extent by memories (efficient causes) coming from past lifetimes, the new human individual begins its development. In the vast majority of cases, any memories from past lifetimes are entirely unconscious in this process.
 - E. As the new, physically embodied personality grows, the mental and vital occasions involved in that personality are shaped primarily by the experiences in which they participate due to their embodiment. While these higher grade occasions exist in higher worlds, they attend almost exclusively to events in the physical world, and are formed into a whole personality by those experiences. As life proceeds, a physical body, a vital body, and a mental body are all developed.
 - F. At the death of the physical body, the physical body disintegrates, and the personality ceases to be embodied in the physical world. However, that personality, with its memories of its physically embodied life, and with the characteristics that it evolved during that life, already exists in the subtle worlds. Instead of being a mental body, embodied in a vital body, embodied in a physical body, it is now just a mental body embodied in a vital body.
 - G. Once the personality is freed from the body, it may, depending on its level of development, persist in the subtle worlds in a dreamy, largely unconscious way; or, it may awaken in the subtle worlds and carry on some interesting extension of its life in those domains. It is those personalities that awaken in the subtle worlds that are able enter into communication with those personalities that are still embodied.
 - H. After a certain time in these subtle worlds, the subtle bodies themselves also die. Ultimately, the personality dissolves, and the continuity of the being is then held in the Soul itself, until the soul undertakes a new reincarnation.

XIV. Conclusions

- A. The explanatory framework here proposed has a number of signal advantages:
 1. First, it provides an interesting and intelligible way for dealing with the mind/body problem, and for articulating a doctrine of the subtle worlds.
 2. Second, it provides a coherent way of accounting both for reincarnation and for personality survival.
 3. Third, it unifies parapsychology with the physical sciences by providing an explanatory framework which accounts in a satisfactory way for both disciplines.
 4. Finally, it brings attention to three vast categories of causal interaction which have been entirely neglected in the technological development of our civilization. These are:
 - a) First, the efficiently causal interactions among physically embodied higher grade occasions that bind all living and thinking beings into networks of empathic and telepathic interactions. These networks are only minimally conditioned by distance in the spacetime of physics. It is these non-physically mediated networks of interactions that are the basis for a true global mind. Without taking these causal interactions into

account, it becomes impossible to account properly for evolutionary and historical processes.

- b) Second, the formal causal interactions among high grade actualities and the lower grade actualities in which they are embodied. Without understanding these formal causal interactions, neither autopoiesis nor embodiment can be properly understood.
 - c) Third, the networks of efficient and formal causation that bind the entire physical world into networks of empathic and telepathic communication with beings (such as disincarnate personalities) that are not embodied in the physical world.
- B. A proper understanding of these causal interactions will not only open a much more detailed way of working with reincarnation and personality survival, it will also open up a whole new approach to the technological enterprise. *I believe that a technology based on an appreciation of these hitherto neglected causal interactions can eventuate in a way of life that offers human beings a comfortable and ecologically sustainable way of life – a way of life that is filled with zest by the vast possibilities for evolutionary development that it opens up for exploration.*
- C. On a more practical note, this paper suggests that parapsychological science will fully come into its own when it is able to discern and articulate the scheme of indication that binds vital occasions into a world, and the mechanism of formal causation that allows vital beings to become embodied in systems of low-grade, physical occasions. It is my hope that this paper may inspire further research in those important directions.