

## **Sixth-level Teleconsciousness: Seeing with Higher Definition**

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The core personal metaphor of sixth-level *teleconsciousness* is “deep seeing” – moving from focusing on what’s in front of us to expanding our vision to take in the big picture of reality. This level of awareness, often realized through intense spiritual practices (and sometimes via equally intense psychedelics or spontaneous breakthrough situations) is awareness *apart from the thinking mind*. It involves processing the data from the outer world in full consciousness that one is in fact *data processing*.

Sixth-level thinking is by its nature *holographic*, holding *all levels* in awareness and appreciation; it is free to tune into the whole range of vibrations of consciousness. From this place, the old habitual mindset no longer satisfies, and all levels of reality, all ways of seeing the world, are open for fearless exploration. Co-creation and collaboration are this level’s social organizing principles.

On an inner spiritual level, Buddhism calls the sixth-level realm of perception *Dharmadhatu*, where “to see one object is, therefore, to see all objects.” In poet William Blake’s words: “to see a World in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wild flower.”<sup>1</sup> The eye is opened to the cosmic, but grounded in compassion. It decodes all incoming signals and discerns which ones to act upon, knowing all the time that there is always more than one story to believe. It sees not only the frames of each “life movie,” but the projector, screen, and audience as well! It sees beyond superficial appearance and concepts to the creative energy that “modulates” reality.

When the mind is prematurely opened to sixth-level awareness but not grounded in the lower centers, when the filtering systems of fifth-level teleconsciousness are not fully developed, the nervous system cannot handle the shock of “seeing beyond the veil.” I believe that the Infosphere has indeed thrown us beyond the veil, whether we are prepared or not. Our contemporary sixth-level choice is to “see deeper” or turn away into a deconstructed universe, where nothing seems to exist but cleverness and special effects.

## *Teleconsciousness: The Yoga of the Infosphere*

The *Infosphere's* sixth-level technologies are our megapixel cameras, camcorders and photo cellphones, our DVD players and HDTV receivers. All of these tools are based on the *digital encoding and manipulation of what we think we see*. They all openly rely on illusion: on the creation of digital sound and image files that trick the brain into creating more than what has actually been delivered to the retina and eardrum. Just as we use digital editing software to crop and zoom, choose a point of view, change colors, contrast and brightness, routinely adjusting the “reality” of our digitized experience, our media challenges us to explore our point of view, to look wider and deeper, to focus on the once-hidden details of our visual field – and metaphorically, on the shadows, the blurred lines and comfortable concepts that have heretofore defined our personal reality.<sup>2</sup>

High Definition Television (HDTV) brings into our homes panoramic wide-screen images of incredible resolution and clarity. Its image signals contain double the scanning lines, ten times the pixels, and a viewing field one-third wider than the old analog TV screen. Viewers are freed from the restraint of the close-up and overt (fourth-level) emotional cuing. Information comes from the perimeter as well as the center of the picture. There is more to see, and the viewer is now responsible for deciding what parts of the screen to focus on. The cinematic “2-shot” – two characters, two voices, two actions - is back on the hi-def screen, returning diversity and ambiguity to the TV image. Wide-angle shots reveal not just the batter on plate, but the entire field of action.

Along with the main digital video transmission, a “datacast” subset of the HDTV signal can deliver Web content, multimedia email, and even control signals to your home thermostat. Within the veritable sea of digital sound, text and image data streams is a critical “PSIP” (“Program and System Information Protocol) code to decipher them all and route the picture to the screen, the data to the computer, and the Dolby™ 5.1 audio to your surround sound system. Without the correct decoding signal, all this data can be received, but not processed.

The importance of the having the *correct signal* to unravel the abundant “data stream of reality” is the truth of sixth-level teleconsciousness. This is reflected in our

contemporary cultural fascination with *codes* – *DaVinci* or *Matrix*, genetic or security, and in the digital media tools of our age. The technologies of digital compression that reduce our music and video files to smaller and smaller sizes, all use hyper-fast signal processors to convert "real world" analog images (or in the case of audio, the sound), into numeric computer codes. These codes are in turn reduced in complexity, and sent on to control the manufacturing of an "acceptable proxy" of the original captured image. Digital "instruction-set" transmission is much more efficient and error-free than analog representation. Sending *the recipe*, not *the cake*, is what makes language more efficient than grunts and growls, written alphabets better than pictograms, and DNA able to perpetuate every living species.<sup>3</sup>

Digital encoding and compression is actually how the brain processes what we "see." The visual world is so complex that storing even tiny fractions of the changing image would overwhelm even the vast storage system of the brain. Instead, it discards most of the information and relies on its own version of pattern encoding, converting analog images to a limited set of mathematical wave-pattern representations (called Fourier transforms) to tap memory and build its picture of the world.<sup>4</sup> The visual image we see, says Howard Bloom, "is the product of slicing, dicing, coding, compression, long-distance transmission, and neural guesswork."<sup>5</sup>

As evolutionary psychologist Susan Blackmore tells us, when we look out a window, we may have the impression of a beautifully rich visual image, but in fact we're beholding only a compressed piece of the whole. "All our brains are holding is a little piece of the central image, a very rough sketch of the rest, and the ability to respond quickly to change and look again when necessary. Neuroscience is showing us that we are pre-wired for recognizing certain objects; that what we "see" is based as much on *past habits* of seeing as it is on the new data coming into our eyes."<sup>6</sup>

Our all-surrounding sixth-level communications technology seems to be inviting us to examine our codes of consensual reality, to *pay attention to where we put our attention*. Doing practices that open one to this stage of teleconsciousness is a form of

“esoteric signal decompression,” allowing one to look beneath surface identities to decode richer and subtler dimensions. Clear sixth-level vision brings one closer to experiencing the unity of creation, seeing the underlying continuity and hearing the hidden harmonic chords behind humanity’s often painful apparent differences.

However, without a strong grounding at the first-level, and good “truth filters” at the fifth, the sixth center can be overwhelmed. When closed in self-defense, it refuses to accept conflicting information or complex memories, and focuses on black or white answers. These symptoms are reflected in our contemporary hunger for finding the “correct code.” The works of Phillip K. Dick, the pulp science fiction writer of the 1950's, are the hottest Hollywood action movie properties, while Neal Stephenson's historical novels about codes, viruses and hacking have made him, according to a review in the *New York Times*, "a cult figure among the digerati." But, as Erik Davis observes, "the logic of (today's digital) technology has become invisible -- literally *occult*. Without the code, you're mystified. And nobody has all the codes anymore."<sup>7</sup>

More recently, mastering the codes of consensual reality is the hacker's power in the sci-fi thriller, *The Matrix*. The popular *Da Vinci Code*, with its clues and messages hidden in artwork, gravestones and classical poetry, parallels the surreptitious appearance of “virtual products” and corporate logos in TV programs. The 2004-5 series, “Joan of Arcadia” disguises God as “a stranger on the bus.” On another show, TV detectives get help from a medium who hears crime victims from “the other side.” *CSI* distills the truth from microscopic crime scene evidence. While in many mosques, churches and temples, fundamentalists offer simple solutions to today’s complex problems by offering up their simple interpretations of esoteric verses. In the political domain, arguments over what “encodes” sexual identity have spilled over into battles over state Constitutional amendments.

While a closed sixth-level awareness refuses complexity and searches for the missing code that will “make sense” of the incoming data, a blown-open one no longer even tries to “ground” the flow of information it receives into any real experience; every

new image becomes, in Alan Lightman's words, "a disembodied nothingness," floating weightless in a sea of "digital emptiness."<sup>8</sup> For some, ungrounded media saturation has led to cults and magic. Many others have found themselves lost between physical and virtual realities, adrift in a world of *Terminator II*, *Grand Theft: Auto* and *Mortal Kombat*. Combining high-definition video image quality, surround sound and full interactivity with the experience of deeper and deeper sixth-level "realities," -- and the sweet lure of the energies of sexuality and power, marketplace forces have made the video game industry into a *twenty-five billion-dollar* global business, supporting 168 million players in the US alone.

Most of us however find ourselves between these two extremes, trying to make sense of our sixth-level media environment, trying to see more, to see wider and to see deeper in a world where *everything* is in the process of being digitized, where our entire culture will be delivered to our living rooms and our pocket devices, our cars and our computers, our eyes and ears, as strings of one's and zero's. Notwithstanding the popular image of compulsive teens hooked on violent video games or the rise of "professional gamers" who play in public competitions for large cash prizes, the real videogame mega-hits are virtual sports leagues and online social simulation games such as *SimCity*. While the former ranks are filled with adult men, these latter games are massively popular with both boys and girls, who can create entire worlds: agricultural villages, vast industrial mega-cities, high-tech edge-cities or small pedestrian-friendly communities.

Our hunger for sixth-level seeing is reflected in the debate over repairing the Hubble Telescope, and more closer to home in the explosion of Internet webcams -- surveillance cameras, "nature cams," "traffic cams," and, for exhibitionists, "voyeur cams." Patrick DiJusto, a *New York Times* reporter found over 10,000 web-linked cameras, "showing everything from bedrooms and living rooms to coin-operated laundries and shoe stores to plasma reactors and mountain ranges."<sup>9</sup>

The spiritual lesson embedded in our sixth-level technologies is about *seeing* as opposed to merely *looking*; training oneself to dig beyond the surface pixels that make up

our day-to-day reality. This is wisdom taught by contemporary philosophers of consciousness and by the esoteric masters of many ancient traditions. It is from this place of compassion, beyond the world of form, that one can watch the codes of the “causal realm” unfold and become “real” in the ever-forming Now. In a few years our analog television sets will go dark unless we upgrade to the new digital transmission system. I believe that the *Infosphere* is also suggesting that it is time to switch to a higher-definition way of seeing.

Digital technologies provide a template for understanding this innate awakening consciousness. I have suggested that the *Infosphere* provides us with a set of metaphors to make sense of seeing with the unfiltered eye, demonstrating in silicon chips how we create our consensual "stories" through patterns of prediction based on limited data. Our sixth-level challenge is to see beyond appearances to the creative causes behind the curtain; to change our “spiritual operating system;” discarding the embedded habitual “reference frames” that keep us from fully experiencing the unfolding of the ever-present moment.

Meditation is, in effect, a process of *observing* the instruction codes of reality *without processing them* into thoughts, emotions and suffering. We can choose whether to engage or to just observe the flow. We have the power to decide whether to identify with the stories of life experience, or be the silent observer of the codes. Our gullible consciousness responds to any software we put into it. A discerning awareness of our “programming” can take us out of our self-imposed prison of limitation. From this stance of loving observation, one can become, in Sri Aurobindo’s words, more than “a laborer in a thought factory, but a receiver of knowledge from all the hundred realms of being.” With the correct code, one is free to choose one’s life story from all Creation.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ken Wilber, *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (Wheaton IL: Quest Books, 1977), 60.

<sup>2</sup> This “creative” process is of course perfectly acceptable with home movies and snapshots, but not in science. Some professional journals have discovered “enhanced” illustrations in research manuscripts. In a few fraudulent cases, new elements were added or conflicting images removed. See, Nicholas Wade, “It May Look Authentic; Here’s How to Tell It Isn’t,” *The New York Times*, January 24, 2006; D1.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Blackmore, *The Meme Machine* (London: Oxford, 1999), 213.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Talbot, *The Holographic Universe* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 27. Lynn McTaggart, *The Field* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002) (at 85), cites the work of Karl Pribham to build a mathematical

model of perception based upon “Fourier transformations”—these are the same “cosine quantization” tools used in today’s video compression standards.

<sup>5</sup> Howard Bloom, *The Global Brain: The Evolution of Mass Mind from the Big Bang to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (New York: Wiley, 2000),66.

<sup>6</sup> Robert X. Cringely, *TV Oaxaca*, July 1, 2004, in “I, Cringely” website: <http://www.pbs.org/cringely/pulpit/pulpit20040701.html>; on “pre-wiring” to recognize sexual images and celebrities, see *New York Times Magazine*, December 11, 2005, 82.

<sup>7</sup> “The Second Coming of Philip K. Dick, *Wired Magazine*. Edward Rothstein, “Pursuing the 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Origins of the Hacker’s Grail,” *The New York Times*, September 20, 2003. A17. See also, Erik Davis, *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic + Mysticism in the Age of Information*, (New York: Harmony Books, 1998), 273-4; 181.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Lightman, *Reunion* (New York: Pantheon, 2003), reviewed in the *NY Times Book Review*, July 27, 2003; 6.

<sup>9</sup> “On the Net, Unseen Eyes,” *The New York Times*, *Circuits Section*, February 24, 2005, E1] reports on the number of unmonitored Webcams, including those found in a middle school locker room, that can be accessed with a simple Google search.

<sup>10</sup> Satprem, *Sri Aurobindo, or The Adventure of Consciousness* (New York: Institute for Evolutionary Research, 1984), 50.