

What the Mavericks of the Mind are Missing

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with Bob Dobbs & David Jay Brown

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Gerry Fialka of Contemporary Communications Conference produced the following dialogue between Bob Dobbs and David Jay Brown, co-author of the books *Mavericks of the Mind* and *Voices from the Edge*.

Bob Dobbs: All the "mavericks of the mind" miss the general characteristic that, today, under mixed corporate-media conditions, all visionary awareness, in whatever variety, is obsolete.

David Jay Brown: That sounds like an oxymoron. How can visionary awareness be obsolete when visionary awareness is what carries us beyond our current perspective?

Bob: The "us" has disappeared. The only occupants of the global theater are the mixed corporate-media. And that's our problem. I'm talking about public communication. I think that the mixed corporate-media have given everybody personal visionary hyper-subjective experiences to the max for the last 20 to 30 years. But that leaves everybody in their own little solipsistic bubble. We have to learn to create a language, an esperanto that retrieves some kind of public space, or public language, that we could share, that could communicate something that is beyond our grasp. When people get into expressing their own particular enlightenment, that is cliché today, just as creativity on a personal level is a cliché activity. The problem I feel I have

solved is how to express the collective consciousness we are now in. That's what I mean by saying visionary awareness is obsolete. It's on the personal level. When it's obsolete, that means it's a cliché. We all have it, and have it in varying degrees of intensity going up the wave or down. But in terms of communicating to other people, if they've disappeared and are not listening or having their own experiences, what common ground do we have?

David: Maybe I am not understanding what you mean by visionary experiences or visionary perspective.

Bob: Right. Well, you say what you think it is and I'll respond.

David: To me, a visionary perspective is that which sees beyond the ordinary, beyond the limited, beyond whatever particular perspective we happen to be stuck in. It means looking one step beyond where we are. It's what's coming over the horizon. Of course, it will vary from person to person because everybody's on different points of a continuum in terms of their evolution or development as an individual, species, or culture. I'm not sure I understand how that could ever be obsolete no matter what point on the continuum of development you're on, because you're always going to be looking toward the horizon for something new to evolve into.

Bob: Personally, in your own body you can look at the horizon, but in terms of the media we have, there is no horizon. There is a tactile space that is resonating and pulsating. It has visual characteristics, but they are minor in relation to the acoustic, kinetic, proprioceptive and tactile characteristics. So, we have to determine what sense we are talking in because the bias implied in the word "visionary" is the eye.

David: Right.

Bob: One aspect of the eye is the illusion of the "horizon". In fact, I go so far as to say that ESP is obsolete when effects precede causes. When we have new environments coming upon us, the effects of them show up before we have the actual technology that institutes those effects.

David: Because they move backwards through time? (laughs)

Bob: No, there's not even "time". They are just environments and they have characteristics. Traditionally, the artists in cultures, the visionaries in the old sense, would pick up these effects and express them. The most amazing and longlasting visionary expression of this would be James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, where he picked up the effects of all technologies that came since his time including CD-Rom and virtual reality; and expressed the effects on perception beyond his own personal point of view about them. Usually looking over the horizon involves ESP or some kind of precognition, but I think the human mind can't see the effects via these old ESP techniques as effectively as the use of these new techniques. I advocate studying the effects of the environments before they arrive. The liner notes of the Bob's Media Ecology CD specify that the hologram phase is from 1977 to 1990. The hologram is a small technology that certain laboratories have, but it is not here as an environment. But the effects that it's going to have when it becomes an environment are already here. Those effects were manifested all across the world culture from 1977 to 1990.

David: And those effects, I assume you mean, are the condensing of information from everywhere into every specific point?

Bob: Right, and also the idea of virtual reality, of living inside an environment that is a simulation, in the sense of a hologram, too.

David: I've heard you talk before how we are reincarnating the Akashic Records in the electronic environment, and we are becoming discarnate in electronic space.

Bob: That point about the Akashic Records is perfectly apt to what I'm talking about. Theosophists talk about the Akashic Records. Maybe Blavatsky and other mystics got it from the Oriental mystics and the Great White Brotherhood. I would say that the movie medium contains all times and spaces. We externalize the idea of the Akashic Records, which include all times and spaces, in the movie medium. The effects of the Akashic Records were here as we built up the movie environment. We are beyond the

Akashic Records in the TV environment because when you look at the screen of the television, it's a resonating mosaic of intervals. You are the screen and you are forced to create an image out of the mosaic. You are creating something and you are doing that everyday. This goes beyond the idea of a tunnel/container called the Akashic Records, which has all times and spaces. I think we are, in general terms, hallucinating collectively, beyond the metaphor of the Akashic Records. That's an example of an ESP model, the Akashic Records, being obsolete.

David: I'm not sure what you mean when you say hallucinating?

Bob: I mean that the eye, the ear and the hand are projecting on the environment rather than receiving impressions passively which is the old characteristic of life from 1500 to 1900.

David: That sounds like an interactive, co-creative process. Hallucination implies seeing something that is not there.

Bob: Right, I begin with that. Now you are being more precise. Yes, hallucination and dreams come from the movie environment. It's fantasy that comes out of the television environment. So it is a co-creative thing, but it's hallucination in the sense that what you are seeing may have a lack of reference point for anybody else who's projecting. Establishing a reference point is hard to do as viewers experience the TV environment. From one person's point of view of the other, or one culture's point of view of the other, they are hallucinating in relation to them, because they don't see the same thing.

David: I'm not sure I understand why film and television are so different. You say one affects dreams and one affects fantasy. I'm not sure I understand the distinction.

Bob: Movies simulate dreams in the sense that they take you on a trip, usually an outer trip, because they are an extension of the eye and the foot as an environment. Also you are in your own seat in the theater - this is before VCRs. Originally the movie experience was a solitary experience like in

Plato's cave. Then television comes along and you have millions of people watching the same content at the same time. That is different in terms of simultaneity. In the movie environment, in the 30's, people saw a movie over a two-month period. Many millions of people saw it, but they saw it in smaller groups and not as instantaneously.

David: Right, so you think it's a non-local phenomenon. It's happening everywhere at once and everybody is having the same experience at once, in many different points in space.

Bob: And also it's live. That is a very different thing. The movie is a package, it's like a book. It is not live in the sense TV is live. It is very interesting that the "powers-that-be" stopped live TV in the mid-60's, for 12 years until Saturday Night Live came back. I knew that the Secret Council of Ten felt the live experience of TV was not controllable. So the movie environment creates an environment that dictators like Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt and Mussolini could control. But once we got into live TV that was a new situation which left a lot of the traditional radio-era establishment looking fragile. So you see the basic point that TV is a totally different environment on the technical level compared to movies.

David: In the sense that it's instantaneous, that people have a choice, and it's non-local. So the distinction you are making between television and films carries over into the distinction between dreams and fantasy. You say a dream is something prepackaged, and a fantasy is interactive. You are co-creative and helping to develop the fantasy.

Bob: Yes, that's good.

David: Of course, that doesn't apply really to lucid dreams though, where one is actually interactive within the dream.

Bob: Well, think of the title Finnegans Wake.

David: That's the idea of being lucid in a dream?

Bob: We are collectively. That's the thing about television - you are lucid

dreaming. Marshall McLuhan said with TV, we are dreaming awake. In other words, movies are dreaming, and movies become the content of television. So we have gone beyond the movie environment. And if movie was dream, then we're into a new situation which he called "dreaming awake," which you can call lucid dreaming.

David: Right.

Bob: Because that experience has not been communicated properly or articulated well, we have confusion. So the population is lucid dreaming and not knowing it, and therefore in a state of confusion. But once they hear the statement of what's going on, then they can realize they are lucid dreaming and then they're really "finnegans" awake.

David: I see. So you are saying the evolution is from a point of passivity, prepackaged receptivity, to something interactive, co-creative where people have an ability to give and take, co-create with whatever develops.

Bob: When you're watching TV in a room, you can turn the sound off. Also, the common cliché about TV in the 50's and 60's was that it was a passive medium. You just sat there and received impressions. They didn't understand technically that when your eye and ear are looking at the mosaic mesh of the TV screen, the cathode ray is coming at you. All that's there is a pointillist Seurat painting. Do you know of pointillism?

David: Sure. It's like a television screen, or a newspaper photo, or our own visual field when we examine it closely.

Bob: There are these dots. Your perceptors, your receivers are making an image out of it. There's an image being transmitted. Your brain has to find that image and carve it out of the dots. To get into Terence McKenna, that's what created the massive acceptance subconsciously of the LSD kind of experience where you turned your senses into makers and sculptors of space.

David: It also made people aware of the digital nature of reality so everything is composed of little bits and bytes that can be rearranged.

Bob: That's right. So, because we were getting that collectively on the unconscious, we then could do it privately and hence the acceptance of drugs happened in the 60's.

David: The acceptance of psychedelics specifically, I assume you mean? Like LSD or psilocybin, you see as being related. It took prior having developed a certain technological medium like television before people would accept it on a mass level.

Bob: Yes, because if you took people in the 20's and 30's and gave them LSD, I think there would be even worse confusion, and maybe trauma, because people would not have had that kind of collective experience through the medium of TV first. It would have been more traumatic.

David: How do you explain the fact that people have been taking psychedelics long before the advent of any real high technology? It's been in tribal societies for thousands of years. Terence McKenna documents how it's been used ritualistically before any real signs of civilization develop in tribal societies.

Bob: That gets into my knowledge. The Archaic Revival that he talks about is a symptom of the fact that we've retrieved with television the paleolithic and pre-paleolithic. The most primitive awareness has been retrieved by the television environment. So yes, different cultures took it. It's interesting when you bring in the phonetic alphabet, and then the printing press, that you see the oppression of this kind of activity. There were always individuals, for whatever reason, taking drugs through history. I'm talking about public archetypes and collective archetypes. It was considered witchcraft or wasn't even considered in, say, the last thousand years in western society because the suppression of the other senses by the dominance of the visual sense allowed people to get into a passive mode, and therefore as a society did not look upon cultures that they came in contact with, that did this kind of stuff, as something equal to them. They felt they were barbarian or inferior or just strange and weird. But the main point of my knowledge is that when we get into the electric age, we then start to retrieve primitive awareness.

David: Marshall McLuhan talked about how television brings back tribal awareness on a global level.

Bob: Yes, and he talked about it bringing back occult awareness, and primitive awareness and drug taking. He talks about that, and Terence McKenna picked up on it. In the late 80's, McKenna wrote a review of the book *The Letters Of Marshall McLuhan*. And knowing McLuhan and knowing McKenna's work, I found it very interesting that McKenna was kind of obsessed with the way McLuhan predicted that when computers became an environment in the 70's, especially on the personal level, there would then be a great interest in drug-taking, which fact he once told Tim Leary. McKenna finds that sentence from the *Letters Of Marshall McLuhan* curious and is intrigued by it. He is also intrigued by the relationship of Burroughs and McLuhan. So McKenna has read enough of McLuhan to see that there is something of what McLuhan is saying to approximate. But I don't think he has an astute enough understanding of the archetypes of evolution that we've developed, and that McLuhan developed, from *Finnegans Wake*. So it's a mystery for McKenna. I think he's still wrestling with it and I hear it in his lectures on language. He's usually talking about verbal language when he talks about language. He doesn't talk about the new languages which are the environments that we've created.

David: I'm not sure what you mean by that.

Bob: There's the environment created by speech.

David: Do you mean something like a post-symbolic language that's created visually?

Bob: No, McLuhan used the term "language" for all our technologies and the environments they create. So the printing press, he called it "the Gutenberg Galaxy," was a new language with a visual bias that altered the old language of speech and body movement, the kinetic language and other languages of the senses. When the electric age came in, we retrieved the acoustic and tactile senses in the new language of electricity and its environment. So the

electric environment and the print environment are new languages as opposed to the old speech language. All media, all these means of human expression, are languages. So there are different types of language.

David: I make a distinction between language and medium.

Bob: That's where McLuhan disagrees with you. To understand McLuhan's definitions and suggestions, you need to know that any artifact created by humans is a language because it creates an environment. It's a shared environment among people and the users and culture that use that artifact.

David: By so doing it carries a message.

Bob: That's right.

David: I recently interviewed Jaron Lanier, the virtual reality pioneer. He spoke to me about how virtual reality will allow people to utilize a post-symbolic language where you won't use words or symbols, but rather describe experiences just by creating them visually and experientially. If I want to describe to you what it's like to go to New York, I'll create the experience of you being in New York.

Bob: How will he communicate it, through a virtual reality disc or something you put on?

David: While you are in virtual reality, he will then create the experience for you.

Bob: Right, that's exactly what I mean. I explain the effects of that in the Bob's Media Ecology CD booklet. The hologram, which is like virtual reality, will create environments for you.

David: Exactly.

Bob: That's like a hologram environment you are living in. Lanier calls it post-symbolic. All media, all languages are symbolic and metaphors of our

bodies. They come from parts of our bodies, and are metaphors for them. So it's inaccurate to say something is post-symbolic because... I know he means literate and verbal symbolism, but if you know that all media are symbolic, then you might be more particular in how you would say that. Lanier is talking about the technical application - the technical invention and the ability to do that. But he's missing the point that the effects of that have already happened over the last fifteen years. Ronald Reagan was a fine example of the collective unconscious effects, what Jean Baudrillard calls "a mirage, a virtual reality president."

David: Because of his ambiguity?

Bob: Yes, ambiguity is really important. He was post-verbal. Jackie Mason does a great skit on why Ronald Reagan was more successful than Carter. Jimmy Carter went around in the 70's in anguish about all the problems. All Reagan did was laugh about them and dismiss them. (David laughs) He didn't get into verbal explanations and dueling with the issue at hand. He just used, I'd say, phatic communion. He waved, talked and used body language. He expressed a general indifference that was more successful in a virtual reality situation - the effects having arrived in our subconscious more than the anguish of a Carter. Jackie Mason doesn't talk about it the way I'm doing. But as an artist he picks this up and does great skits on it. Check out his album from a few years ago where he talks about Contragate.

David: Okay, can you point out what some of the other mavericks in my book are missing?

Bob: Terence McKenna is probably aware that McLuhan knew there was an Archaic Revival, but I think that Terence either ideologically or in a propagandistic sense puts great value in the fact that there is an Archaic Revival, but we have already had it before in a lot of ways. He specializes in the revival of drug taking, or natural psychedelics. Because he's focusing on that particular culture, that part of our legacy, he is creating something for younger people to focus their attention on. They need to focus on something, in terms of old knowledge, that's culture-specific, because it's very hard to see the mixed corporate-media and how it's interacting, the new knowledge and

culture, until you have experienced twenty or thirty years in the media environment. So, he provides an antidote, an ersatz anti-environment for people, but his model is puny and miniscule in expressing the nature of the present we live in right now, which has services and disservices. The Archaic Revival is a service and disservice for different cultures. McKenna is talking about the figure and missing the ground of the effects of the Archaic Revival on all these different cultures throughout the planet which are in different stages of evolution. When you think in those terms, McKenna is puny. Every one of the mavericks are puny. In particular, I take issue with the term "Archaic Revival" and McKenna's misunderstanding of it. Now, you wanted me to talk about some others.

David: Let's try somebody else. How about Tim Leary? After Marshall McLuhan, he was one of the first people to talk about the relevance of living in an electronic environment.

Bob: Tim talks a lot about Marshall McLuhan. I've asked him, "Why did you start talking about Marshall McLuhan in the last few years, when you didn't talk about him since the 60's?" He said, "I didn't understand fully what Marshall did." Then I asked, "Is it because the Berlin Wall went down that you now have a rekindled interest in the global village idea of Marshall McLuhan?" Tim said, "Yes, since the Wall went down, I saw in some sense, the global village was here." I then said, "Did you know that McLuhan's main insight was not the global village, which was already articulated by Wyndham Lewis and Buckminster Fuller?" Some people attribute it to Fuller, others attribute it to Lewis. Since McLuhan knew Lewis first, he probably got it from him. What McLuhan really saw and wrote about was the global theater. In electrical terms, the global village had already existed since the telegraph, the radio and the telephone environment.

David: In a more limited way...

Bob: Technically, we had all moved into the same discarnate, resonating spot. I'll explain that a little later, if necessary. What happened was the planet extended itself via the satellite. The satellite is a man-made environment that simulates the planet. A person can live inside a satellite, a space capsule, just

like he or she can live on the planet. So we've extended the whole planet as a living environment. When the ring of satellites, starting with Sputnik in 1957, went around the planet, it turned the planet into a theater. It turned the radio, telegraph, telephone and TV environment, the global village, into a global theater with a proscenium arch around it.

David: Right.

Bob: That is what McLuhan emphasized all through the 60's and 70's, and nobody picked up on it. So here's Tim Leary hoicking up the global village as a political fact, and he's just catching up to the 1930's. He doesn't understand McLuhan enough to get the relevance of the global theater notion and what that's doing to all cultures around the planet, which are in different stages of development.

David: And what is it doing exactly?

Bob: Think of the satellite in 1957. By 1962 and Telstar, there was a more popular awareness of the satellite environment with the song "Telstar". Then the satellites really started to ring the planet, put up by the Soviet Union and the United States. You then see what happened in different cultures in the 60's. All its effects may be interpreted on a journalistic level as improved communications, television, radio or whatever people saw as a figure. Not noticing the ground of satellites, we had turmoil in every society. China is an example of what a new environment does. It erases the image of the culture which is based on previous technologies. Therefore, the culture has to strive to create a new image, a new identity in relation to the effects of the new environment, or retrieve an old image through violence. Both identity strategies are violent, but to retrieve an old image is pretty hard compared to dealing with the new effect, and to find a new image which you can't imagine, or how to find it or what to base it on, is difficult because you are operating in response to a satellite environment that is largely invisible. So you have violence in all societies. So in China, all of a sudden they decide to have Mao's revolution, the children's crusade, where they allowed young people to wipe out the whole middle class. It's well known what happened in the US and the West, the student uprisings - the whole sensory upheaval, in

general, of all kinds of cultural institutions in the West. By the early 70's, the Third World countries, the Arabian countries, and the Aboriginal countries in Australia started to have a sense of their own tribal identity. All kinds of separatisms began breaking out. When the effect gets to Iran, fundamentalism comes in. There's a lot of tribal retrieval or tribal upheaval going on in cultures all around the world from 1962 to 1982 due to the unconscious effect of the satellite environment. The culture feels inadequate in relation to the satellite effect and tries to retrieve an old image or forge a new image. At the same time the tribal culture is mad at the industrial image which was the movie, steel, television - we'll call it the Western environment, cultural imperialism, or whatever you want to call that Western industrial environment that was running the world up to the 60's. All these cultures certainly saw the inadequacy of that model because it was not on par with the communicating effect of the satellite environment. Then all these cultures get angry and want to separate from the industrial West, yet they are trying to find a new ground for their culture inside a satellite environment which affects the money environment to the point that money as computer bit is moved around the planet instantly. This creates inflation. It moved so fast, thanks to the computer environment, that all cultures and nations in the world suffered inflation in the 70's. That was due to the combination of the computer and the satellite. I'm giving you examples of services and disservices, mainly disservices. McLuhan wrote about this in his book *Take Today: The Executive As Dropout*. It has never been dealt with. Tim Leary comes out with this new video that celebrates the wisdom of Marshall McLuhan, and just deals with the global village. That is such an inadequate understanding and usage of McLuhan. He does not talk about what McLuhan really talked about. Tim Leary actually has a copy of *Take Today* in his house. I was there a while back. Before I got there, I asked him if he had a copy of *Take Today*. He said, "No, I don't know that book." Then a few months later I was in his house. While he was getting dressed, I was looking at his library. There he has a copy of *Take Today*. I pulled it out and it was autographed by Mrs. McLuhan about 1988. He got it from Mrs. McLuhan around '88 - how he interacted with her at that point I don't know. There it is, a copy of the book, autographed to him. He didn't even know he had it. So he obviously never read it. And for some reason, he didn't want to read it. I caught him - guilty of having a book he didn't know he had.

David: It's not that surprising.

Bob: I think he's a little amnesic due to age. He may not have a fully functioning memory of all that he experiences.

David: So, you are talking about this desire to go back, or to use an old model or an old metaphor or an old perspective. When the present model isn't working with all the data, do we look backwards for something?

Bob: Yes, or forward.

David: When we look backwards and gain an old model, do we try to expand it in some way?

Bob: Yes, we retrieve it as an archetype. It's actually an old cliché. We bring it back and use it in a new way. We alter it a bit to use it and try to institute it. Usually that works for a while, but then the environment changes again, so that archetype is scrapped again and becomes a new cliché. So there's a retrieval process going on all the time. William Butler Yeats wrote about it in the poem called "The Circus Animals' Desertion." When he exhausted his creative ability, he would lay down in the "rag-and-bone shop of the heart" and find some old garbage, which was a symbol for clichés. Then he climbed back up the ladder to create a new archetype.

David: I see.

Bob: This creative process always goes back and looks for scrapped images and scrapped environments, and brings them back if they are relevant to the new situation. So, obviously Terence McKenna's metonymy is a holeopathic retrieval not just of Tim Leary but also of Gary Snyder.

David: I'm not sure of the meaning of "holeopathic"?

Bob: See my chart from Bob's Media Ecology. After the hologram phase from 1977 to 1990, we get into what I call the holeopathic retrieval phase

which is: we've gone beyond the effects of the hologram. We have now completely "disappeared" all media. We live in a place...

David: Do you mean a non-local space?

Bob: Right.

David: Everything, everywhen, is present everywhere.

Bob: Yes. "Holeopathic" is a word that combines hologram and homeopathy. In homeopathy, the more diluted and tinier the substance, the more effective it is. So, we have retrievals of the hologramic phase made tiny, like homeopathy. So they are holeopathic, and they are retrievals. So you have retrievals all across the Western culture since 1990. Examples are: Rush Limbaugh is a holeopathic retrieval of the outer-kinetic bias of the 60's, Terence McKenna of the inner-kinetic bias of the 60's, Bill Clinton of the Democratic party, and Camille Paglia of feminism. These different aberrations are holeopathic because whole cultural archetypes are focused into one person. That person represents a whole cultural baggage, even to the point they claim they are the source of it. Camille Paglia says that she was really the original feminist, pre-Steinem and Friedan. So, Terence McKenna is the holeopathic retrieval of the inner-kinetic, proprioceptive psychedelic counterculture. He's a combination of Leary and Snyder. Gary Snyder and Tim Leary were at opposite ends of the counterculture poles. Snyder had the more naturalistic view and didn't go for the artificial chemicals that Leary did.

David: Right.

Bob: Terence takes the view of Snyder. But as a proselytizer, he comes across as a Tim Leary. So there's a media image of Tim Leary he retrieves, but the actual content of his propaganda is Gary Snyder's view.

David: I'm curious then. What role do you think psychedelics are going to be playing in the future?

Bob: I think they will be used constantly in every generation as long as we

live in this electric environment. Kids grow up in the TV and computer environment. They are being stimulated like a psychedelic - the whole age group and individually, their senses are being stimulated. From the time they are born, they're living in a psychedelic environment. Usually by the late teens they've absorbed so much TV, they reach the saturation point. Once kids leave the house, go to college or work and move out of the family, there's usually a drop in TV consumption. Economically, they may not be able to afford a TV, but TV's everywhere. When they move away from that cocoon of suburbia where they have been bombarded with TV for 15 to 20 years, then they may go into drug-taking. What they don't realize is that they need subconsciously the stimulation that the TV environment gave them. So, they get it privately through drugs. As long as we have the television environment, you will always have every generation taking drugs to meet that felt need for inner-tripping. We are guaranteed by it, and that's why Tim Leary can still go around to college campuses. Someone like me has more detailed and intricate knowledge than Leary or even Henry Kissinger. I don't mean this as a value judgement - Kissinger may have a lot of esoteric knowledge about what it is like to run a very complex society - but I am not a homeopathic retrieval yet. However, the young people go for someone like Leary because he's an archetype for the psychedelic need that people have for inner-tripping. His blandishments and bland pronouncements are a felt need in a certain age group for every electrified generation. Terence McKenna will probably fill that need when Leary is gone.

David: Right.

Bob: It's only for incarnate children in their late teens and early twenties. They will move out of it as they have more experiences, however they get them. They will then develop their sensory abilities and the flexibility of their talents and skills. They will not be so focused on that need for inner-tripping. They will do it other ways. Just by being obsessed with your work today is a form of inner-tripping. It's a passing fancy, a "passing fanny", for generations to go through Leary. Then they'll go onto something else. But there's always the next class coming up.

David: But back to the idea of psychedelics in general, you see them

basically as an extension of television which was just satisfying that need for inner-tripping, as you say. But there's a real distinction between television, which is flashing all these superficial images at you, and LSD, which puts you in touch with parts of your self that you haven't been conscious of.

Bob: That's true. Remember, you're talking about private experience. When you take LSD, you are being stimulated in a way that's quite traumatic, or quite exciting. Whatever happens, it's quite revelatory. Now, I'm talking about collective, public archetypes. When I'm talking about television, I'm talking about the effect of it on millions of young people. They cannot be individuals and make a choice whether they are going to take drugs or not. In general, they'll want to take them for a while because of the general collective effect. I'm not talking about what I call the "private citadel of consciousness" - your particular needs and brain, what you want. You will have all kinds of experiences that are meaningful to you. However, we are dealing with an environment that requires language to be communicated. Television is a new language having effects on us that relate to the other older languages: from movies, newspapers, radios, bulldozers, skyscrapers to speech and books. Television doesn't seem to do to us what cocaine or heroin does. What's important is what it is doing to us in terms of its effects on the whole society, which you and I have to deal with as a private individual. You have to grow up in a world that's a computerized environment and it has evaporated all kinds of old hardware jobs and tasks for you. That is something that has happened to our time. For young people, they're moving into an environment that seems to have not as many employment opportunities in the traditional way. Despite how many times they take drugs or get insights from a Zen Buddhist, they have to deal with that collective fact of our time. As T. S. Eliot said: "I cannot talk in the particular, I can only talk in the general." If I talk in the particular, I'm imposing my views on you and then we have to negotiate that. But we both have to speak and deal with these new environments. We can learn to talk about them beyond our personal experience and point of view.

David: So as to help avoid biases...

Bob: Yes, personal biases. That's what the whole crisis in American culture

between the right, left and center is. Everyone is projecting their own personal fantasies, desires and lifestyles on the public screen, but not recognizing that the public screen is not a central point, like a switchboard, that's going to tabulate your preference and some proof of what your preference accomplishes as opposed to certain evidence of what a competing preference group claims. These agendas constantly cancel each other out. So, you can't expect to project your lifestyle or your desires without getting a reaction. Also, in that confusion, every social group, every tribe, has to get its identity broadcast, but only through violence. You assert your identity by demanding recognition or imposition of your desires on the public's general space. That's all within a discarnate environment which is very hard to talk about. That's why you have endless talk shows and content argument over issues that project people's personal bias. They are missing the environment and language they are operating within, that unites them more than they ever realize.

David: What is the cure for this?

Bob: The cure is me. (everyone laughs)

David: I thought I saw a video where you got shot.

Bob: I don't look like that. That guy is my father.

David: I'm curious, Bob. What do you think happens to consciousness after death?

Bob: I know what happens after you die.

David: Please enlighten us.

Bob: I've actually played tapes of that on my radio show in Toronto.

David: You've been able to record the after-death process?

Bob: Yes. I had spirits through a medium describe what happens to you. And

not only what happens to you, but what happens to different cultures. Your cultural conditioning determines how you have a death experience.

David: You think that a person's belief system influences what they experience after they die?

Bob: Oh yes, definitely.

David: Just like it influences what happens while we are alive?

Bob: Yes.

David: So a Buddhist has a nirvanic experience, a Christian has a heaven or hell experience, and on and on and on?

Bob: Yes, in general terms it goes that way. The Tibetan Book Of The Dead, William Irwin Thompson and people into Oriental Buddhism, think they have got a monopoly on understanding the stages of death and what happens to you after you die. They have the edge over the West since they assert that you live after you die. If you don't believe there's life after death, then you are limited. In the realm of describing what happens after you die, the Tibetan Buddhists are as biased as anybody else can be. That's not understood today. Most people are just amazed that the Buddhists seem to understand the post-death experience and seem to tell you the stages. But those stages are culturally conditioned. To anybody, I would say, "Do not expect those stages to happen to you when you die." So, do not rely on The Tibetan Book Of The Dead, or The Egyptian Book Of The Dead, or any new book that comes out from any culture that claims to tell you the stages of apprehension after death. You have to realize what culture you are from. Now today, we are in an "acultural" situation: a culture that has no reference point. This new discarnate un-localized situation we are in is having effects on our brain, and will alter the death experience because it is a new active culture working us over, even though we don't have a very good language to talk about it. Do you see what I'm saying?

David: Yes. Do you think it's possible for us to extract the personality

pattern-information out of the brain, and by downloading it into a purely electronic environment, to become completely discarnate where you won't even have a physical body anymore and you'll exist primarily in some kind of cyberspace/virtual reality field?

Bob: Yes. Hans Moravec talks about that. There's an interview with him in Mondo 2000.

David: He's the fellow who wrote the book *Mindchildren* and is into robotics, from Carnegie Mellon.

Bob: Yes. He's projecting that can happen, and I imagine that it will happen. That's an expression of the confusion that's going to happen when the mind, or whatever we call the private citadel of consciousness, can be preserved in a computer lattice while the body is dropped off, or repaired. What is that thing versus the electric environment? Or what is it as opposed to the computer lattice that it's inside of? Humanity has always had the problem of what the mind is versus what culture and language are. As Milton expressed in *Paradise Lost*, when Satan fell, the problem that created that fall was that he obscured his thinking with language. Bucky Fuller used to talk about the difference between brain and mind. Mind seems to be, from the Oriental point of view, the eternal consciousness, what I call the private citadel of consciousness. The thing that is just there and we don't even know the boundaries of that. We might all be that one thing that is not affected by anything and lives forever. That "forever" may be really just one moment. Do you know what I mean? It is our living in the body that makes it think that it's a sequence of time, not one moment but a series of moments that has an end. What is that thing that's eternal? When does it become electricity, and then a physical body? And if we can start manipulating and creating electrical and astral levels with nanotechnology, which they call evolutionary, as opposed to genetic, engineering, we are then really playing with this dilemma of where does the mind leave off and where does the physical vibration begin, whatever subtlety that vibration is. But I think it always will be an eternal problem where you are aware of yourself as having mindfulness, but you're also experiencing something where you may be separate from other people, or in a different resonance than them. So, we may have to flip the astral

plane. William Irwin Thompson talks about this a lot, that we are altering the astral plane when we can bring out and influence the mind so it doesn't die. That will affect the traditional structures that one died into, in the past, when we get into this situation where scientists can actually hijack the astral plane and preserve you. It's going to confuse the death process. Do you know what I'm saying?

David: Yes. I think, for me, the real question is: Let's say we can extract information out of someone's brain. We are extracting the basic components of their mind. We download them into a computer, and have this vast array of memes and belief systems. The question being: Is it conscious and how would you know if it is or isn't?

Bob: That's right. What is consciousness? That has never been answered - that question. That's where media become models for cultures as collective unconsciousness. And also, they can be metaphors for the private unconsciousness.

David: As far as I know, besides the Turing test, which is completely fallible, there is no way to determine whether something or somebody is actually conscious besides yourself.

Bob: Right. But while we are living in this world, that's where we begin to look at the medium, and say: if you take a visually-biased society, then they will be detached from the sensory matrix. Before you bring in the phonetic alphabet and then the printing press, the visual sense operates in harmony with the other senses. That's what we admire about pre-literate cultures, tribal cultures, who have not been abstracted visually. In the West, its genius was to abstract the visual sense thanks to the meaningless bits and sounds of the phonemic alphabet, the phonetic alphabet made up of phonemes. The phoneme was an abstract, meaningless bit that did not relate to the sensory matrix, or what your senses experienced, as ideograms did, like the Chinese language. The ideogram shows physical reality in the pictures. So, when we got into this abstract process isolating the visual sense out of the rest of the sensory matrix, and the visual sense is the only one that can be isolated, then you had a separation between culture and nature, which we've called, in the

20th Century, the Western hang-up: it doesn't appreciate the interaction with nature. That's the disservice of the visually-biased society. Remember, humans don't know the difference between the animate and the inanimate - on a personal, private citadel-of-consciousness level, we find it hard to know anything in relation to our hidden center of consciousness. We have to look at cultures and language, since language is what people share. The West developed a visually-biased view of nature, and of reality. They isolated the visual sense through the phonetic alphabet, and then via the printing press, from the matrix of all the other senses - therefore, detaching themselves from the flow of nature and all the senses and, therefore, from nature in general. Only the Western society created the category of nature, capital "N" nature, which was a result of writing, in particular, the phonetic alphabet. They started to study the content of nature because they were abstracted from it. They did not realize that was the effect of the phonetic alphabet, and later the printing press. Therefore, it led, especially from the 1500's on, to where the visual bias was intensified greatly, more than the phonetic alphabet did, due to the printing press and the mass distribution of printed books. Then you had the development of science which did not have an interest in the transparency of nature, or nature as an occult phenomenon and all the different experiences labeled under magic. It moved away from magic. Then, when the 20th century brought back acoustic/tactile space and reabsorbed the visual sense, the visual sense was no longer dominant as the hidden ground. The electrified acoustic and tactile sense was the hidden ground because the electric environment is similar to the actions of acoustic and tactile senses. We then had a new sense of interrelation with all matter, with all of reality - what Western man calls "Nature." It now had a transparency. For visually-biased man, it was opaque. But for electric man, it's transparent again. Therefore, the need for ecology came back, a sense of inter-reacting with all the senses, and all the environments made by our senses that are extensions of our senses. So, the visual bias decreases. I'm suggesting to you a more comprehensive sociology of knowledge. We are looking at different cultures and why they say things about reality as opposed to other cultures. The hidden ground is not just what anthropologists study, cultures per se, but the media they use. The forms of communication are the broadest hidden ground that determine the culture's bias. We can talk about whether things are animate or inanimate only in terms of ratios between cultures of whether they think things are

animate or inanimate, why they think things are alive or not alive.

David: It sounds like you are equating animate and inanimate with conscious and unconscious. Can we equate them?

Bob: No. I meant that if certain pre-literate cultures consider nature alive, and that's obvious from Native American and other cultures that come out of those pre-industrial and pre-literate societies, after that you will have an industrial society that doesn't believe nature is alive - because of that society's visual bias.

David: Just a machine.

Bob: Yes, just a machine. But now that machine metaphor, which is called a Newtonian universe, has collapsed and become the Einsteinian world. Maybe there's going to be a new metaphor, like the Tesla world. But quantum science does not see the mechanical Newtonian model as adequate. That's a cliché of the 20th century, we all have heard about this new organicism. That concept of organicism is unconsciously evoked by getting out of the control of the visual bias and getting back into a harmonious interaction of all the senses, which retrieves pre-literate society sensibility which was not fragmented and isolated by the visual sense. Therefore, it had a sense of interaction with the environment in a more holistic and non-passive way. We are retrieving the awareness of these preliterate cultures as a new value.

David: It's interesting. I understand what you are saying about the power of language. Terence McKenna talks about how language creates reality.

Bob: Right. That's a common pre-literate awareness. The Eskimos always said, "How can I know stone without the word 'stone'?" For them, the word was the thing. McKenna is surfing on the retrieval of that awareness, not aware that the new language, which is the electric environment, is making us retrieve those old percepts of reality. So, we have to look at the properties of the new electric language that cause this effect, among many other effects, rather than saying that language is something that creates reality. Of course, language creates reality - man is the measure of man, but that says nothing

today.

David: But isn't language for most people auditory? It's not visual. Most people don't even read.

Bob: But what happened when it became visual. And what happened when we became post-visual. That's what I'm talking about: language changed and the concepts changed. Whether it's acoustic or visual matters.

David: And you see us returning to something that involves more of the senses at once? Actually, by taking one sense and blowing it out of proportion, it distorts our perception of reality.

Bob: Yes. Here's the problem: the tactile sense is what we extended with television. The nature of the tactile sense: it is the sense that interrelates all the senses and makes consciousness coherent. In other words, it takes input from the acoustic, the visual, the kinetic, the proprioceptive, the smell and the taste channel and interrelates them. This makes you have a coherent consciousness where everything is integrated. You have a whole sensorium operating. That is the tactile sense. It is the sense that interrelates things. It's almost like a hidden sense.

David: It's like the common denominator sense?

Bob: In the medieval period, they called it the *sensus communis*. It is like the switchboard. And television is a switchboard.

David: Evolutionarily, it is probably the first sense to emerge.

Bob: That's right. The beginning and the end are the same. We've made a metaphor of that cycle through our technologies. We went to the acoustic first, in general, with speech. Then we went with visual: writing and print. Then we started to move into iconography: movies and photographs, which use gesture and movement. Then television came along which completed the extension of our senses, because it interrelates sight, sound, the kinetic and smell. Many people who see something with a certain vibrancy will

consciously or subconsciously smell it. A bright color can evoke a certain kind of smell.

David: Right.

Bob: TV includes all the senses. We don't have smell-o-vision yet. That will be a particular off-shoot and fragmented extension of television.

David: It was on CNN yesterday that someone in London has developed a computer that has an olfactory sense.

Bob: Yes, we will inevitably get that. Television is the major matrix. It is like the concept of the "singularity" that is much talked about. Gerry produced the Contemporary Communications Conference dialogue between Philip Chamberlain and myself entitled "The Singularity: Without TV or Via TV?" Do you know this scientific term "singularity"?

David: The center of a black hole where the laws of physics break down.

Bob: Yes, and some new thing is happening and it takes a while to figure out how it is. There is even the question whether you can express what it is. Television is a singularity in that we have created an environment that mimes all our senses. It is an extension of the tactile sense. Television is tactility extended because it is interrelating all the senses. When we create an environment that is tactile, that affects all the acoustic cultures, all the visual cultures, all the kinetic cultures, and all the ESP cultures - let's say the Atlanteans, or whoever, had that kind of culture, maybe Amazonian cultures do. If tactility is altering all of us and all our historical baggages, then we have to understand that because of that situation, we will try to retrieve acoustic models, which is what McKenna does. The psychic people try to retrieve ESP models. The scientists try to retrieve organic models. All these retrieved models are attempts to put back into their bias, their discipline, the hidden effects of tactility extended. So, we are in a situation that is very hard to express. The best image of a tactile environment is a page from Finnegans Wake. James Joyce figured out how to express the tactile interplay of all the senses in the opposite medium, the printed page.

David: Actually, Thomas Pynchon did a very good job at it, too.

Bob: No, because he writes in English.

David: Gravity's Rainbow?

Bob: Yes. It's written in English. Remember, Finnegans Wake is written, in terms of verbal media, in over 65 languages. So, he's already got that bias down by showing the mish-mash of languages, the Tower Of Babel the electric age brings in. Then he puts it on a flat mosaic. If you are in a tactile environment, the visual sense is a flat mosaic. It's like Eskimo realities. Have you read some of Edmund Carpenter's work? He describes the Eskimo way of seeing things. It's a very good metaphor for the way people feel they live today. So the Eskimos have a very flat mosaic. It's just all white and snow. Visually, it's very bland. For a lot of people in the last 15 years, wherever they go in the world, they find it homogeneous. All the airports are the same. We are beginning to get a bland, universal, global village culture due to the global theater of television and satellites. In a visual sense, it's becoming a flat mosaic. We can still go anywhere in the world and hear all kinds of radio and different sound-culture content. It's quite a diverse variety. We have rich acoustic depth, which pre-literate societies have. And we have a lot of kinetic activity. Moving around through movies, cars, airplanes and aerobics, we are using our kinetic senses. The other senses are being retrieved. We have a very rich society. But if you look at it on the visual-sense level, it looks very bland. This sameness and standardization appears to be showing up all over the place. This is what Norman Mailer used to complain about.

David: You are saying that basically just holds things in place, so we can have the freedom to be more multi-sensory, tactile and such.

Bob: What did you say was in place?

David: The things that are the same everywhere, this conformity. The same modular structures that are built everywhere on the planet.

Bob: The Americanization, or McDonald's, metaphor?

David: The Coca-Cola metaphor.

Bob: That's only from one sense's point of view - the eye. Think of the environment people live in everyday. They listen to all kinds of radio stations, watch many TV stations, read different magazines and see different movies. Using the other senses, not just the visual, there is quite a variety.

David: So, you see us as coming from primarily a tactile multi-sensory experience, in a tribal sense, and we have fallen into the historical process?

Bob: Visualization.

David: Where we took the visual sense and exaggerated it, or we focused on it? Is there a reason for this? Is this part of an over-all plan? Is this so we can go back to the tactile with new dimension?

Bob: That's right. We go back with the individuation that visual space created. There were no individuals, in the way we in the West understand an individual personality, or individual cultural figure. In pre-literate cultures, the group ruled - the mandate of acoustic space. It was like Fascism. In pre-literate cultures they had certain services and disservices. They had great group awareness. There was no strong individual sense. You can see how we've extended our senses and phases. When we extended the visual sense, we then fragmented the individual out of the tribal group and started to develop individual acuity. The Greek culture was the first archetype of that. Then the Romans, and then the European culture brought back the individual after a group-oriented medieval period when the visual medium of papyrus disappeared. When papyrus and paper returned, then the visual sense returned and was spread with the printing press. Then you had this heightened individualistic culture. Then the individualistic culture out-did itself. It created industrial technology by emphasizing the individual, fragmentary style of knowledge done by the scientist, which comes out of visual space - the way they analyzed and processed Nature. It then flipped out of itself and created a whole new technology which retrieved the acoustic tribal environment and swamped the individual. Hitler was the iconic image of that - the way he took whole societies and put them in the ovens. The Holocaust

was not respectful of the individual - it was intense group conflict. Tribalism was retrieved. That is a problem for the individualistic heritage of the West because it is no longer dominant as a visually-biased ground. But luckily the computer has brought back a bit of visual space because you can now read on the computer. You still have the iconic effect of the computer screen, but there's also the visuality. The abstract visual sense has been brought back into balance. This is what your book *Mavericks of the Mind* illustrates: the individual, idealistically, hoicking up a new understanding of the individual's relation to the environment, not on a fragmented ego trip - that's the attraction of the Buddhist psychology and Oriental wisdom, which has the service of emphasizing the interaction of the individual with the group. The West only emphasizes the individual. We are made visually-biased in order to develop our individual skills. Now we have to figure out how to relate our individual skills in relation to the new acoustic, kinetic, and especially, tactile environment.

David: Let me just stop you for a second, Bob. What you are talking about happened primarily in the West. We don't really see this in places like Japan, where there is as much technological application as there is here. Yet, there is a very powerful group mind and group mentality there.

Bob: Right. If one was biased, one might say, "I know we are going to develop acoustic and tribal tactile technology, but in the end I'm still a visual person." This is maybe what James Joyce did. He said, "I'm a visual man, and I value the visual sense. I'm going to preserve all different sensory cultures inside a visual matrix, the book." Let's take that as an idea. How do we preserve the Western sense of the individual? We are dedicated to it at the turn of the century. Then comes the telephone, the radio, the television and the computer/satellite. We'd say, "My God, the visual sense hasn't got a chance against these new more powerful technologies. The computer and the television are much more powerful in a shaping way compared to this puny printing press. That was 200 years ago". So, how could one preserve the individual? This is maybe what the Christian fundamentalists are expressing. They are dedicated to visual space, and determined to convert those Chinese, Indians and Africans to the visual metaphor of Christ, and the medium of Christ, which is the Bible. They can't win when you have oral cultures, like

the Chinese, and the group mind which was never industrialized, called the Third World in general, when their groupiness is enhanced by radio, television and computers. The white-page-biased fanatic can not even begin to communicate to them because he's inside an environment where literacy doesn't have the same attraction as the electric-group technology for cultures who are already groupy. Now, here's the paradox. Remember, tactility is "acultural". Tactility is neither acoustic nor visual. It's something the acoustic culture doesn't fully grasp and the visual culture doesn't grasp at all. When you have a tactile environment of mixed corporate-media, which is TV, radio, computer and satellite, swamping any part of the world, whether you are Third World or First World industrial, it is going to cause an identity crisis for that group. So, the Chinese and the Indians are intensified by the groupy-effect of the electric media on their group bias. So, they become very paranoid and then jump to the West to preserve themselves. That's why the Japanese and the Chinese are running to embrace industrialism, which is a problem that the ecological summits and conferences deal with: how do we get the Third World not to use our Western technology, which we see as obsolete and polluting now? But for some reason they want it. That's because under the tactile mosaic, the Chinese want to retrieve visual space as a novelty for them in defense against the paranoid effect of group technologies on a group-biased culture. So, do you know what the Chinese are doing? About fifteen years ago, they decided to adopt the phonetic alphabet. They are taking all their culture and translating it into the phonetic alphabet. The drama for us today is whether this will totally alter them and make them aggressive, outward-bound and violent like the West was, in a visually-biased way. And all this at the same time the electric technologies are making them more integrated. That is the drama. China is a key expression of this drama: will visual space come back to dominate again through the Chinese? It may not, so the irony is that we already have a communication ecology because television, if we recognize its tactile nature, is the global Esperanto that bypasses every culture's visual or acoustic bias, individualistic or group bias, and is altering us. If we can recognize that, we then have a way of seeing what is making us upset, as I said at the beginning of our talk - what the satellite was doing to different cultures.

David: William Irwin Thompson makes the distinction between sperm

cultures and egg cultures. Western cultures are like sperms, and an old culture like China is an egg culture. Things really change on the planet when the egg cultures change because the sperms are always moving around.

Bob: That's the battle between the matriarchy and the patriarchy. Patriarchy is left-hemisphere and visual bias. Matriarchy is right hemisphere and acoustic bias.

David: Are you familiar with the distinction between dominator society and partnerships? Dominator is both matriarchy and patriarchy, and all "atriarchies" - where one group, one sex, one race rules over another.

Bob: Yes, *The Chalice And The Blade*, the idea where there's a partnership and equality between people. I know William Irwin Thompson, who did a very interesting talk on Riane Eisler. He thought she should have given him credit for talking about this years before her in his book *The Time Falling Bodies Take To Light* and earlier writings he did in the 70's. That was the dialectic he used. Riane Eisler retrieved it from his point of view. He agrees that Riane Eisler's *The Chalice And The Blade* is a good book and useful reading. It's obvious that the dominator is visual space, isolating the visual sense and dominating other senses. That's left-hemisphere and the West. Partnership society is pre-phonetic alphabet, pre-Western culture and goes back into pre-weaponry. It's pre-tribal like the Amazonian cultures that Sting and McKenna talk about. They're partnership societies. In a lot of ways they are tribal, but they are actually tactile. If you take Riane Eisler's notion as a new idea: the partnership-style relations, as opposed to favoring one or the other relationships, then "partnership" is recognizing the interactiveness of the tactile interval. It's a tactile-biased concept. But the problem, like anybody who writes a book, they are offering the figure, the concept, without demonstrating the ground that we live in.

David: So, you really see a major change occurring in China as a result of them going from an almost more hieroglyphic alphabet to a phonetic alphabet?

Bob: Yes, there will be a major change. The problem is that it's almost a futile change. The Japanese jump into American culture and its content

because it's a novelty to them. When the printing press came in, books were a novelty. Books, like television, were a new, ugly media threatening the medieval status quo. For the Chinese, Japanese, and any Third World cultures, visual and individualistic space is a novelty to them. Being an individual like the All-American worker is the Bob Dobbs-supersalesman image Ivan Stang talks about, that kind of capitalistic image. They are attracted to that image. Americans have exhausted that image for themselves and are getting affected by the corporate effects of television, tactility and tribal retrievals. The affluent white class of American society is not interested in the individualistic pursuit of gold. They are more interested in togetherness or group behavior. This started in the 60's with group behaviors that were weird for western society - everything from wife-swapping to psychedelics to political agitation to drop-outs.

David: Terence McKenna talks about what made partnership societies. The reason they weren't dominators was not only because of group psychedelic sessions, but also group orgies. As a result, they could not trace the male lineage.

Bob: That's right. There's no private individual thing. Thompson talks a lot about the myth of Isis and Osiris. Seth, Isis' brother, had the power because it was a matriarchy. The only male who had the power was the relative of the mother. The husband was a character off on the side and had no force in determining the structure of the society. When writing came in, then the structure was upset. Thompson's book *The Time Falling Bodies Take To Light* talks about how the myth changes. Isis is no longer happy in her power relationship with Seth, who is her brother. Seth sees a new relationship developing between the husband Osiris and Isis. Osiris gets new status. Seth, representing the old establishment, kills him. That myth is showing the beginning of the shift to left-hemisphered, visual space - the shift of the value of Osiris, of the sperm. Before writing and the individualistic bias came in, as you just said, the group merger dominated - where everybody was everybody. There was no distinction other than maybe toward the egg metaphor which was woman, who was more tactile than man. Why did you bring that up?

David: William Irwin Thompson said things really change on the planet when egg cultures change. Sperm cultures are always changing. There's really a global shift when a culture like China changes.

Bob: That's right. To use archetypes, woman is continuous and man is discontinuous. Tribal societies have a lot of change on the surface, but they are very conservative. They don't change on the basics. However, in the left-hemisphered, visually-biased, applied-technology societies, we inevitably change. We try to cover up by having a uniformity on the surface. That was nationalism and patriotism and the Victorian image of everybody conforming on the surface in social interaction. But underneath they were creating new technologies that would really upset them. The real hidden motive was to change, whereas in tribal societies, there's lots of confusion and blurring on the surface, but underneath a very rigid hierarchy.

David: Just the opposite.

Bob: When visual technology of the West, based on visual-space needs, changes, it comes into a very iconic and static environment. The electric environment just stops us and puts us all in a discarnate state and then our goals of moving along industrially are usurped by the TV image. We have no where to go. We've returned to the tribal state of staying in one situation on the deepest level. Why do the tribal cultures with a basic non-changing nature change? Why do the egg cultures change? If they change, then something is really changing. That's what Thompson means. When you bring in tactile television, it makes the acoustic, right-hemisphered egg cultures need to change because their identity image is erased since they specialize in acoustic space. It's erased by the new space of tactility. Tactility threatens even the egg culture. That's why the egg cultures are changing today. Therefore, we are in a new, what Thompson calls, "singularity". Even women are changing, or want to change, and the tribal cultures like China, too.

David: Do you see a global culture emerging, or do you think such a thing is even really possible?

Bob: A global culture that's agreed upon?

David: I mean in the sense that there is an American culture. Is there going to be some kind of global equivalent to that?

Bob: The '60s were at the pinnacle of ecological harmony, technologically speaking, with television, satellite, and computers. Mixed corporate-media, which is television, satellites, computers, radios and newspapers - to sum it up we'll call it the TV image - equals tactility. Tactility is the hidden ground. The society becomes biased in a tactile sense. If tactility continues as an environment, then the sensory balance is upset. In the '60s we were balanced with literate people and the new tactile ground. For many decades into the future, I can predict, just like people will take drugs, there will be this Arthurian myth about the '60s as a wonderful time.

David: What kind of myth was that?

Bob: Arthurian - as in King Arthur and Camelot. That's what Kennedy represented. The power of the Kennedy image was right there in the non-mechanical, holistic, organic balance that was established between tactile, kinetic, visual and acoustic. As we moved into computers and more high-tech in the 70's, we kept the tactility. The balance became extreme. The organic, tactile balance became unbalancing. It's a surplus extension of the organic balancing factor, which is tactility. The organic balance is all the senses in harmony. When you talk to somebody, all your senses are involved. Speech is not just acoustic. It is a tactile environment. When you are having one-on-one speech with someone in person, you are using all your senses. You are having immediate simultaneous communication including intuition and maybe ESP. All technologies are fragments of speech, or fragments of language. So, you either went visual, acoustic, kinetic, or tactile. So, television as a machine is an extension of the tactile sense - of the holistic, balancing sense. We've made a mechanical version of talking with somebody. There's a whole machine environment involved in it. If you extend tactility and over-use it, it flips into kinetic space. Check out McLuhan's book *The Laws of Media* which answers the question: what happens when tactile space is pushed to the extreme? It flips into being uptight, or kinetic space. Kinetic space comes back. My general drift over the last few years is that the idea that America won the Cold War, that the West or Capitalism won, whatever you want to call this thing that won, is really just the global retrieval and preference for kinetic space, which is the American archetype. America is

movies, cars, newspapers, and radio: a basic pre-television environment in the 20's and 30's. That kinetic space, the main sensory characteristic of America, is now being retrieved by all cultures in the world. That's what Tim Leary thinks is the global village, the Americanization of the world, or the preference for American values of individual entrepreneurship and consumption - using your body as an antidote to the extreme tactile wash, and tactile mudbath, we are swimming in, which cannot be bought, sold or stolen. If we have tactility going on too long, then I recommend collectively turning off the TV image for a while. If we keep TV on too much, you're going to have a global village based on American culture because kinetic space is all you've got. Visual space is puny, even music is puny, compared to the mobility and kinetic vitality of traditional American media.

David: American culture is basically made up of all other world cultures. In some sense, it is kind of a global culture already.

Bob: There's where we come to the Akashic Records. Remember, I said the movie medium is like the Akashic Records. It contains all times and spaces. So, America was the global culture. Wyndham Lewis wrote a great book in 1948 called *America and Cosmic Man*. He was speaking to the post-World War II culture, which was still very snobbish towards America. He said that Europeans don't realize that the future is being hatched in America. McLuhan learned a lot from Lewis. Basically, in McLuhan's terms, kinetic space, which is extended by the American movie medium, can contain all cultures and did become the global village.

David: That makes sense to me.

Bob: That global village is inside the tactile global theater. It's now only a collective nostalgic preference for speed in many cultures. But at the same time, electric media, especially computers, allow every culture to decentralize and to prop up its own local culture, which we call tourism. (David laughs) Everybody will be propping up the mythical baggage, which I call the mythic stage, of their particular culture while they struggle to make money to interact with the kinetic-culture archetype of America. Those two things are inside confusing the "finneganese" of the satellite environment. We try to retrieve

the American kinetic space and simultaneously preserve our own cultural heritage, which leads to "political correctness". Every person and every tribe becomes a mythic stage. You must appreciate their whole sense of time, history and cultural baggage. That all has to be acknowledged.

David: Before they can plug into the global circuit.

Bob: Well, they are plugged in. And the plugging in of the global-theater circuit requires them to prop up their own identity with greater ferocity and seriousness. No joking about your "political correctness". And at the same time, they're consuming the kinetic media of America - all of it moving at the post-Clinton pace, where Clinton can't even help implement the National Health situation. Because the main factor is that we are all discarnate and have disappeared. (David laughs) And that's the joke.

David: Where have we disappeared to?

Bob: If you listen to Bob's Media Ecology Squared, I try to explain it.

David: (Laughing) I have actually.

Bob: So you're laughing, you got the joke. This is a big joke. This is where mixed corporate-media is a satire on us. We can satirize ourselves through speech. But all the technologies are like our speech. We now have made this grand speech through various fragments of technologies and machines. We now implode and make hand signals, or "signs". This is where my book Phatic Communion with Bob Dobbs quotes Arthur Kroker, who represents the school of Baudrillard, the structuralists, post-structuralists and semioticians, who tried to describe this environment via "signs". They say we are in a situation where the "signs" have no reference point, no reference and no difference. So therefore, the very "signs" of our society are satirizing us. They are Menippean tactility, signwise. They cannot be labeled. They cannot be pinned down. That's the tactile sense. So, the mixed corporate-media, today, are doing a satire on us.

David: I'm not sure I fully understand that.

Bob: Think of it this way: the implosion of all the media into the situation where the "word makes the market". The White House makes the market. What the White House says affects everyone in the world, and affects the stockmarket. If Whitewater gains momentum, then the stockmarket goes down, or the price of gold goes up. All media start changing. This thermostat is based on the White House, not Clinton - it's the cultural archetype of too much tactility, the "hot spot". Therefore, we retrieve a need for kinetic space. As we focus on kinetic space, we are not in kinetic space. We are in a tactile environment. As we try to prop up any solution, any technological band-aid for the problems we have today and for those in all the different cultures, we never can put our finger on it because that environment is constantly changing. We're in a paradoxical, changing state called Menippean tactility, which is moving money nowhere at the speed of light. They're making trillions of dollars every day, but what is it? It's also a flood of electronic signals. What are they trying to buy? You can't buy the electronic environment. You have immense wealth, just by turning on your TV, that no one person can buy just for herself. I can't buy a television station and demand NBC to make all these programs just for me.

David: Some information is more valuable than others.

Bob: The problem for the discarnate superangel which we all are, is selecting, filtering and editing information. What are you going to attach to? What are you going to put value in?

David: Information becomes the commodity of the future basically.

Bob: Think of information not just as a mathematical formula, but the technology that it creates. That technology alters us. That's the whole problem about high-definition TV: what's that going to do to society? Who's going to get it? Meanwhile, Russia still puts up the most satellites around the planet. Yet we have the image that Russia is a basket case. How come they can keep putting up the most satellites? Why are they doing that?

David: I don't even know. Are they efficient? What kind of satellites are they? Telecommunication satellites?

Bob: They are different kinds that everybody wants to buy into. Numerically, they put up the most of any culture in the world. But back to the mixed corporate-media: What does a trillion dollars measure? That's money as a hologram. This transaction is what Baudrillard calls "the ecstasy of communication". All the media just interact and just keep moving. That's kinetic space trying to "looka beesy!", to quote the Pope when Jesus shows up. Just keep doing whatever you do, or drop what you're doing and do something else, but keep moving. And all the while you are still in touch everywhere with everything on the planet electrically. In this telephone we could have a conference call with 5,000 people, all listening. If that was broadcast on radio stations, you have more millions of people listening. Where are we then? We are all in a little electro-magnetic space that we can't see, but we can feel. And we're interacting. The whole world is interacting on that little node. You can call it a computer terminal or a television screen. That little node has no visual boundaries. You can't localize it, but we are all inside it. That space is like a quantum particle, smaller than an electron, and yet bigger than the sun. It includes all dimensions. Everyday we are living in it. Subconsciously and collectively, we want to fill up that resonating interval.

David: We're perfecting it.

Bob: We're perfecting the content of it. We can't do anything to it. Since we're all inside of it, all 5 billion of us, let's bring in digital technology and virtual reality. We'll be able to target each person's fantasy and split up this resonating interval according to each person's needs.

David: I see.

Bob: MONDO 2000 talks about virtual reality in the future and targeting your personal fantasies so that you, or maybe Gerry Fialka, can be sold the whole collection of Frank Zappa videos - to him and just to him. It will come in on his little virtual-reality goggles.

David: Let's carry this thing far into the future. Where is this all going? Are we journeying into someplace where, basically, we'll be living in our imaginations, in a sense? Where there will be no longer a distinction between

inside and outside? Is that where we're moving towards, do you believe?

Bob: All those things that you just said we've been living in since 1957, or since the '60s. Technologically, creation ended in the '60's because all we've been doing in the '70s and '80s is fine tuning: putting back in via what's called hi-tech, but is actually left-hemisphered visualization or individuation, every potential that was latent in the '60s. Anything that can happen in the future can be thought of, and you can experience it maybe, in a movie, book, or TV show. And so, potential futures, as McLuhan used to say, are already happening. All you have to do is think about them, and then you realize, "Yes, we've already got them." In other words, nothing can go past the implosion of human beings that happened in the '60s when we imploded into this discarnate resonating interval. This is maybe what David Worcester, who's sometimes on my show, is talking about when he says, "The original separateness, Rhyee, returned to the Plane of Essence. All of being is united now." This is where imagination comes in as a retrieval. We can imagine any kind of scenario, like the legendary hologram of virtual reality, and we'll actualize it immediately through a personal video subscription, or maybe a whole society, say part of Canada, will adopt a certain movie-set kind of environment and put on that situation for a while. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

David: But obviously, maybe not obviously, there are physical limitations to what we can do and within the imagination there's no limitation.

Bob: Yes, the imagination has always been there. So therefore, that's part of the private citadel of consciousness. You'll have to look at how different technologies altered a society's interpretation of what the imagination is. Since we are all now resonating in a tactile sphere, part of the people's problem is how do we even imagine today since we have so many images evoking all periods of history - just think of all the movies. Then this is part of the passivity typified in the song "In the Year 2525" which predicts us having no arms and legs. That had already happened by the '60s. (David laughs) You had so much imagery - acoustic, visual, and kinetic - to swim around in. You either got fed up and got into private psychedelic use, or into gnostic denial of the word. You tried to meditate and get out of the body. Or you became a superconsumer, made lots of money, flew all over the world

and contemplated it as a museum. All these questions of what to do, when we have so much wealth, have already been dealt with. Society doesn't know how to define a new economic order because this is unmeasurable wealth, in the old terms. We already have so much wealth that the old money-wealth doesn't mean anything. So then you have the grievance of the working middle-class people. Today you have to look at every class as a transitory, transient phenomenon. There are people moving from the poor-class to the middle-class and on to the upper-class. They are moving through. You can't categorize anybody as poor or middle-class or wealthy because many people move through these classes or interact with people from all different classes. The archetype of the middle-class hangs around as a separate mythic stage itself and gets mad at the archetype of the "welfare"-class.

David: The archetype gets mad at the archetype?

Bob: Yes. This is the global language that is going on, which I write about in my memo to Prince Charles. The archetype of the middle-class is screaming at the archetype of the welfare-class because it resents the fact it is working at an office and has to be away from the radio and TV entertainment. The welfare-class can stay at home and swim around in the software swill. (David laughs) The commuter/middle-class people in the hardware vehicles are stuck in pollution and all the daily problems of daily work. Joblessness means that many people are poor, middle-class and rich at different phases of their life.

David: This is almost unheard of in prior generations.

Bob: That's right. That's why Marx's social critique failed and so will any kind of critique based on class today, such as Lyndon LaRouche in his early writings when he used to talk about making the working-class conscious of itself. The working-class was a transitory amoeba which contained many people who were in it for a while, then dropped out, moved on. To interpret society in terms of class struggle is so limited now because all these class struggles are archetypal and contain imposters.

David: In America?

Bob: In the whole world.

David: The caste system in India and the class system in England haven't changed in centuries. England hasn't changed. The caste/class system is still very much in place.

Bob: Those are particular sensory-biased cultures. You can say that the Industrial Revolution happened mostly in America. The class structure, in the visual sense, mostly happened in America. Therefore, it is the most obsolesced by this new iconic absolutism of the tactile image. Yes, on a certain level, the class struggle is an American phenomenon, an industrial phenomenon. There was class struggle in the European countries. But, you are right, there was a heavy medieval baggage. That's why Wyndham Lewis in the book *America and Cosmic Man* said that Europeans could not understand the wide-open spaces of the new kinetic-tactile world that we lived in. They lived in the spatial sensibilities of ancient cities. The Aristocracy still had control. Therefore, the problem with being a Canadian is that she could have had American technology, British politics, and French culture. And what she got was French politics, British technology, and American culture. (David laughs) You can quibble over whether French culture is perfect, but Baudelaire and the Symbolists of the 19th century still have a strong effect on people. Be that as it may, the electrified mixture of cultures today evokes a great deal of confusion, as Joyce shows on any page of *Finnegans Wake*, because none of the archetypes have any staying power anymore, whether American, industrial, feudal, or Amazonian.

David: They're dissolving archetypes.

Bob: Everything's disappeared.

David: Thank you. It's been a pleasure.