

**Taking the Road Not Taken:
How Parallel-Life Hypnotherapy
Relieved a Client's Decades-Old Pain**

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We've all come to forks in the paths of our lives and finally chosen one trail over another; as Robert Frost wrote in "The Road Not Taken":

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth....

And, yet, perhaps a few days, weeks, or even years later, we sometimes wonder about that "road not taken." At those moments, we may feel a number of feelings, such as regret, curiosity, anger, frustration, pain and even a bit of hope that just maybe we can come back somehow to the fork and "be one traveler" and travel also the *other* route. But the realization soon hits us:

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

At that point, like Frost, we may rationalize that the way we actually *did* choose is, indeed, the most exciting because it is supposedly the less travelled by, and therefore, is the *right* one:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Yet, the basis of Frost's decision is completely false, since earlier in the poem, he notes how one path is really not any more worn, more travelled by, than the other:

Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.

His later sigh indicates his awareness of his rationalization in the face of not knowing, really, how the two paths might be different. Though Frost often presented himself as the unassuming, "cracker-barrel poet" whose books of poems graced countless coffee tables, he was actually deceptively simple in his work; in fact, he was, as critic Lionel Trilling once called him, a "terrifying" poet, always approaching, but ultimately staying at the boundaries of the *unknown*, which was presented in various images that might be scary if his whimsical humor did not back him and his readers away from them. Frost could not ever examine the road not taken because, although part of him was definitely attracted to the mystery, a greater and fearful part of him held back from breaching the boundaries to explore the unknown. Being an actual surveyor of land, he would fill his poetry with images of walls, demarcations of land, encompassing lines, and other barriers, all of which another part of him, nevertheless and paradoxically, wanted to remove or erase. Consider in this context another of his famous poems, "Mending Wall," in which he describes his ritual of returning every spring to rebuild with his neighbor the wall that separates their properties; strangely, however, it is "where it is we do not need the wall." However, despite his internal reservations and heeding his neighbor's dictum that "Good fences make good neighbors," they continue to gather those difficult-to-balance boulders, which that pesky, winter "frost" had tumbled to the ground.¹

Beyond lacking fundamental courage to face his fears of the unknown, Frost was constrained in his exploration also by a very limited metaphysics, one that posited a Divinity that was either cruel and barely caring, or even nonexistent. In "Mending Wall," he describes his land as filled with apple trees (squat, deciduous trees emphasizing a dimension of

impermanence, life and death, as well as an evocation of the Fall and expulsion from Eden), while his neighbor's adjacent farm is filled with dark, tall pines, evergreens shooting far into the sky and emblematic of the eternal, inscrutable Divine. And that neighbor on the other side of the wall Frost describes as being "like an old-stone savage armed" who "moves in darkness." In "Design," Frost tries to understand what could have brought together a white heal-all, which is usually a purple or blue flower, a white moth, and a white spider. The last lines speak of the horror of a brutal or missing Divinity:

What but design of darkness to appall?--
If design govern in a thing so small.

With such a metaphysics, Frost could not have conceived even an afterlife to be sought after, much less a parallel life in which he made a different choice about his path. Thus, if anyone wants to examine the road not travelled, the decision not made, the life not lived, at least two things are necessary: bravery and a metaphysics that gives the spiritual journeyer access to other trails, other dimensions, and other, more comprehensive understandings of identity. It would have to be a metaphysics that allowed the individual to "travel both/And be one traveler."

"The Road Not Taken" was published in 1916, long before a metaphysical or even a physical theory emerged that could have helped Frost understand that the road not taken continued to exist and might somehow be "travelled." Six years before Frost died at 88 in January 1963, a relevant, new theory/interpretation of Quantum Physics (which itself appeared near the turn of the previous century) arose. Interestingly, that new interpretation would foreshadow a powerful, new metaphysics: Jane Roberts' Seth Material, emerging from a very different source in December 1963, about eleven months after Frost's death. It seems, in Carl Jung's terminology, that the collective unconscious of humanity was ready for a great expansion in its awareness of what reality is. What follows here first is a very brief, less-than-bare-bones overview of that scientific breakthrough leading afterwards to a discussion of the Sethian view of parallel lives and, finally, a case study of a woman experiencing parallel-life hypnotherapy.

The new Quantum Physical interpretation surfaced in a Princeton doctoral thesis written by Hugh Everett² and mentored by John Wheeler, who was one of the popularizers of what came to be known as the often controversial, Many-Worlds Interpretation/Theory (MWI).

The fundamental idea of the MWI, going back to [Everett 1957](#), is that there are myriads of worlds in the Universe in addition to the world we are aware of. In particular, every time a quantum experiment with different possible outcomes is performed, all outcomes are obtained, each in a different world, even if we are only aware of the world with the outcome we have seen. In fact, quantum experiments take place everywhere and very often, not just in physics laboratories: even the irregular blinking of an old fluorescent bulb is a quantum experiment.³

In layman's terms, what is posited here, when applied to the human realm, is that every decision a person does not make *is* made, every choice he refuses *is* chosen, every path she does not take *is* taken...each in another universe. The MWI was a critique of the thought experiment called Schrödinger's Cat, envisaged by Erwin Schrödinger in 1935. Schrödinger was unhappy with the conclusions of the original, Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, the prevailing one at the time. That initial interpretation posited that a:

quantum system such as an [atom](#) or [photon](#) can exist as a combination of multiple states corresponding to different possible outcomes....a quantum system remained in this superposition [all possible states/potential outcomes] until it interacted with, or was [observed](#) by the external world, at which time the superposition [collapses](#) into one or another of the possible definite states.⁴

All the other outcomes/states that might have been observed, *simply disappear* when the superposition or wave function collapses.

To critique this perspective, Schrödinger's thought experiment took the Copenhagen interpretation to the macro level of everyday reality by imagining a cat penned up in a steel chamber that contains also a small radioactive substance, one atom of which may or may not

decay; if it decays, it will set off a reaction that breaks a flask with a lethal acid that would then kill the cat. According to the Copenhagen theory, until the box is opened and the cat is *observed/measured* to be either dead or alive, the cat exists as both dead *and* alive. Schrödinger believed his macro-level thought experiment made the Copenhagen interpretation simply ridiculous, since the cat is “obviously” either dead *or* alive *before* the observation/measurement.

However, Everett’s MWI disputed Schrödinger’s conclusion:

In the many-worlds interpretation, both alive and dead states of the cat persist after the box is opened, but are decoherent from each other. In other words, when the box is opened, the observer and the possibly-dead cat split into an observer looking at a box with a dead cat, and an observer looking at a box with a live cat. But since the dead and alive states are decoherent, there is no effective communication or interaction between them.⁵

So, while both of the opposite situations/outcomes get realized in different branches of the universe or in different universes, according to the MWI, the observer in each becomes “entangled” with what is observed by him or her; such entanglement (the opposite of decoherence) keeps the worlds from interacting, and each world becomes internally consistent (until the next splitting event). This view would suggest that the road not taken, while existing as real—as is the road actually taken—*cannot be visited in any way*. Nevertheless, another prominent physicist, Roger Penrose, soon argued against *that* conclusion, thereby suggesting that a person could be “one traveler able “to travel both” possibilities. He noted, ““I wish to make it clear that, as it stands, this is far from a resolution of the cat paradox. For there is nothing in the formalism of quantum mechanics that demands that a state of consciousness cannot involve the simultaneous perception of a live and a dead cat.””⁶

In the early winter of 1963, Jane Roberts and her husband, Robert Butts, began experimenting with a borrowed Ouija board and thereby contacted what would ultimately emerge as an “energy essence personality” who called himself Seth and soon spoke directly

through Jane. Thus began an extraordinary and profound journey through an amazing metaphysical school with endless dimensions.

In a very few years and after several hundred sessions, Jane published in *The Seth Material* excerpts from those sessions, one of which is very relevant to this discussion:

...all of you are more than you know. Each of you exists in other realities and other dimensions, and the self you call yourself is but a small portion of your entire identity. Now, in dreams you do have contact with other parts of your [whole identity]....What you see in the mirror is but a dim reflection of your true reality....This whole self [Soul] has lived many lives. It has adopted many personalities.⁷

In the many books that followed and which he called his own, Seth reiterated the basic multi-dimensionality of the whole self beyond our imaginings, discussing not only the whole self's past and future selves, but also its counterpart selves, as well as probable (also called parallel) selves. In this discussion, I will focus only on the parallel lives of the whole self, a topic addressed many times in his books, but most powerfully in Chapter Sixteen of *Seth Speaks*, the first of Seth's eleven books.

As Seth describes what these live/selves are, he interestingly uses phraseology reminiscent of Frost's poem cited above, as well as the Many Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics:

In your daily life at any given moment of your time, you have a multitudinous choice of actions, some trivial and some of utmost importance. You may, for example, sneeze or not sneeze, cough or not cough, walk to the window or the door, scratch your elbow, save a child from drowning, learn a lesson, commit suicide, harm another, or turn your cheek. It seems to you that reality is composed of those actions that you choose to take. Those that you choose to deny are ignored. The road not taken then seems to be a non-act, yet

every thought is actualized and every possibility explored. Physical reality is constructed from what seems to be a series of physical acts. Since this is the usual criterion of reality for you, then nonphysical acts usually escape your notice, discretion, and judgment....

Because you do not accept them all as physical events, you do not perceive their strength or durability. Your lack of perception cannot destroy their validity, however. If you wanted to be a doctor and are now in a different profession, then in some other probable reality you are a doctor. If you have abilities that you are not using here, they are being used elsewhere.⁸ (*Seth Speaks*, Chapter 16, session 565).

He goes on to note that the soul or whole self, with its “infinite dimensions in which fulfillment is possible,” is far too vast for the very-limited, three-dimension intellect to behold in its entirety” ; nevertheless, the personality can, indeed, apprehend some aspects of the soul, such as certain probable selves. For, as Seth says, they “are a portion of your identity or soul, and if you are out of contact with them it is only because you focus upon physical events and accept them as the criteria for reality” (*Seth Speaks*, Chapter 16, session 565).

Moreover, in contrast to the view, held by the MWI, that probable worlds/selves cannot be contacted, yet in alignment with Penrose’s belief that simultaneous perception of more than one world is, indeed, possible, Seth says:

From any given point of your existence, however, you can glimpse other probable realities, and sense the reverberations of probable actions beneath those physical decisions that you make. Some people have done this spontaneously, often in the dream state. Here the rigid assumptions of normal waking consciousness often fade, and you can find yourself performing those physically rejected activities, never realizing that you have peered into a probable existence of your own (*Seth Speaks*, Chapter 16, session 565).

Yet, dreams are not the only gateway to parallel universes/selves: "...often what seems to you to be an inspiration is a thought experienced but not actualized on the part of another self." These are what Seth calls "bleedthroughs" or "benign, intrusive thoughts" from a probable/parallel self, ideas which you can choose to actualize in your own life. (And unactualized thoughts of your own can be picked up by a parallel self and actualized in its parallel world.) But Seth says one other method for mutual contact involves imagination. He presents a situation in which a friend calls a man on the phone to invite him to meet with him:

Let us say that he tells his friend he will not go. At the same time, if he imagines that he took another alternative and agreed on the engagement, then he might experience a sudden rift of dimensions. If he is lucky and the circumstances are good, he might suddenly feel the full validity of his acceptance as strongly as if he had chosen it physically. Before he realizes what is happening, he might actually feel himself leave his home and embark upon those probable actions that physically he has chosen not to perform.

For the moment, however, the full experience will rush upon him. Imagination will have opened the door and given him the freedom to perceive, but hallucination will not be involved. This is a simple exercise that can be tried in almost any circumstance, although solitude is important (*Seth Speaks*, Chapter 16, session 565).

Seth also praised the use of hypnosis a number of times in his books, suggesting that it could open individuals to other aspects of themselves. In fact, his notion of "psychological time" sounds much like undirected or loosely-directed self-hypnosis, one of the creative "inner senses" he taught to Jane and Rob and their readers. Indeed, hypnosis can facilitate the loosening of inhibiting psychological boundaries and, as will soon be seen here, provide the individual with the chance to use more powerfully the imagination's capacity to image what is otherwise imageless to the strictly bounded, conscious mind.

Yet, why try to contact parallel selves in the first place? Because each probable self forms as a result of the “road not taken,” a choice not actualized by the “official” you, the probable self, says Seth, “is in important respects quite different from the self that you know.” Such is the case, not only because of the different initial choice, but also because of the parallel self’s many other, subsequent choices (whose unactualized alternate choices open up still more parallel worlds/selves). Thus, the experiences of each parallel self can offer something of value to the “official” self who is curious and even adventurous: “To the extent that you are open and receptive, you can benefit greatly by the various experiences of your probable selves, and can gain from their knowledge and abilities” (*Seth Speaks*, Chapter 16, session 565). Moreover, as I shall soon demonstrate, contact with a probable self can quell anxiety about a choice made long ago, one that may otherwise haunt the present self.

An author, retired psychotherapist (especially with veterans), Reiki master, former nurse, and mother of two children, Athena⁹ is a 72-year-old, White woman currently living in Northern Virginia with her husband. A very grounded individual with a great sense of humor, she is now a Reiki volunteer in a hospice and a hospital and is a member of the Virginia Master Naturalists. Dedicated to growing spiritually, she has had numerous spiritual experiences throughout her life, including visions and spontaneous experiences of past lives, and is now a member of MUFON (Mutual UFO Network).

Born of Ukrainian Jewish parents, Athena grew up in the Bronx and was the middle of three siblings. A naturally good student, she was also a tomboy who beat up bullies who threatened her younger sibling. Her non-conformity extended to her refusing for a long time to become fat like the rest of the family members; but that rebellious aspect of her competed with another part of her that wanted to please her “saintly” mother who was afraid Athena would die if she did not eat “sufficiently.” She also ate to please her father who brought home lots of food, despite his diabetes, to show his love. Though he hugged his children, he was otherwise rigid

emotionally; as a result, family members rarely showed emotion, particularly sadness through crying.

This background made Athena especially vulnerable to a cult she joined when she was 27. It was headed by a psychopathic psychic and hypnotherapist who was also a sexual abuser. It took some time for her to realize that she had given her power away (as she had to some degree to her parents); yet, after leaving the cult, she rebelled further by becoming very involved with an anti-cult association. As we discussed this situation, she acknowledged that, throughout her life, she has had trouble reconciling her passive, conforming self with her rebellious side.

Another instance of this inner conflict occurred when she was 21 and went to Haifa, Israel, with a girlfriend, only to find herself meeting a Jewish native with whom she had an instant and intense connection just before she was to re-board the touring bus. She made the very painful decision to forgo this adventure and return eventually to the United States to marry a man whom she had met before the trip but with whom she was not *in* love.

When Athena came for a hypnosis session after meeting me at my booth at a mind-body-spirit fair, she wasn't clear about what she wanted to do. After the intake interview, which ended with her brief story of meeting the intriguing man on "an asphalt street" in Haifa, I described to her the Sethian metaphysics of probable/parallel lives and suggested that perhaps it might be worth her finding out what had happened to the Athena who took the "other road." She first agreed but then waffled about this possibility, saying that maybe it would be better to do a search for a different kind of alternate self.¹⁰ After a moment, she admitted that she was probably resisting the first modality: "I'm afraid that it's going to be painful, 'cuz I don't cry easily [as has been the case since my childhood], soooo...." But then she shared that in the past year she had had "an incredibly powerful dream" in which she met the Haifa man and had a reunion, "and it was incredibly beautiful, with the same feelings and the same pain afterwards about leaving. And I can feel it is coming now...of not wanting to feel the loss again." I then told her that, while I could not at all guarantee that she wouldn't feel the pain, it seemed that something in her

psyche wanted some kind of resolution after over fifty years; otherwise, she would not have been given the dream or felt the encounter so powerfully even now. I also cautioned her about what I call “subconscious override,” the phenomenon in which the client’s subconscious chooses to lead the client hypnotically in a direction it believes is more pertinent to the person’s current needs than the one consciously chosen by the client.

When Athena accepted the invitation, she was choosing to do what Frost could not or would not do—have the courage to go beyond the known. To help her further, I quickly went over the relevant aspects of Quantum Physics, and repeated some of the relevant aspects of Sethian metaphysics that posited the existence of parallel worlds/lives; thus, I furnished her a comprehensive and credible framework beyond Frost’s understanding.

As I explain to Athena the hypnotic process I will use, I note that I will help relax her body and mind, ground her, help her protect herself and then descend a set of seven steps, on the last of which at the bottom she will pause. Then I will count back from 10 to 1, and at 1 she will be back in 1966 standing on the asphalt road in Haifa where the tour bus is waiting and where she meets the man. In doing so, she is using her imagination—the image-making part of the psyche—in the way Seth discusses above, not to make up something unreal, but rather to manifest the past event as real and vivid as possible. As she gets to the bottom of the stairs, I remind her that she is going back to Haifa, but only *for a visit* to a parallel life to gain information ultimately to enhance in some way the “official” life she is presently living. Once she is on the Haifa street, I ask her to stand still and then answer aloud questions I will pose, loud enough for me to hear; as she begins to speak aloud, she will go ten times deeper into hypnosis.

Aware that the bus has stopped ahead of her, she notes that it is as large as a gas or diesel school bus, entirely green, but “maybe [with] some black trim around the windows, but mostly green.” The bus, which will soon transport its passengers further north, has stopped, she says, “to pick us up, the passengers who had a break” after sight-seeing at the Bahai Temple—“it was

beautiful, beautiful.” Because it is an August day in the seventies, she is dressed lightly in “slacks and an overshirt.” As she hears the bus honking to summon the passengers to get back on board, she notes that she is away from the others and thus will be the last one to get on board.

Then she sees the man walking towards her on her side of the bus. “He is taller than me,” she says, “maybe five-ten or eleven” and “looks like Paul Newman, *very* handsome.” Her voice becomes a bit sultry as she notes that he has “sandy, light brown [hair].” Since, as she says, “I just see his face” as he comes closer, it takes a bit of prompting to get her to notice his clothes: “He’s wearing...a small [, short-sleeved,] checkered shirt, khaki or brown shorts....and black, white, red, blue....sandals.” He has been looking directly at her as he comes within two feet of her.

At that moment, she feels “longing...longing...[softly] it’s wonderful [to feel longing]...[I also feel] confusion, a little anxiety—I don’t know why I’m feeling this way....[again softly] this is life-changing...[I feel it in] my heart....I have to make a choice between staying and talking with him and getting on the bus.” Athena is now quite anxious about missing the bus: “What am I going to do if I miss the bus and nothing happens...here? I mean I would have to give up everything...[If nothing happens here] how am I going to get back to Tel Aviv...my girlfriend—she won’t let the bus leave without me.”

She intuitively knows that the man feels about her “the same way” she feels about him. “He starts to talk to me. I don’t understand what he is saying—he is speaking Hebrew...I speak English and he doesn’t speak English....I feel horrible, horrible...the only way we communicate is through our eyes....[I believe his eyes are saying that] he wants me, he recognizes me; [and] I recognize him...we recognize each other...[and] that we were meant to meet....I’m very split: I want to know him, [but] we can’t communicate with each other except through our eyes; and there is a desperation on both our parts to communicate, but we can’t [verbally] communicate.”

Meanwhile, the bus honks insistently, yet still waits for her. Athena tells the man, “I have to go,” while pointing to the bus. Yet she waits until her girlfriend and the bus driver come to get her: “They’re walking quickly, and the bus driver is shouting, ‘You gotta come, you gotta come,’” and he looks at the other man when Athena replies no. Then, while the driver speaks in Hebrew to the other man, Athena’s girlfriend who “understands a lot,” nevertheless says, “‘Aren’t you coming, Athena? C’mon, we gotta go.’” And Athena replies, “Not yet...I want to know [what the driver and the other man are saying].” It is at this moment that Athena aligns with her rebel nature, takes the road not taken, visits the parallel life, the one that, in her “official” life, she eschewed to follow a more traditional path.

With a bit of a laugh, Athena then notes that the bus driver tells her that the man “says he’ll take care of me!” “I feel relief because I wasn’t going to jump on a bus or stay without knowing what his intent was...otherwise, I’d be stranded in Haifa.” She adds, “There is relief that he wants me, that he is deeply interested in me as I am in him.” Then, she says, “He takes my hand and we go to a café.” But she realizes, she says, that “[I have to] get my luggage, my stuff, off the bus...[but then] the bus driver brings it to us.” Her last words to her girlfriend: “See ya in Tel Aviv...[with a chuckle] she smiles and wishes me good luck and hugs me. She’s a neat person.”

As the bus drives away, Athena says she feels “Excited, yet calm. I feel wow, it’s a huge step into the unknown, wow...[but I feel] no doubt. He said he’ll take care of me, he’ll take care of me. And we go to a place to sit down and talk—well, we have to find someone to translate.” Athena says that she orders “Nescafé —what they have there is Nescafé, not the kind of instant Nescafé we have in the States, but stronger, good. It is sort of like Espresso-type.” Because the man has a friend sitting in the café who speaks English, the man asks his friend to come over and translate. When the friend says the man’s name, Athena now knows the man is David. The first thing David says to her is, “Thank you for staying.” But David’s friend is “puzzled,” not understanding what happened. Athena laughs, admitting, “Neither one of us

knows what happened.” “Who you are, what you do, where’re you from” is the gist of the following, translated conversation.

She sighs. Then she says, “David is an engineer...he’s a graduate student in engineering, and I tell him I’m a nurse...he lives in Haifa, where he goes to school, he’s finishing up...I know he’s single...he’s 27—I’m 21...we’re holding hands.” And she is feeling sexual desire, “Oh, yeah, that was strong from the beginning on both of our parts.” Then, she says softly, “we go to his place and make love.” Going there is easily communicated: “I just follow him...we don’t even think about working out anything else until then, ‘til afterwards.” Athena has no hesitation about making love with him: “[softly] very, very wonderful...I know I’m going to stay there and we have to work out a way of communicating. And if I am going to stay there, I have to learn Hebrew. And I am going to stay there.” She notes that he has to learn English: “we both have to learn.”

Six months later, they have an apartment; and Athena has been working as a nurse for almost that entire time: “There’s always a need, always a need and [I] also went to school almost immediately. In Israel, you could apply for ‘Aliat.’ Wherever you come from, if you’re Jewish, you become welcome...very welcome to settle [here]...which means learning Hebrew.” During the past half year, she has learned “quickly, the rudiments anyway—I need it at work....[David] is very helpful in helping me with that.” “We’re married by [now], oh, yes, and I think I’m pregnant...very happy. ”

She has no doubts or second thoughts about what has transpired, and she and David are adequately communicating. The man back in the U.S she dated only once before she came to Israel, so she didn’t consider that connection a relationship; he was also dating another woman when he met Athena. Thus, there “was nothing much to cut off.” She thinks she may have sent him a postcard telling him she was staying in Israel but received no response from him and figured that he had just gone on with the woman he had been seeing.

Yet the rosiness of her match in Israel is soon somewhat threatened: As Athena says, “There’s always danger in Israel....it already is 1967, and there’s a war—there is a six-day war...on the border of Israel. So, everybody who is under 55 is in the military.” Once he became 17, David served in the military for three years—that’s why he was finishing school so “late.” While David is now officially called up, the Army presently does not send him anywhere, which is fortunate for him, given that he finished his studies and has easily found an electrical engineering job. And though Athena is under 55, she is not called into the military because she is pregnant. David is very happy that she is pregnant, says Athena, “[and] his family welcomes me...I am very happy [here]; we’ve got a nice family, an apartment. We’re both working, the future looks good, except for [the fact that] there’s always the unsettledness of our neighbors, our Arab neighbors; but that’s something you accept when you decide to live [here], always knowing that there’s danger.”

As I move Athena hypnotically to the time when she has delivered her child, there is silence; but, after a long moment, she says:

That’s hard...we’re not together anymore....I don’t think [I’m alive]...I’m floating....I don’t have a baby, it’s less than nine months...the baby wasn’t born....it was a bomb, the house was bombed, shelled....we’re in a settlement--we’re not in Haifa....we were living in Haifa and then moved to a new settlement...[near the border]...I think I had some hesitation, but it was the thing to do; it was what you did when you were a new settler—you were there to settle to build the country, to go where you were needed and you were proud to make it yours...when you come to Israel as a settler, you were building the country as well, so you go where you are needed, you do what is needed—there’s a great pride in that.

In going to the settlement, she did not worry much about her fetus, which was about five months along and showing, because “in those communities everybody takes care—it’s communal living....You *always* know there is a threat.” There had already been artillery attacks

near when she lives, so “there were places where you went to shelter when under attack.” As she moved to the shelter, she was frightened. David was already “back in the army at that point—he had orders”; so, he wasn’t with her at the time. Some other women and some children took cover with her in the shelter near her house that was “a dugout in the ground” and protected by sandbags. But then a shell hit the shelter, and she was struck and became unconscious and within a short time died, though before the Palestinian soldiers overran the spot: “I was glad to be dead,” she said, before they abused her. As for the fate of the others sheltering with her, she says with a sigh, “They killed them or raped them if they were women, but I was thankfully beyond that.”

When as spirit, she exits her body, she thinks, “I was glad...that I led this life....because I had an intense love and relationship, [brief pause]...that, even though short, was beautiful and meaningful; and it was meaningful to be in Israel as well...[most important was] him.” As deep feeling arises in the face of the woman sitting in my office chair and giving voice to her parallel self, I gently keep telling her to keep her mouth open and breathe to allow the feelings to emerge, those kind of feelings she had been taught to repress in childhood. The tears streamed down her face for many seconds; then, with tears still flowing down her cheeks, she speaks for her parallel self once again: “David was devastated...sorry that he made me stay; he felt the blame, [felt] guilty that he made me, wanted me to stay.” But, now as spirit, she wanted to tell him, “It was so well worth it, the time we had together. *I don’t regret a moment, not a moment.*”

Then, as spirit perceiving his future, she says, “I see him as an old man....it’s a tough life there....he may have married another time, where he had children; and it was good—it wasn’t the same, but it was good.” As for the spirit of the fetus who was not delivered, the parallel Athena declares that “it knows it was not to be...it knows [and] it’s okay.” I now invite the parallel Athena to go into the Light where she will someday meet David again.

When she gets to the Light, I ask that the Athena of 2017, who has lent her parallel self her voice and expression, to now distinguish herself from Athena of 1967. From the point of

view of Athena of 1967, Athena of 2017, who didn't go with David, and, instead, returned to America, and whose physical body is sitting now in my hypnosis chair in 2017, is a parallel self of Athena of 1967. In short, each is a parallel self of the other. I invite them now to talk with each other about their experiences. After their discussion, which is out of my hearing, I tell Athena of 2017, that she can always come back in self-trance or in a dream to the Light and meet her parallel self again if she wishes to do so. Then, as Athena of 2017 gets ready to return fully to her "official" life, I tell her that the Angels of Light and Love will bring a mesh of Light up through her being; into that mesh she can discard anything from that parallel life she does not want to carry back into her own. And I also invite Athena of 2017 to retain, assimilate and integrate whatever she wishes from her parallel self.

When Athena of 2017 emerged from hypnosis after I suggested that she would now be generally more aware than she has been, she said:

I got what I wanted, which was a beautiful love affair that was truly love, even though it was not long...because I felt like [in my official life] I [had] deprived myself of an opportunity to experience a great love...because of my fear of missing the bus. My big fear was that, if I missed the bus, he may have just wanted to go for a cup of coffee or get laid or whatever; or it may not have meant anything—you know, it was my imagination that this was [something]...or maybe not, but there was no promise that, if I missed the bus, I was going to get anything but stranded in a strange town, in a strange country. Because we couldn't communicate—there was not that safety there—it was a tremendous risk on my part that I chose not to take. [But now, I *have* experienced] that alternative... [I thereby knew] that this is what he wanted as well....And that I had the beautiful love of that lifetime.

Now, it's interesting that when I went [to the Interlife], I was shown an alternative to what might have happened in that lifetime; the alternative was that we had a big argument

[about my insisting that he] come back to the United States with me. And it might have ended there if he said, ‘No, this is my country.’

While there had been many different possibilities, she said:

I saw what I had hoped in that parallel reality. And before it was over, my Guides pointed out there could have been a lot of other endings to that life as well with [with succeeding choices creating more parallel mes]—which I have to laugh at because, of course, I recognize that now. But what I did [in the Interlife] with the other Athena [the one who died in 1967]—which was really kinda neat—I hugged her [and she hugged me back]....because she also wanted, would like [to have had] what I have....my spirituality, which she would not ever have had the opportunity to develop at that time...in that short lifetime. *She valued what I have.*”

Athena of 2017 agreed with me that Athena of 1967 went “deeply” into life, while Athena of 2017 went more “broadly.” In the life of Athena of Israel, there was little diversity, while there was a great deal of such in that of Athena of the U.S.: “There’s a richness [in my life now] that she couldn’t have developed there,” especially because, in the 60s, Israel’s almost exclusive focus was on preserving and expanding the country. Accordingly, Athena of Israel’s having a baby was almost “incidental to her,” in contrast to the attention of Athena of the U.S. to her children.

I then explained that because the Soul is so multidimensional, it cannot manifest everything it is in any one life, official or parallel; so, each life will lack features found in other, parallel lives. That’s why there are so many selves and so many different kinds of selves. One human life cannot ever encompass the whole self. I added that there is an illusion many individuals have: that, if he or she had taken the path not chosen, he or she would have it all. But that is simply not true. There are, necessarily, limitations in *every* life. If the “official” Athena had taken that other path, her “perfect” daughter on this path in—her own words— “would never

have been born.” When I told her that this process often shows that the grass is *not* necessarily “greener” on the other side, she laughed in agreement. But parallel-life hypnotherapy can relieve the stress of the “if-only” (she chimed in with those last two words). All of us have had at least one “if-only.” But, as I told Athena, you can have it all, not in the sense of having everything you want in *one* life, but in the sense of becoming aware of many of your parallel [and other alternate] selves that are distinct from you but are, nevertheless, also you. You are and are not all your alternate selves. The “if-onlys” do not have to haunt you if you realize that the soul is multidimensional and that you have access to at least some of those alternate selves.

“Official” Athena needed to know about Athena and David because, at the beginning of the session and for years before, she had “felt deprived” and sometimes cried about “missing out” on David. Yet, having now taken the road not taken, she could realistically, yet with gratefulness, assess her current life:

I love my husband, he loves me. He does small, wonderful things for me, but he’s not a David. He’s a Jack—he’s decent, honest...there used to be a joke when I lived up in Vermont: my friends and my neighbors would tell me this: ‘Athena, if you die, there’s going to be a line of women with plates of food to give to Jack.’ [She laughs, giggles.] I picture the line of women [saying], ‘Oh, you poor thing, let me feed you’ [laughs again]. It’s the kind of guy he is, but it was not ever a love affair, which I never had....*but now [after the hypnosis, I can say and feel that] I had it.*

The biggest revelation for her then emerged: “And, you know what, *I’m not missing anything!* It’s not that big a deal, I *had* it, okay—[what I thought I had missed forever].” Then, she reiterated that the Guides had told her that that parallel life could have evolved in a different way. When I pointed out that *that* different, parallel life did happen, too, she laughingly agreed and added, “I thought that was so great!” and then listed still other possibilities, all of which have also appeared in their own realities: “I also saw me going back without him, I saw his

coming back with me, I saw him dying in Israel versus me dying in Israel and then I left for the states and left his body there. *Amazing, but it was [all] okay!*"

Before Athena left my office, I summed up what had transpired. The hypnotic process had achieved several healings for her: she experienced the relief of the inner turmoil she had felt for years over not taking that road in Haifa; she was able to give full voice to the emotions she had held back most of her life because of her parents' training; and, while remaining seated in my hypnosis chair, she had summoned the courage to go beyond the limits that had stymied Robert Frost, embraced a metaphysics more expansive than any he could imagine, and thereby integrated her rebellious nature with her more conforming one. She thereby substantiated Robert Penrose's belief that it is possible to hold two seemingly opposing states at the same time: while fully opening to and enjoying the adventurous life with David, she simultaneously appreciated her less exciting, but more diverse and lasting, "official" life with Jack. She became what Frost could not: "one traveler" able "to travel both" paths!

As Athena gathered her things and began to leave my office, her face was free of the slight strain she had manifested when she first sat down in the huge hypnosis chair. "That [it was all okay] was what was so great about [what I found out]," she said with a beaming smile; "that was really great. Thank you so much!"

Endnotes

¹See, also, "Birches," in which he tells that, as a boy, he would rapidly climb the tall birches toward the sky away from the Earth, only moments later to swing on the branches back down to the ground.

² A puzzling fact about this man who would expand our awareness of reality is how constricted he was about his personal reality. Everett, who died at 51, was an atheist who gave instructions to his wife to throw out into the garbage the ashes from his cremated body. His son never touched him until he recovered his father's body, dead of a heart attack. See <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26261-hugh-everett-the-man-who-gave-us-the-multiverse/>

³See the Introduction of <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/qm-manyworlds/>.

⁴ See https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schrödinger%27s_cat.

⁵ See https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schrödinger%27s_cat.

⁶ Quoted in https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schrödinger%27s_cat from Penrose, R. *The Road to Reality*, p. 807.

⁷ Jane Roberts, (1970), *The Seth Material*, New York, N.Y.: Pocket Books, Chapter Sixteen (The Multidimensional Personality).

⁸ Jane Roberts, (1972/1994). *Seth Speaks: The Eternal Validity of the Soul*. Novato, CA.: The New World Library, Chapter 16, session 565.

⁹ This is a pseudonym to protect her identity. She graciously gave me permission to publish this article.

¹⁰ What she had suggested was a hypnotic search for one of her Counterpart Selves. When the soul is intent on experiencing an issue from several angles at around the same time, it incarnates into several individuals who may be of different races, genders, nationality, etc. and who may or may not have contact with each other except in the dream state. For instance, if the soul wants to work on the overall issue of weight, it might incarnate itself into a fifteen-year-old girl in Kansas who is challenged by anorexia, a twenty-six-year-old Chinese man living in Taiwan who is obese, an eighty-six-year-old monk in Tibet who has voluntarily restricted his diet for spiritual purposes, and a middle-aged female researcher in Budapest who is working on developing a totally safe diet pill. By incarnating all these counterparts (usually about four-five), the soul experiences the issue from multiple points of view at the same time. Moreover, each individual consciously or unconsciously experiences “bleed-through” thoughts or feelings from the others during sleep or in waking life through “hunches,” spontaneous images or thoughts, or other “serendipitous” experiences. More information on Counterpart Selves can be found in Jane Roberts, (1979), *The Unknown Reality, II*, San Rafael, CA.: Amber-Allen, Session 721.