

HUMAN ENERGY

In the last of Dr Roles's 1975 papers on the System, he moved on to the scale of the individual human being to show the creation of the energies that underly different states of consciousness. Examples are crucial and one might start by contrasting last week's quotation from Hildegard of Bingen with two recent newspaper articles. The first was an obituary of an opera singer, Arda Mandikian, by the music critic John Amis. He wrote:

She was extremely sensitive, which made sitting with her in an audience hazardous. A death on stage would induce loud sobs, a cinematic shoot-out would cause her to keel over as if she herself had been shot and after a performance of Schubert's *Winterreise* by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau she took to her bed almost paralysed with melancholy for two whole days.

The second article was about a Belgian, Rom Nicolaes, victim of a car crash 26 years ago. He was declared to be in a vegetative state, but thanks to unceasing efforts by his mother he was recently diagnosed with 'locked-in syndrome' – fully conscious but unable to communicate. One can imagine the horror of this, like something out of Edgar Allan Poe. But now he *can* communicate via a computer with a lot of assistance. There is some controversy over how genuine his communications may be, but apparently he 'said': 'I was only my consciousness and nothing else. I'll never forget the day when they discovered me. It was my second birth.'

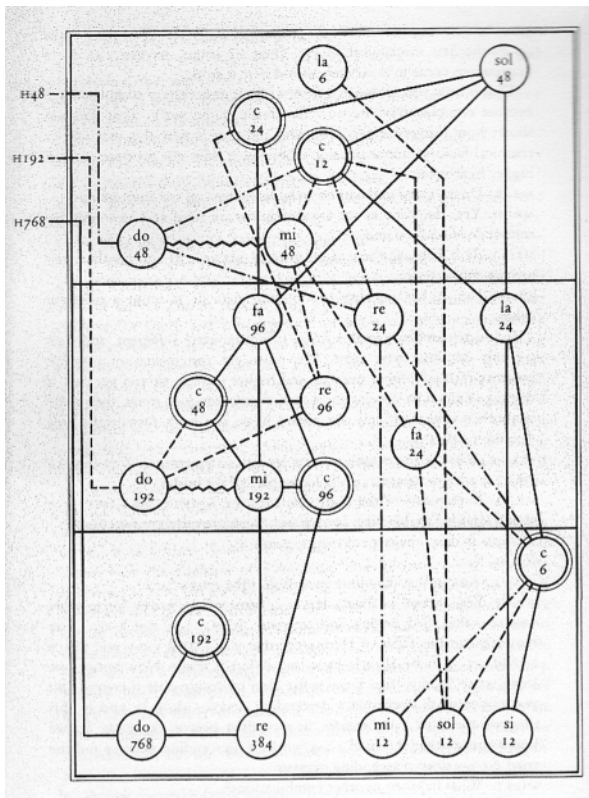


Fig. 1. The Food Diagram
(from *A Record of Meetings*).

These two rather extreme accounts remind one of Zorba the Greek when he said: "Tell me what you do with the food you eat, and I'll tell you what you are." Because, in the System, what we take in, whether ordinary food and drink, or air, or input to the nervous system, is regarded as 'food'; food to be processed into energy. The transformation – refinement – of these energies from lower, coarser energies into the higher, finer energies of consciousness is described in the 'Food Diagram' (or 'Food Table'). It will be remembered that the original explanation of the Food Diagram was complicated: Figure 1 shows a simplified version of the full diagram, drawn on the picture of a human as three-storied house. It shows how energies from the three 'foods' are refined, and has the advantage that the different energies are shown in the body where they are experienced.

Dr Roles's 1975 presentation is radically different (Figure 2), using the full enneagram and thereby losing the anatomical picture but gaining by distinguishing between physical and supra-physical energies.

Dr Roles started as follows:

Taking the human organism as a chemical machine which converts three kinds of intake—the food we swallow, the air we breathe, and the sensory impressions from our environment, we can relate them in their simplest form to eight levels of matter in order of density from the most complex, 7, to the indivisible energy at the Centre which we can call 0. We express them clockwise as an ascending octave from Do to Do, on the six points of the circle with the three “intervals” filled by the entry of the food swallowed (7), the air breathed (after 5), and the sensory impressions received (after 3).

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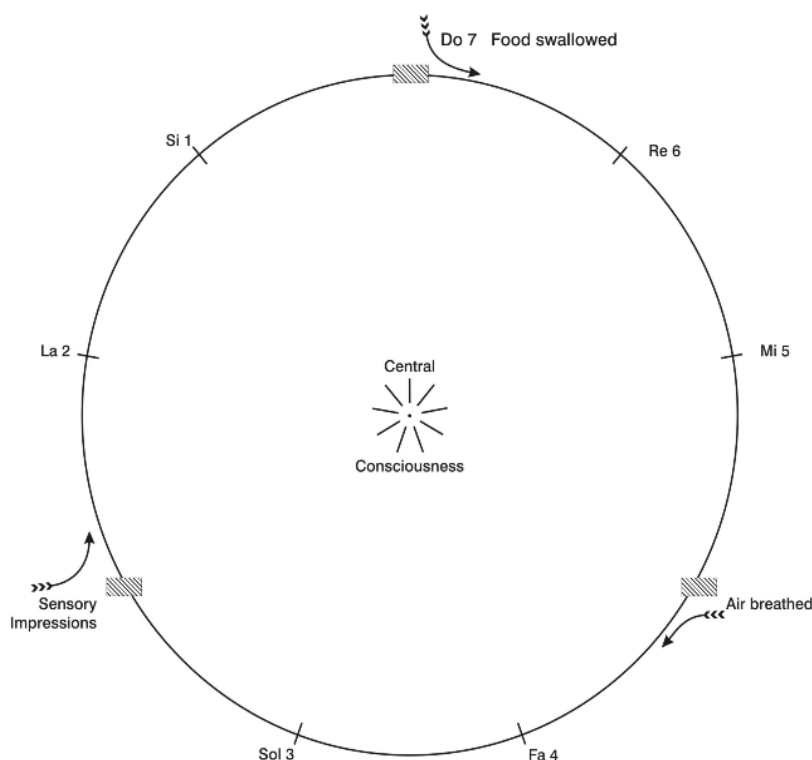


Fig. 2. Food diagram: the Physical Body.

Suppose we eat some carbohydrate such as potato (at Do). This is digested to glucose in the stomach and intestine. It crosses the wall of the intestine into the bloodstream, which delivers it to all the tissues of the body, including the brain. On the diagram the metabolism so far is represented by the first two steps, ending up at Mi. But oxygen is needed to obtain energy from glucose, and this is supplied by breathing air (at the first interval). The oxygen crosses from the surface of the lungs into the blood vessels from where it is carried to the tissues. Here, in practically every cell of the body, a complex chemistry (symbolised by the next two notes of the octave) converts glucose and oxygen into special molecules that trap chemical energy. These molecules then act as the power source in the body at the chemical level: in our muscles, liver, brain and so on.

‘Impressions’ enter at the next interval. ‘Impressions’ as used here means everything that comes into the nervous system – physical feelings such as touch, images of great works of art, pop music, are all considered to be much the same: they are at this level merely physical vibrations which need to be decoded by the brain.

The circle in Figure 2 describes what the refinement of energy in the physical body, equated by Dr Roles to what was originally called the 'food octave'. But thoughts and feelings lie at the subtle level, and Figure 3 shows there is second inner octave that starts automatically with the intake of air and proceeds up to the interval where impressions enter. Dr Roles therefore places what was originally called the 'air octave' in the subtle body.

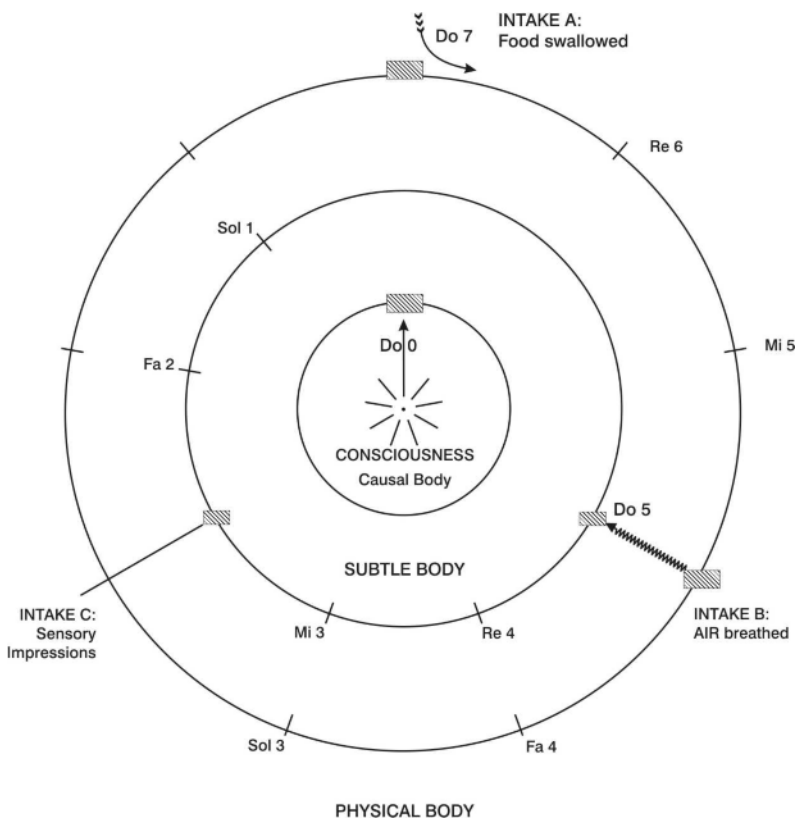


Fig. 3. The Subtle Body.

It was said in the System that impressions usually stick at the interval where they first enter the mind. However, with the 'first Conscious shock' (attention?) they may be refined further in the subtle body and may also start a third octave (Figure 4). This third octave was originally called the 'impressions octave' and Dr Roles places it in the causal body.

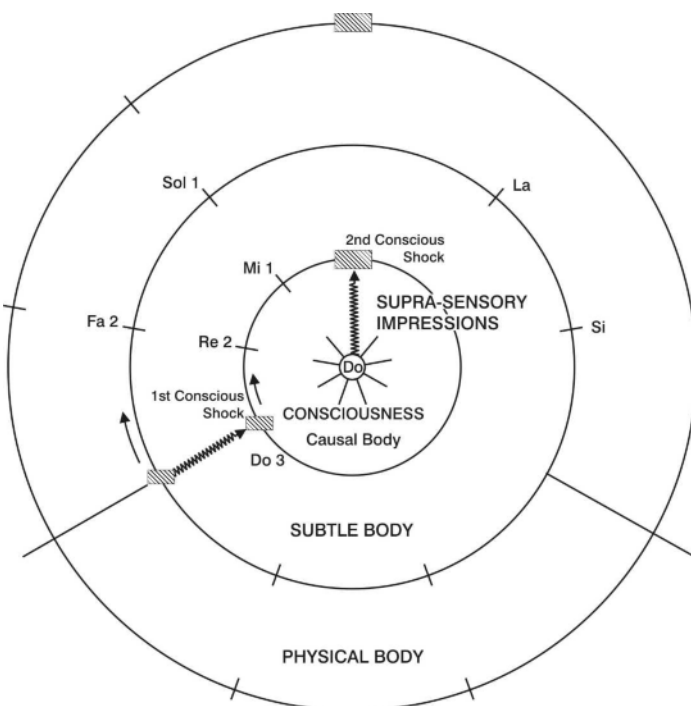


Fig. 4. The Causal Body.

Dr Roles described the Conscious shocks like this:

The first of these, called the “*First Conscious Shock*”, concerns the *intellect*, and consists in arranging it to work as it would do in moments of Full Consciousness. It means knowing what one ought to do. But to realize its Knowledge the “*Second Conscious Shock*” is required, and this depends on the purification of the *emotion* so that it can receive direct guidance from the Pure Consciousness Itself.

We have three different examples of the degree of refinement of impressions to think about: Arda Mandikian, Rom Nicolaes and Hildegard of Bingen.

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Finally, what’s the point of studying the Ray of Creation and the Food Table? Partly it may be because we need to be clear about what is needed to reach a higher state of consciousness. At the simplest level: right food, right breathing, right impressions, right attention. But there seems to be a growing recognition that we need simply to see things as they are, and that this teaching can train our minds to do just that. Last week someone had a moment of insight after seeing one of the diagrams we have been using:

David Connell said in 2002¹, after having open heart surgery, ‘there are two kinds of Consciousness and two kinds of seeing. One is the familiar subject-object consciousness. I the subject see the tree, the object. Here I am separated from the world, and separated from you. There is always time and movement in this consciousness. The other kind is the still, ever-present background awareness. There is no object, only subject. There is no separate me. This background awareness is like a vast still empty cavern.’

When one looks at the world from a 180 degree different perspective, by looking at the space enveloping the objects rather than the objects, one gets a taste of this ever-present background awareness. It is this pure awareness that the neo-Advaita people talk about. One feels that every thing is contained in this loving and caring environment, is as it should be, and the drama is unfolding within this pure awareness. Is this what Ouspensky called the Unmanifest Sun? It is the backdrop against which the drama on every scale unfolds in time. It penetrates and enfolds every level in the whole of creation, down to the smallest particle and absolute zero.

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For further study. There are many unanswered questions about the Food Table. Here are some examples. What are all the different steps, how do we feel and recognise them? Surely some impressions are already more refined than others (and the same for food) or have higher harmonics? Is there really only one point at which extra-sensory impressions are received? Is the final diagram a true representation – how does it relate to the last experience reported here?

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¹ Reprinted in *Contact* Winter 2009