

# 7

## The Two Levels of Reality — “Exo” and “Endo” (1998)

Coauthor: Peter Weibel

S. 59-60

### Abstract

In the electronic age, the “interface” between observer and object becomes amenable to artificial manipulation. Perspective is, as is well known, not completely objective but only “observer-objective.” Distorting the world is unavoidable if one is an observer, it appears. Relativity is the second example, and “mirages” are the third.

To set up a virtual reality with mirage-like properties is a modern challenge — an “interactive *trompe-d’oeil*,” if you like. In the second author’s institute, a touch screen and a touch-sensitive floor panel have been installed, with the aim of making the intimate entanglement between observer and environment perceptible as a both frightening and liberating experience. What is liberated is the mind.

The mind can be “made similar” to anything, according to Anaxagoras. The “Kon-Ton” (Hun Tun = mixture) of Chuang Tzu, the “Whole” (One) of Anaximander and the “XAOΣ” (mixture) of Anaxagoras are all early names for the intangible. The chaos in each case is accompanied by a twin notion: “Shu-Hu” (lightning) with Chuang Tzu, “Apokrinein” (a separating internal secretion) with Anaximander, and “NOYΣ” (Mindblade) with Anaxagoras. The dual notion in each case refers to the cut, the interface, the place where the cosmic egg pops open, respectively. It is a daring business to spring the bark of an internally burning log. But only if we catch the lightning by looking right into it (another ancient Chinese myth) can we glimpse the predivided (exo) world. The latter is still called “Kon-Ton” (chaos) in Japanese.

The first western scientist to recognize the interface problem was 18th century mathematician-cum-theologian Roger Joseph Boscovich, from Dalmatia. He asserted that the world really is deformable (we would say: “like rubber”)

but that we are unable to notice this. Due to our being made of rubber too, we are subject to codeformation. Hence the interface falsely presents a solid world to us.

Both quantum mechanics and relativity reflect this "cut type" (or endo) position. A mere observer-objectivity of the world ceases to be hermetic once it has been recognized. For it then becomes possible to investigate its properties with the aim of finding a loophole. A prison whose existence has been recognized can be sprung. Science and wisdom are no longer at odds.

### **Acknowledgments**

O. E. R. thanks Yoshiki Kuramoto and the late Kazuhisa Tomita for stimulation. For J. O. R.