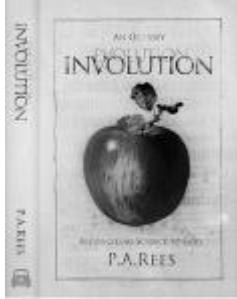


LOST IN TRANSLATION- Scaffolding the Cathedral**PHILIPPA REES****'Involution-An Odyssey Reconciling Science to God'**

Involution as a book of rare endeavour to tell the experience of the universe as something which one only perceives in the midst of its unfolding. Written in poetry Involution seeks to shine a light upon what is beyond the material plane of understanding our place in the universe. Science is taken from being an explanation to a chronology of happening. However hard it is to write backward from meaning into the elements that provide the path to that experienced end, the attempt is invigorating as presenting the possibility of reversing the hold we feel science has over us. (editor)

This book (and the focus of this exposition to explain it) at the intersection of the individual and the collective, has a bearing upon the inspiration and methods of science. It is both the subject of the narrative through the epochs of Western thought which threads a rosary of individuals, all mavericks, upon a familiar chronology; and the experience that gripped a collar and forced Life's journey and its reflections—and this book in consequence. Since I am the individual in question here and this book is my travelogue offered to the arched eyebrow of scientific scrutiny I am on a high wire: this is an act never before attempted—to write subjective science and to ask for indulgence. The reprehensible use of the 'I' is inescapable and unashamed. It is a sign of what is to come and what of importance this book might signal.

To explain the writing of a book that superficially appears to be another Divine Comedy for an age that has no time for epic or divinity highlights a difficulty common to both the book and any explanation of it: the imperious dominion of time's single direction. We live so much in its shadow we fail to see its flail or filter. Even language is compliant; the goose step of grammar follows whatever raises a boot first. It is assumed that a linear causality, the events of past study, past reflection, propitious events, peer reviews, will collaborate to justify the apparent insanity of writing a poetic Odyssey through the history of thought. That is how explanations are framed or certainly have been hitherto. If this book needs to explain itself it is because it presents an alternative, a non linear, revealed causality, and that applies both to its inspiration and its subject matter. Each has shaped the other. Why I was allocated this responsibility is unclear, but there never seemed to be an escape; it summoned more imperiously as the years passed.

The genesis of *Involution* was an unsought mystical experience, and like almost all others I later read about, (but knew nothing of at the time) carried with it no content, no injunction, no structure. The material world fractured and slid away: luminescent light and a single compassionate Eye replaced it, and having been perused, detailed and indelibly absorbed, slowly withdrew and permitted the material world to return. Consent created reality. An infinite loving intelligence bathed creation. *'Now you know'*.

A critical component was the sharing of that revealed vision with a man I scarcely knew, and that encounter, both shared and of some duration, ensured no possibility of doubt. A series of episodic and improbable encounters had brought us together in circumstances that severed us both from our past(s) as though clinically prepared for surgical excision. Had either of us been alone, one might in time have persuaded oneself that it had been an aberration, the delusion of a fevered mind. Two people, extracted with forceps from opposite lives, and taken to a beach at the tip of the continent to be offered an identical vision anchored it in reality. No inner light alone could scar two retinas or two minds identically. Two witnesses made its truth and grace objective. It had appeared at the culmination of improbable events that contrived to place us together, in that place, witnesses to a prepared and staged 'showing'.

What followed denied any return to prior existence, marriage, children, country and society. A new course had been set, but certainly never sought. Yet the need for corroboration seemed inbuilt, as though what was to be communicated, would meet not only corrosive doubt but external scepticism. Conviction needed shoring up for a prolonged integration. That was in 1969 long before such experiences had become commonly reported, and the few that existed I knew nothing of. That innocence was probably vital.

The experience and what followed it took me so far beyond the reach of rational explanation or wise disclosure that I was forced to make my way alone. The original Theory of Involution was written at fever speed, and with the slender resources of Hamilton library in Bermuda, (while I waited for a banana boat, a divorce, and en route to nowhere) as a scientific monograph. At the time, and still burning bright, I believed it might change the world. I felt the ship of science was heading for the rocks and if I shone a strong enough beam it might turn round. What I now realize is that the original 'Involution' was the skeletal ladder down from heaven to hell, and its value was in saving my sanity, by providing a chronology through the realms of collective thought, the knotted rope that linked me back to earth, through history.

In believing that I could revert to intellectual theorizing I was grasping for the safety of the familiar, and a language through which to convey and reattach me to others. Instead that theory was the thread through the maelstrom of unfiltered consciousness, both infernal and celestial which I knew I had to find ways to navigate to enable return. Had I read Jung, or found myself god-intoxicated in the East it would have been easier. The stratagems that were needed; whirling (to find the still centre), letting myself fall (to conquer lesser fears) and facing down recognisable terrors (explosive fire, or snakes) were the instinctive measures, to enable me to keep clear contact with the Eye through which I was penetrating the cave of consciousness: My venture into the interior anchored to a vision, carefully offered.

Other people's spiritual or psychic excavations had never seemed to have universal relevance until I was travelling through the caves of evolutionary memory. The vivid reality of relativity was no longer a concept but a lived truth. Instantaneity between thought and event, the integrated symbolism of the physical world where birds circled round a head and cars ran without petrol, and men appeared to answer questions before they were asked demonstrated the reality of older myths. Thought created the collective reality, but as I had been extracted from the collective, there was now, for me, no separation between mind and matter. Immersion in a field or matrix of connection was the experiential hologram, and made miracles constant, (the synchrony of mind and matter in space-time) or what we now term quantum entanglement (to use the safety of the new 'objective' terms.)

I could now appreciate science and the chronology of scientific thought rather like taffeta oil on the surface of water, reflecting patterns from below and the sky above and flowing from time past, but now I perceived its obedience to time future, the current taking it towards the sea. I began to explore the other instances reported of such 'showings' and revelations, and recognized that prior forms would govern what was perceived and the imagery grasped to convey; innocent maids in France would see the sweet virgin, Hindus would meet Kali, Faraday would encounter lines of 'force'. By the time involution reached Einstein he would see the curvature of space-time. Plato's 'forms' and 'ideas' were newly understood, the creative cause of perception. That first Eye had been quiet gelnite on the doors of the Cathedral of Consciousness, and it was the beginning of exploring the universe in which thought created, and all was retained.

The only madness was afterwards, imagining anyone would listen or that I could make it intelligible. I knew I had to find a language. Since science was trusted I foolishly reverted to Huxley's familiar temporal stratifications, Cosmic, Biological and Psychosocial distinguished by pace and biological forms, and demonstrated the encoding of consciousness through 'progressive interiorisation' and evidenced in animal behaviour: inadequately more of the familiar and corroded by rigid and very specific meanings. Such language would not do, as I discovered.

Desperation, youth and the hope of a place at the academic table attempted to present it to a Modern Churchman's Conference on 'Nature Man and God' at Oxford (to arch indifference): to the Epiphany Philosophers at Cambridge whose cross-examination was savage and whose contempt was undisguised. Fifty copies were posted to top scientists in most fields. Of the scientists only Alister Hardy stopped to pen a diatribe. Although the philosophers Arthur Koestler, Irwin Schumacher and Konrad Lorenz gave it warm and regretful approval; all said there was no hope of publication. That should not have surprised me since the hypothesis of Involution included the recognition that the collective tempered the adventure of consciousness through time. In using familiar concepts for an entirely different journey that first theory was an axle that slid into the ruts it knew would take it home to the collective, while I was steering it in the opposite direction. Only shapely, small (and peer reviewed) chisels penetrated the resistance to the new. At the time it was disappointing, since it had cost my life, and I was hungry for a well stocked library.

Rather than 'Involution' being the fruition of a new vision, it was the beginning of its refinement. I recognized that shaping a new scientific structure had to be in such a way as to permit the view of the Cathedral behind it, the building behind the scaffolding. The inexpressible needed allusion, not a chisel on stone. After six attempts in prose I surrendered. If it had anything to offer it was the luminous science behind the scaffolding, and visible because of it. Non linear spontaneous experience is timeless and symbolic, multidimensional and allusive.

Involution -The Odyssey is a different work entirely and now written for different reasons and a different audience. It fleshes out the same skeletal theory, but to another purpose; to recast the mythology of science. The skeleton is a simple hypothesis, that evolution has been through the process of involution, the progressive in 'forming' of experience encoded within cellular memory. Man emerges with his evolutionary past encoded in his DNA, but in addition to his bodily hierarchy of complexity the experiences are also encoded as *memory* at every organic level. The history of scientific understanding reveals the incremental recovery of that memory. Through the inspirations and syntheses of genius the recovery shows the same pattern as the evolution of which the mirroring disciplines were the reflection, emerging successively when ripe and required.

The separation of mind from matter, and man from spiritual union, was the collective and projected shadow of this unbridgeable gulf between intellect that continues the opposition, (thesis/antithesis) and the necessary syntheses that moved towards increasing unity, and now stands before imminent revelation.

Involution's hypothesis of revealed and incremental (and enlarging fields) of connection through *direct intervention* by a spiritual upwelling, a dimension for which prepared and sensitive genius are the emissaries, complements the restricted linear causality. Hitherto, causality has rested upon determinants already extant (genes, brains, reflexes, instincts) encoded by the past and shaped by their interaction with the present (natural selection). Involution suggests a causality that intervenes from the future and chooses its prophets; the recovery of memory is simultaneously the summons to integration towards the whole, and as such a recovery of the characteristics of early human thought. The future becomes the experiential understanding of the past, all still present. This 'science beneath science' the spiritual destiny of creation, validates the scientific adventure as obedient to the same urgent hunger as the religious, but shaves its hubris through exposing its limited certainty and the price it (and its creation) has paid.

This returns us to the beginning of this essay, the domination of a unidirectional sense of time. What instills and reinforces it is intellectual and analytical language, the grammar and structure of which reflect only the habitual (externalized) and comparative vision it grew to express. Other non-linear episodes of insight come through visionary symbolic signals, multilayered, unified, elusive, evocative, and ramifying. Those genius visionaries all agree; the difficulty lies in communicating what they know to be certain. Their internal vision is the generative cause, but the direction they face to convey it, the collective, shapes and sometimes savagely, what it will accept. Any experience that extracts the individual from the herd sets up a guillotine whether he invites it or not.

In reading for this work the lives and circumstances of genius, what seemed common to most was this isolation, circumstantial or psychological, and almost invariably a congruence between his particular life and the field to which he applied himself. The integration of life and thought contributes to the compulsion. He *is* his understanding, it is not an opinion. That inevitably poses the next question why him? Why then? What erupted in person to play genius? Unlike scientists, mystical poets do not have to contend with accommodating a world view so certain of its superiority, so entrenched in refusing the critical component of *spiritual revelation*. Unlike wiser prophets this book is tilting at the scientific windmill head on, but with the soft lance of poetry. It may not penetrate bone but it will not easily break.

The decision to write this work poetically is in obedience to many things. Obviously a necessary economy is pragmatic. The deeper hope is to offer a language closer to the experience of revelation, both certain and elusive, wide ranging and specific, holistic and faceted, and avoiding simply a conceptual structure. There is a structure but temporary, merely to prize apart the sense of deeper truth, for which science has afforded an exact and interesting mythology. Already and again, the pattern of rejection and personal hostility by orthodoxy of either sort, scientific or spiritual, seems to be sharpening knives, in contrast to the response by readers without affiliations, whose enthusiasm is immediate and spontaneous. Below are some extracts:-

'...it resonates with a primal truth; it just feels right.'

'Soul identifies himself as the impulse of genius as well as the Lord of misrule...'

'(The) decision to incorporate poetry is brilliant solution to tap into the right brain in order to communicate ideas that blur the distinction between the two brain hemispheres. The poetry also keeps the book from becoming another boring textbook on a very esoteric subject...'

'a paradigm where theories win over experience is becoming less and less convincing, not least because it alienates poets from logicians.'

This Odyssey is an attempt to re-gild the scientific galleon, to sail through waters shared with other vessels, Quinqueremes and Coasters, music and painting; but not to sink it. No mythology is given the authority that scientism has appropriated, but science's real authority may lie deeper, and the impulse of genius has offered a pathway towards and through a better paradigm, one in which the individual is precious and unique, and selected for that maverick independence.



*It took my life to reconcile
(That's what this tale intends)
Your prologue shaped my epilogue
The harvest of a quiet eye
Has just been brought to bed.*

<http://involution-odyssey.com>