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Nandi Nobell

Advisors:

Jenny Althoff  (1st)
Prof. Ronald Jones  (2nd)
Christer Lundahl  (3rd)
Martina Seitl  (4th)

How can experience design offer new methodologies for introducing individuals to spiritual practice as mind expansion?
At different times there has been more or less optimism about the possibility of a pure or 'first' philosophy, taking \textit{a priori} standpoint from which other intellectual practices can be impartially assessed and subjected to logical evaluation and correction. The contemporary spirit of the subject is hostile to any such possibility...

(Oxford University Press, 2008)

This written thesis has been developed in tandem with its practical counterpart: \textit{Entrance Not For Everybody}. Together the practical and theoretical work make use of virtually every interesting experience I have had - minus the ones that have been drug-related\(^1\).

In essence it explores how ancient spiritual practices may be the most developed tools we have for experiential mind expansion - regardless of how these practices are viewed by the scientific community. In addition this text question science's relevance for the personal experience of reality - in comparison to individual exploration of the same by whatever means. The prime strength of the sciences is its consistent, empirical development through logic. Mostly aided by external (as in not belonging to one's own body and mind) resources and tools and the development thereof. So far, science largely concern a material evolution - even if it is of an immaterial nature such as software or intellect.

\(^1\) I have chosen to cancel out the drug experiments - that have been conducted with various intent, intensity and frequency as well as with a range of different substrates. This is due to two reasons: one being that drugs of interest have been illegalized at various points in and of time in their context at the various locations I have been studying them in.

The second reason is that I have more experience of intensive and prolonged studies of meditations and various spiritual practices. This said does not intend to cancel out the potential values I see in experiments and possibly habitual use of intoxicants for additional understanding of truth and realities concerning life, consciousness and everything - really.
What I propose is the *Human Individual Experience* - optional means for experiencing the world as alternative ways of knowing.

The work's main intention is to awaken an interest in spiritual practice in individuals who have no such experience or did not know to value such experiences that could be perceived as being of *spiritual magnitude*. This is important because regardless of the nature of spiritual content - seen from a scientific perspective of any kind - spiritual experiences are mind blowing, mind altering and most of all *mind expansion* in its purest form - at least on an experiential level - which naturally is key - given the context this text is being written in.

For someone who already have a personal relationship to spiritual practices of an experiential nature - of any sort - there is a place, community or method to expand within their field of choice - if not locally then certainly globally. Therefore the target audience is not the experienced spiritual seeker for whom endless paths lay ahead.

What is being proposed here is an approach which put the individual's experience in the centre of all - using more or less traditional spiritual practices as they have been constructed or discovered to offer great paths into higher consciousness experientially. In its practical manifestation, *Entrance Not For Everybody*, these have been gift wrapped in - as well as accompanied by - layers of fiction, cultural references and very detailed physical props, much because the individual of no spiritual background who is the main target group for this introductory experience, is likely used to a material world based in tools, entertainment, storytelling etc. Therefore this redressing and recontextualizing of practices is just a means to target and introduce a new crowd to old and useful methods - in a smooth and memorable manner. The idea is to offer this
experience as a starting point and to be continued as a forum or hub for future explorations of more advanced experiences focusing on expansion of consciousness.

Material complexity is bound to develop further in both its tangible and intangible realms but it is here questioned whether this will really lead to an expansion of consciousness or just offer products to reach realms that are already accessible within - at no cost.

The aim of this work is not to clarify the lack of consistency in what is commonly referred to as reality - although this might be a direct consequence. It is rather taken for granted that reality is subjectively understood. Therefore the thesis only investigates if and explains how a composition of experiential practices which are strung together thoughtfully may work as a door-opener for further inquiries into the realm of spiritual practice as a means of expanding mind and consciousness. In this respect the exhibition itself is the most important research ground for the thesis - which naturally cannot be incorporated in advance.

It is useless to criticize what you have not yet experienced

The choice of perspective for this thesis is individual subjectivity. I suggest it to be the original format of all experience. According to Satyananda (2004), there are three forms of experience; subjective experience; sensual experience and absence of experience.
Objectivity may only exist as a higher form of consciousness. In scientific contexts the word objective, is traditionally used for one of its two primary meanings:

(of a person or their judgement) not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts (Oxford University Press, 2012).

In spiritual practice the word would rather be used in its deeper sense:

Contrasted with subjective.
Not dependent on the mind for existence; actual. (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Both concepts of the word are useful within their own contexts but in the former description objective does not offer any form of maintenance of truth or reality - it only clarifies its purity in terms of absence of feelings and opinion - not even personal interests are essentially cleared out which still holds the door open for lobbyism and so on.

So subjectivity it is! It is not to say a solipsistic approach is desired, but in order to gain real experience it is essential to experience - not to fantasize or read about experience - those are other forms of experience². This is made very clear in the recorded evening discourses by S.N. Goenka, during the 10-day Vipassana meditation courses given around the world. In his TED-talk (2009), Swami Dayananda Saraswati says: "You learn swimming by swimming, you learn cooking by cooking."

² Communicated experiences are great in their own right - they advertise what there is to experience.
Experiri meaning try, is the Latin origin of experience (Oxford University Press, 2012). Despite the tremendous variety of objects and events on offer and in contrast to the endless personal encounters every modern being has gone through - how many have had the chance to try even one experience of true spiritual magnitude? Spiritual experiences are simply not available if you are not born into the right context - or deliberately search for them. The former happens naturally but cannot be controlled by yourself and the latter requires knowledge about the existence of spiritual practices which needs to be more than just superficial for one to be inspired to enquire at all. The word experiri - try - entitles experience of something only to the one that has undertaken or gone through something similar. Trying is not a state to be reached through contemplation alone - to try something is a first-hand perspective of an experience.

Why are spiritual experiences given such a great relevance here?

"It is a big change in your life when you start making the journey inwards."

The Beatles³

First and foremost because spiritual experiences have made the greatest impact on me throughout my life and has thus formed the foundation of the person I am and strive to become.

In *Yoga Unveiled* (Desai, 2004), Georg Feuerstein Ph.D. gives a relevant explanation of the difference between spirituality and religion:

"Religion is based on belief and on having someone else do it for you. Spirituality is based in actual, personal experience and effort. It has to be your own effort to make a change."

As a personal practice I strongly believe in sharing the things I love - in this case spiritual techniques as tools for altering the mind and reaching beyond personal boundaries. It makes the work a form of charity. This said - according to the book *Information is Beautiful* (McCandless, 2009), the Swedish population form the most atheistic culture in the world today, this knowledge adds to the potential of spiritual practices in novel contexts. It also puts special demands on the experience. Primarily - it does open up an interesting opportunity for designers of experiences in terms of practice and context.

Religions and spiritual practices are taught in Swedish schools as if though it was a fully concrete and tangible subject. If instead, students would be experientially introduced to the spiritual practices from within all these religions and life paths - imagine what a child would grow up to know and understand after even just high school. Picture a society in which meditation is everyday practice through kindergarten to the palliative care center. How many violent crimes would it lead to in that society? Potentially fewer.
Admittedly meditation is part of all Eastern ancient martial arts which obviously did concern fighting. These martial arts of past times did however hold honor and respect as a prime values which cannot be said about Israeli Kravmaga and modern MMA that in contemporary societies are considered more directly useful fighting styles. Eastern martial arts stem from the Indian Kalaripayattu which was then brought to China by monks who formed the more famous Shaolin temples, their fighting style is traditionally called Chan Wu (. It roughly translates into meditation accompanied by fighting. This essentially means advanced fighting - to a great extent - used to be carried out by spiritual masters - this cannot be said of modern warriors. Perhaps it is the traditional values that are lacking more than the efficiency in the use of limbs - could this too be corrected through the involvement of spiritual practice in modern defense?

Looking at the concept of spirituality from a different perspective - let us begin with the very word spirit (Oxford University Press, 2012) - from the Latin spiritus which in turn comes from spirare meaning breathe. Stemming from such an origin it is obvious the word has been of immense importance to mankind. Incidentally - or not - in the ancient tantric traditions - now known as yoga - the inhalation and exhalation have been named after the sound of breath - in Sanskrit that is. The inhalation giving rise to the sound SO and the exhalation to the sound HUM (Satyananda, 2008). So also means I am and Hum means that - as breathing is a continuous activity, the never ending sentence pronounced by the very act of breathing is thus: I am that I am... which famously is the very foundation of Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah (Shimon Halevi, 1979). In the very non-mystical Swedish language the relationship is equally close - andas (breathe) and ande (spirit).
Aside coincidences of mystic and cultural relation the word spiritual is understood to be linked to religious belief - without being strictly associated with a particular religion. In this respect it is crucial to understand that every major and minor religion on this planet is - or at least originally was - based on spiritual experiences - no quote needed. Admittedly not every religious person have had experiences of spiritual magnitude, but the very religions would never have come to existence without first hand perspectives of spiritual experiences.

The discussion above is an extended way of saying that without personal spiritual experience there is a gap within human existence - both on a personal and a collective level. It is not to say that being spiritual or religious is key for existence, but it is a means of addressing that denial without trial is an uninformed choice - and a popular one too. In this case it makes us - the modern, secularized citizen - lack one of the core perspectives of our forefathers who gave us the language we use today - regardless of race, origin, sex, creed etc. This human experience may be offered through design and can hopefully be delivered with means to bypass the culturally inherent fear of practices outside science.

This makes room for the question: Can the very essence of human existence have come to change to an extent which leaves out the importance of spirituality for mankind? - Once it was inseparable from the word - spirit - that originally describes - breathing - an autonomous human function without which no one can survive for more than a few minutes at most! Is the contemporary lack of spiritual insight and interest in contemporary Sweden a direct result of well-informed scientific understanding of the essence of human reality and existence?
Experience as evidence

The purpose of this thesis is to mark out and make use of, a - by mankind - well studied area of experience and expertise that is neglected by science.\(^4\)

Experience design is - as the name suggests - a form of design rather than a niche of science. For this reason, following and studying useful practices that expand one's ability to experience is - or is at least hereby proposed to be - of great interest to (m)any practitioners and students of experience design.

Whether the same studies are relevant to students and practitioners of science is of less concern. It should however be noted that Mindfulness - the widely accepted practice within cognitive psychology, is entirely based on Buddhistic techniques as taught within Vipassana meditation. Mindfulness has been "developed" or perhaps renamed and re-packaged to better suit a science-oriented crowd, by Jon Kabat-Zinn Ph.D. at University of Massachusetts Medical School. This example can therefore be seen as empirical evidence for the potential of ancient spiritual practices in novel contexts that has come to be accepted by new crowds - in this case an educated one.

Mindfulness is in addition to being a version of Eastern spiritual practice, a business that capitalize on a method that, traditionally, always has been offered for free in its original context (it is maintained and spread through a financial system that only

\(^4\)It is not interesting because it is neglected by science - that is just an unfortunate fact.
allows students that have undertaken at least one course, to donate money for others to be offered the same experience regardless of their financial means).

Rebranding spiritual practices for personal financial gain and influence has of course been done before - perhaps most notably by L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, whom in particular systemized rebranding of the spiritual practices of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (Drury, 1987). Hubbard’s model does certainly not set an example of how spirituality best can be spread - though his work might have catered for new crowds.

For this thesis the business-aspect is not interesting as such - although it may indicate a potential market. Opening new minds to the extensive world of experiences of a spiritual magnitude is the essence and it may very well be - as in the case of mindfulness - that selling the experience is key for reaching certain crowds.

As experience design - in its developing current format - still is such a novel practice, I suggest a much freer approach to experiences - and the studies thereof - than science would have chosen to do. Therefore this proposal clearly distance itself from the ten core beliefs of science - according to Rupert Sheldrake Ph.D. (2012) in a lecture given about The Science Delusion and the book with the same title:

1. Everything is essentially mechanical.
2. All matter is unconscious.
3. The total amount of matter and energy is always the same.

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S.N. Goenka makes this clear in his video lectures - screened during the traditional 10-day Vipassana beginner’s course: westerners get suspicious when they receive something for free.
4. The laws of nature are fixed - they are today what they used to be and will remain forever.

5. Nature is purposeless and evolution has no goal or direction.

6. All biological inheritance is material - including DNA with its possible modifications.

7. Minds are inside heads - they are nothing but activities of brains.

8. Memories are stored as material traces in brains and are wiped out at death.

9. Unexplained phenomena - like telepathy, are illusory.

10. Mechanistic medicine is the only kind that really works.

It is however essential that the distance from scientific dogmas need not be dogmatic either - the framework of choice ought to be considered as options of experiential explorations without boundaries - other than legal matters restrict locally.

This suggestion is not to discredit science of any kind. Nor is it proposed to block out anything science may bring forth to the advantage of experience design. No, this proposal is simply an early attempt to save and ensure the freedom of experience design - one of the newer fields of study and practice in the modern, Western world.

The intent is not only to keep an open mind but to spread the ability and interest of reaching beyond the body and mind - experiences that do exist outside of what the sciences understand, know of and acknowledge. Experiences for which there are thousands of witnesses but no scientific evidence.\(^6\)

\(^6\) These witnesses are not to be discarded as lunatics - as may be the case of people who claim to be abducted by aliens. For complex experiences of spiritual magnitude there are systematic practices that may take years to learn and master, but essentially it is available for anyone with an interest.
Within both yoga/tantra and Buddhism, experiences beyond the mind are well-known. Scientifically this is problematic because limited aspects of the mind can be researched as it is - and no attempts have been made to measure anything - if it is at all possible - beyond the body and mind. But even if it was possible to empirically credit or discredit these realms of experiences with a scientific base\(^7\), whose purpose does it serve? The individual who just undergone the most complex experience of his or her life will certainly not be favored.

According to Sheldrake (2012), in his talk about *the science delusion* he says:

"The belief that science already understands reality in principle - the details are just to be filled-in. This belief, is called *scientism*. People who believe in scientism do not think this is a belief-system. /.../ This is the default attitude of most educated people."

What answers can science offer the secularized Swedes about the reality we occupy?

In the BBC series *Horizon*, the episode named *What is reality?* (Shariatmadari, 2011) present the most prominent theories of the scientific *truths* of reality.\(^8\)

In *particle physics* there is a dream of simplicity. According to this line of thought: *The Standard Model of Elementary Particles* - a set of sixteen unbreakable

\(^7\) That does more than disregard it on the notion that it cannot be measured - it is therefore unreal.

\(^8\) All quotes and information in this section comes from this source if nothing else is stated.
components (six forms of quarks, six types of leptons and four different force carriers) make up the world we see around us.

The **holographic method** suggest our three dimensional reality is an illusion. The driving question is: “What if the whole of reality is a hologram projected from its event horizon - the far edges of our universe?” According to this theory the information we experience exist far away at the edges of the universe. Everything we experience - from particles to galaxies are holograms or images of things taking place very far away. We are even ourselves projected from information stored at the far reaches of our universe.

**Quantum mechanics**, we can change the way reality behaves just by looking at it - but this also means reality has a secret life of its own. Albert Einstein once asked Niels Bohr: “Do you really believe that the moon isn’t there when nobody looks?” to which Bohr replied: “Can you prove to me the opposite? Can you prove to me that the moon is there when nobody looks? This is not possible!”. Professor Anton Zeilinger of University of Vienna says: “Quantum theory is an exciting theory because it is extremely precise, it is mathematically beautiful - it describes everything - it just does not make sense...”. In quantum theory everything has the potential of being in two places at once, possibly in parallel worlds that may exist in infinite numbers - this means what we think of as reality is just one of an infinite number of realities. Regardless of what we perceive we only experience a fraction of what really is going on.

**Mathematics**, “As you go deeper and deeper into reality mathematics become the only way to describe reality.” Professor Max Tegmark of MIT summarizes the state of contemporary physics with the phrase:
“Every time in history when we have had really complicated descriptions of reality, someone has come along and unified this into something beautifully elegant. And right now I think our best understanding of physics again is a bit too complicated to be the real deal.”

Max believes our universe is not just described by math - he is convinced that it is math. He states “Our entire universe is a giant mathematical structure.” The benefit of this concept is that everything can be understood.

The Horizon episode ends with the conclusion that reality might best be defined as:

"An intelligent conversation with the universe that will continue as long as we are around to ask the questions."

Yet another popular description of reality is the string theory - in short described on CERN’s webpage: String theory intriguingly suggests that six more dimensions exist (in addition to our normally perceived three dimensions with the addition of time), but are somehow hidden from our senses. They could be all around us, but curled up to be so tiny that we have never realized their existence (CERN, 2008).

With these scientific explanation models of reality as a foundation and background knowledge, even Douglas Adams’s The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, may seem quite reasonable to a certain extent.

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9 My own entry within the brackets
Somehow the scientific explanations of reality appear not too different from spiritualism. Understanding the reality we know as a hologram projecting the information we perceive from the outer reaches of our universe, is fundamentally similar to the yogic concept of the world we experience being *Maya*, an illusion. In google’s search engine one will find that Quantum physics is often related to *mindfulness meditation* - which in reality is a *light* version of the Buddhist Vipassana meditation technique.

It appears as if we do not actually know what reality is - at least not scientifically. Can it then be logical to repress and discredit non-scientific ways of experiencing reality?

With this observation - the potential relationship between scientific theory and spiritual *experiential* practice. I question and offer a starting point for the personal exploration of the same relationship in the practical thesis part: *Entrance Not for Everybody*. In addition - with this form of reasoning in mind - I, the explorer and designer of experiences - suggest not only that experiences of spiritual magnitude ought to be treated with respect towards the individual. I stretch further and propose all personal experiences should be treated with great respect - regardless of their scientific, cultural, social and communal status¹⁰.

In this particular study and practice the subjective experience is key - why allowing for a subjective explanation to one’s own reality is essential. Swami Satyananda once said in a *satsang* held at the *Bihar School of Yoga*, in Rikhiapeet, Jharkhand, India: "*There are many realities but there is only one truth*".

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¹⁰ This may even include the even less appreciated states of mental illnesses.
Knowing there is not one single approved, proven and agreed explanation for what our reality is even within science, suggest alternative means of understanding the reality surrounding us may be of equal relevance - if not for science then for the individual.

According the documentary, Yoga Unveiled (Desai, 2004), yoga is a means of achieving the wisdom of what is real and what is unreal. Yoga is therefore not to be compared to either science or philosophy. If yoga is to be compared to anything it is to psychology - it is a user’s guide to the human form. In the same documentary Jon Kabat-Zinn Ph.D. says about yoga: “I just find it to be one of the great gifts to the planet. An absolutely extraordinary door into consciousness.” In the same line of thought- the Buddhistic practice of Vipassana, means to see things as they really are (Goenka, 2011).

Fiction and reality

Fiction is here treated as an aspect of human reality - which subjectively is given both different roles and values. Rushton (2011) suggests, in his book The Reality of Film: Theories of Filmic Reality that anyone of the modern world have been exposed to great enough quantities of filmic reality for these realities to blend and effect other perceptions of reality. This may range from monsters under your bed to Parisian
romantic ideals. Fiction is also considered one of five aspects of the human mind as described by Patanjali in his epic text the *Yoga Sutras* (Satyananda, 2006)

In a reversed manner Walt Disney's *Disney World* and the more adult and contemporary *Silencio* by David Lynch, does the same in using fiction as reality - or rather turning it into reality.

Where one is to draw the line as to what fiction is, things get complicated, but again - Patanjali's description in his 9th sutra: "*Following upon knowledge through words but empty of an object is fiction*" (Satyananda, 2006). Manipulating the individual's as well as entire crowd's perspectives on reality has always been the *raison d'etre* for propaganda, the Gulf war in the 1990's is a valid example. According to Passer & Smith, (2007), even our memories - as crystal clear as they may appear to us, change over time - in essence making them fall into Patanjali's description of fiction. For this reason - reality is here used as the term describing one's individual world-view. Truth - as used here - follow Sayananda's example - in which there is only one truth but many realities. Truth is thus - in this definition - the *actual state of all*.

The long-term vision for this thesis - or rather: The ultimate aim for anyone who gets introduced to the full version of this thesis-project, is to inspire and make way for the individual in allowing for him or her to work their way towards a personal reality which resonates in perfection with the *truth*. This is likely to not be a scientific approach or concern in any respect, but it appears to be the supreme goal of virtually all spiritual

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*In the headline the word is translated from sanskrit into *fancy, but fancy is then explained by Satyananda as *fiction* in this particular case.*

*<http://www.prwatch.org/books/tsigfyro.html> Accessed 2012/04/16, provides some good examples.*
paths. It is understood that this will not happen in one go at a single occasion, what is created as a project in this context is an introductory step.

The personal relationship to reality

It is certain that willingness and/or openness to have spiritual experience is key when one is to undertake more complex forms of spiritual practice - in order to reach experiences of spiritual magnitude. Georg Feuerstein Ph.D. puts it this way: "Our job is personal transformation" (Desai, 2004). With this in mind - all visual and physical aspects of this experience design model have been carefully designed for the sake of persuasion. This is done with the purpose of investigating the curiosity awakened through artifact and situation design in service of the preparation for the offering of an experience of spiritual magnitude - with an aim at delivering a positive and useful memory for selected participants. It is also - potentially - a means to open up for further practices on the same path or possibly on completely new ones”.

As has been discussed - the definitions of reality are unclear - yet all individuals do have a personal concept of what is real to themselves, even if these concept may change from time to time. Likewise, what fiction is may be clear in most cases and purposefully unclear with the employment of propaganda at other times. Fiction's influence on personal ideals, fears and aspirations vary between individuals, but no one is completely unaffected. Spirituality is ethereal in essence but is often visualized
through artifacts and symbols, which also mark out what specific practice and historical lineage they belong to.

The range of concepts above are all employed as tools to be mixed into the formation of a method which aim is to cater for an individual's ability to allow him- or herself to be engulfed in a temporary spiritual practice - without having to address it real or artificial, spiritual or artistic etc. The entire system welcomes both an attitude of appreciating the potential and reality of the practice, as well as it offers the opportunity to be discarded as a momentarily, mental and sensorial day-trip. Again - subjectivity is at its core, and the personal relationship to reality is respected - although it is admitted the aim is to inspire further inquiry within practices of spiritual magnitude.

At the core

The designed experience is thought of as a starting-point, and for this reason it cannot be allowed to be consumed.

In order to reach out to individuals that do not know about the existence of - or at least are unfamiliar with the possibilities spiritual practices offer - a composition or system of factors are in play.

Although experiences beyond the mind are acknowledged in the creation of this work - a restriction to mind-related reality is more than sufficient for its manifestation. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, perhaps the most important of the ancient yogic
scriptures, offers - among many things - a sublime explanation of the mind, and this view can be seen as a central tool with which the work has been developed. It reads: "The fivefold modifications of mind are; right knowledge; wrong knowledge; fancy (also translated as fiction or imagination); sleep and memory." (Satyananda, 2006).

This thesis-project concerns and makes use of all five folds of the mind - although it does its utmost in excluding sleep from its initial practice - wherever possible!

In Patanjali’s fifth sutra it is said that "The modifications of mind are painful or not painful." And it goes without saying that the methods with which this work hopes to inspire further inquiry, tries to avoid pain at all cost. Patanjali continues to give a further explanation of the fivefold mind - as to clarify the concept in the sutras 7-11:

"Direct cognition, inference and testimony are the sources of knowledge."

"Wrong conception is false knowledge which is not based on its form. Example: one is under the impression of having seen a snake but it really was a rope."

"Following upon knowledge through words but empty of an object is fancy."

"Sleep is the modification of absence of mental content for its support."

"Not letting the experienced objects escape from the mind is memory."
Satyananda, 2006). These concepts of the structure of the mind have been considered for all aspects of the project, which can be seen as an experiment with and elaboration of the five fold mind as described above.

A walk-through of the un-manifest experience

At this stage it is essential to offer an idea of the experience-composition.

The main visual part of the system, consist of a sculptural space in the shape of a cubic octahedron - the shape is derived from one of many ideas of what the original geometry of the I Ching divination system come from. It is possible to look into this space through one of four kaleidoscopes. This is facilitated because having a clear vision of what happens within the space is not desired for the audience. As a sculpture it appears as a mix between the stone in Kaba and the monolith in Stanley Kubric’s 2001 - A Space Odyssey. There is no sound when you come close to the sculptural space - but the entire structure is sound isolated so it will slightly alter the sound in direct vicinity. There is no text on the structure - nor anything to describe the piece. A line of red diodes hang glowing from the structure and if you move your head sideways or turn your head fast - the text Entrance Not for Everybody\textsuperscript{13}, appears in the corner of your eye - due to

\textsuperscript{13} Directly extracted from Hermann Hesse’s The Steppenwolf
the POV-effect (Persistence of Vision). It is a subliminal message to build mystery and attraction. There are no further clues on offer outside as to what the interior may be like.

By the side of the structure - or possibly on the structure - a short film is being played. Its content begins as a side-track of the ending of Chris Marker’s *La Jetée* (1962), (in which a time-traveling man finds himself shot dead in a memory of his own). The extension to the story deals with the people *outside of time* - that offer to help the man at the end of the film. Now that the Man died, a novel character is introduced in the same setting as the man last met his woman of his life - the natural history museum in Paris. The new character is a man who is in control of time and can move in and out of it. The voiceover will introduce some ideas of the relationship between space and time as well as give a hint of how certain spiritual practices may offer control over the personal experience of reality. Throughout the entire project - other than in the written thesis, the word spiritual is never used, this in order to not loose the potential atheist audience member - which is part of the target group for the experience. New forms of effects are being applied as to underline the new character's different relationship to time. The idea is to engage people with various relationships to the movie-part. Some will understand the connection to *La Jetée* and that is good - regardless of their liking of it. The person in the film will also be inside the sculpture and you can get a glimpse of him through the kaleidoscopic corners. A myth or story is there for him for you to project your own concept of reality and fiction upon. This element of mystification is based on two fictional characters in particular: *Mr. Gold*, in Guy Ritchie's *Revolver* (2007), and *Colonel Walter E. Kurtz* in *Apocalypse Now* (Coppola 1979), not the way he is but the

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14 In comparison *La Jetée*’s original style.
way in which Dennis Hopper's character - the photojournalist describes him. All these physical elements only exist to bring attention to the fact that something really is happening inside the space and nearly no one gets to know what - thus the title: 
*Entrance Not for Everybody.*

A mysterious but not costumed actor or actress will select individuals based on common sense as well as individual intuition - this has been tested at the Nobel Night Cap (2010) successfully for the three experiences: *The Sound of Your Name Rings Written, The Dice Game* and *Whispers Melting on Your Tongue.* The invitees will never be found in the close vicinity of the sculpture. They will rather be befriended, interrupted or by other means persuaded at another location. When some level of trust has been built up the actor or actress will bring this individual to the sculptural space - and open the sculpture for the participant. Before allowing him or her to lie down on a bed that is being pulled out of the structure, a small intricately embellished metal object is given to the person. It is a small disclaimer form with a number of boxes to tick and a space for a signature to be etched in manually by the participant. The bed then slides into the sculpture with the person on it.

As one lays down, one is offered a device to cover eyes and ears. The eye-device will be a mind-machine that is redesigned to look like the wired eye-cover the main character uses in La Jetée. For the one who has a relationship to La Jetée references build up - and this should for them qualify as a playful way of simulating time-travel in an everyday context. Should one have experienced the *Bindu Shards* another reference

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15 This is a result of me having been asked to inform the individuals who are about to enter the structure with a mind machine over their eyes - about the epileptic risk the use of such a device brings forth. The same is done for fine artist James Turell’s *Bindu Shards* this particular part of the aesthetics is mimicking.
is present for the mind to get stuck in - but here - unlike the case with the Bindu Shards - the journey has a physical destination. For those without any prior knowledge of La Jetée or the Bindu Shards, the mind-machine ride into the sculpture will purely be a trippy moment and will thus reinforce the concept that anything could happen inside the sculpture.

Inside the man sits in a corner - his back towards two mirrors in a 90 degree angle so that he appears to be four identical persons sitting perfectly symmetric back to back. He wears a head-piece that reflects his face in a symmetric manner and does not appear to belong to the past, the present or the future. His presence may be individually referred to *The Holy Mountain* (Jodorowski, 1973) or *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* (Gilliam, 2009). The man offers the visitor to lay down on the floor on a nicely textured carpet into which the fingers sink in.

One of 64 black boxes with unique content - framed like collected butterflies, is selected for the person who will be able to take a look at the object composition before closing the eyes and being given a silk cloth to cover his or her face. The boxes are inspired by an art piece described in William Gibson’s novel *Count Zero* (originally published 1986)? A uniquely composed spiritual practice is presented and or instructed - here and now - which leads to a visualizing or meditative state during which one will be delivered one of the sixty four poems of the I Ching (Riseman, 1987) which describes a particular form of change. As soon as the practice comes to an end the guest is asked to repeat what they experienced as key-elements from their undergone experience - as to reinforce the memory of their recent mental undertakings. This can be done verbally or in written form. He or she is perhaps asked to write down five important elements from
their experience and let the man guess what they wrote - so regardless if the guess is correct or not they have stated something as important from this situation and this can be discussed there and then. All forms of revisiting of the experience are mnemonic methods as described by Passer & Smith in *Psychology - The Science of Mind and Behavior* (2007). The visitor is given the box from which his or her spiritual experience “originated”. In addition to this offering a member's card is attained accompanied by a polaroid of themselves within the structure as an identification tool to be in use at later stages beyond the exhibition grounds.

All members will be made connected on an existing social network. This will be done with uniquely created accounts. Login details are given as well - in order to facilitate future contact with the initiated members and as a means for them to communicate between themselves.

The combined methods become a mixed salad of crafts, media, learn-through-play, storytelling and guided self control and visualization. The beginning and end of the experience is purposefully blurred through use of designed distractions and classic elements of acting, as well as of mnemonics and gamification. All this is just to deliver the experience of spiritual magnitude as softly as possible and aiming at making it desired even before one gets introduced properly.

For establishing a wish to take part of the experience on site as well as to awaken an interest in continuing the practices and exploration, a number of game dynamics are applied (see appendix A). The majority of all known game dynamics are described in the iPhone application *Game Mechanics flash cards* by Richard Caetano (2011), and more famously introduced in a lesser form and quantity by Seth Priebatsch of SCVNGR in his
TED talk (2010). (See the Appendix A for a list of game mechanics that are in use for this thesis project or thought to be useful for the extensions thereof). Several of these mechanics are in use by various forms of member's clubs and orders already - this is evidence for their use and usefulness.

Continuous practice is the only way to reach the further or higher in consciousness (Sivananda, 2004. Satyananda 2008. Goenka 2012.), therefore the idea is to have the clients return and explore more of the complex experiences of spiritual practices. This will be facilitated in the form of an esoteric society, a closed member's club, in which more advanced techniques may be used. Advanced spiritual techniques and experiences thereof require the individual's own interest and time-investment in the practice. It is not essential, and it is not the aim, for this member's club to be the sole basis of advanced experiential practices for its members. On the contrary - the goal is rather to redirect it's members to other existing paths where they can experience the practices of more established spiritual foundations - this is thought to work as a hub for these individuals. This esoteric society is however thought of as a testing ground for further experiments with methods for introducing new audiences for spiritual practices, as well as other forms of more complex experiences that require time-investment, interest, trust or just a group of dedicated people with a common goal in mind.

Do I have the right to do this?
Is it morally reasonable to lure strangers into mental states of mind they did not actively choose to enter? The main argument for answering yes comes out of turning this question 180 degrees around: Is it moral to not introduce people to safe practices that may alter their entire perspective on life and eventually expand their consciousness?

Spiritual experiences are as the name suggests: experiences. This means without experience of spiritual practice everything concerning spiritual experience one believes oneself to know - is entirely based on descriptions of spiritual experience. Personal spiritual development grows at a natural and individual pace, this means stretching beyond one’s private capacities is just not possible.

Henry Ford’s famous quote: “If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said faster horses.” underlines what I am trying to communicate - the aim is offering something great to people, which they did not know they wanted until it was experienced - only then is it possible for the participants to make an informed choice in avoiding spiritual practice.

How is the person treated throughout the experience?

As curiosity is the driving factor for the visitor, his or her body will be entirely handled by him- or herself. The interaction with the sculpture via its kaleidoscopes is self-conducted, as is watching the film. In the communication with the hidden actor or
actress, one will decide for oneself whether to enter the sculpture or not. Once inside the sculpture it is also possible to proceed or withdraw.

   Everything about the interior of the sculpture - including the bed on which one enters the space - is designed to have a tactile impact, subtle but purposefully shaped.

   Mentally the person can be said to be treated in a somewhat dissolving manner. For this the three concepts; reality; fiction and spiritual practice are utilized. What is meant by reality and fiction has already been discussed and by spiritual practice it is here referred collectively to various ancient practices ranging from shamanic drum journeys and sejd to pranayama, meditation in several forms as well as acts of heightened concentration and yogic methods.

   The fluidity of the borders between reality, fiction and spiritual practice within this particular designed system, offers - as earlier has been mentioned - the individual to decide for him- or herself which category the nature of the experience belongs to.

How is this experience design?

The experience builds on earlier experiments from the master course, including the work at the Nobel Night Cap, the Future of Opera, The Future of Death, Play and the Transformative Design/Authenticity-projects offered throughout the education 2010-2011, as well as it has made use of, and partly depends on practice-based research. These experiments all serve as experience prototypes for the thesis-project.
The design thinking sessions of the first year have all come to a conclusion through this work although they have been aided through the extensive use of meditations. In essence the project has been carried out by a designer for whom design thinking is a natural work process.

From the perspective of future forecasting, this work can be seen to use principles of the past as well as of the future, in that it considers the community aspects of both digital and physical realms and allow the two to be brought together. The project has no planned ending - this is a beginning and this too can be seen as a method that may grow stronger over the years to come. With a greater time-perspective in mind - In a futuristic scenario the deciphering of personal experiences of spiritual magnitude - far beyond Michael Persinger’s God Helmet (Hitt, 1999) and acclaimed hallucinogens, we may very well have reached levels in which spiritual methods could be replaced by scientific products - like digital drugs - as described by Rohit Talwar (Solon, 2011). These novel paths are still likely to suffer from the disadvantage shortcuts within consciousness may result in. In yoga the order of practices are not only taught for the sake of learning but also for the preparation of the individual - as to cater for the inner balance and healthy improvements of the student in his or her escalating path into higher realms of consciousness (Satyananda, 2008). In understanding this, the project can be seen to target a factor that is likely to grow increasingly important as technology become more advance and possibly physically and mentally intrusive - if Ray Kurzweil should be right with his singularity theory (Grossman, 2011). With infinitely complex technology developing at an increasing rate - what this technology is used for is key. Physical improvements may very well be appreciated, but the human race have already
been taught to be longing for superpowers of various kinds via filmic realities and age-
old myths, so understanding the potential of human - and possibly even artificial
consciousness is essential and greatly catered for by the ancient practices of Yoga and
Vipassana, which will serve as the inspiration for the future of technology - consciously,
subconsciously or unconsciously. In this respect, spiritual practices will become
increasingly accessible to wider audiences - although most likely presented under new
headlines.

This thesis work is *interdisciplinary* in its composition. Although several
individuals with various backgrounds have been part of both discussions and
productions of the different parts and aspects of the thesis project. The elements for the
potential emergence of a transdiscipline fusing design with spiritual practices, fiction,
practice-based research, game-dynamics and mnemonics - are there - but it is prior to
its practical execution, not possible to assess what it's disciplinary status is going to be
perceived as.

Can this be seen as transformative design?

In being a slower process than accidents and intoxication for instance, this format of
experience design is to be considered an introduction or initiation to spiritual practice
which may lead to transformative experiences at later stages of involvement. Thus the
experience on the spot is unlikely to be transformative, but the possibility of someone
experiencing this event as personally transformative is considered in the handling of the individual throughout the process.

Is the experience authentic?

The answer is yes. This does however not mean that some elements of the experience may appear as inauthentic. In the case with this experience, the structure of the system design allows one to consider any element real and engulfing or fake and fictional. This is also the intention - a form of metrics that will separate the skeptics from the ones that are open-minded enough to proceed to higher states of consciousness as well as more complex forms of practices. The final procedures of the designed experience that includes the offering of an *I Ching experience box*, as well as a membership for the esoteric experience society works as either *The Red Pill* or *The Blue Pill*, in the Wachowskibrothers' *The Matrix* (1999).

Further Perspectives
The project as a whole is a form of yogic practice in that it is about offering something without expecting anything in return - all in line with the great yogi Swami Sivananda Saraswati’s key teaching: Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate, Realize.

What is offered and presented is not an illustration of a certain practice - it is a personal experience of a practice, meaning: it is not playing meditation or breathing techniques - it is meditation practice or an actual breathing exercise. The work is not created to symbolize or represent something else - it is present for the sake of offering a first-hand experience of itself.

The practices offered can be perceived in a range of ways and this does only underline the thesis-concept - individual, subjective realities are the only perspectives until higher states of consciousness have been reached. This does in essence also apply to science - as quantum mechanics have revealed so beautifully: "When we are not looking there are waves of possibilities. When we are looking there are particles of experience." (Arntz, Chasse, Vincente, 2004). In this respect the piece is an extension of reality and works with methods to create prejudice, fiction and real experiences as well as using tactics that cater for the dissolving of the same.

On a personal level the work is a form of research. I have come to understand not only all material objects as props, and all individuals as characters, but also all experiences as prototypes- everything can be continuously refined and changed so the question is therefore what one chooses to refine if not one’s own consciousness. It is also assessing whether this type of platform can be utilized as a knowledge distribution system from an experiential perspective - with an understanding of how this perspective on offer will be mainly subjective. In this respect it experiments with ways of knowing.
To a certain extent the format as a whole can be viewed as a multidimensional collage of cultural references with little respect for time, heritage and fictional status. These elements that form the collage have all been carefully chosen to work as a united piece but that is by definition one quality if a collage.

Conclusion

In reality - where I live - a conclusion prior to the first moment of carrying out the work in its totality appears rather unfruitful. This entire thesis project - paper included - is already a conclusion of previous experiences ranging from creative work and daily inspiration to spiritual practice. What can be said at this stage already is that logic does not win all races - science in all its glory cannot cater for all human needs. A Ph.D. is not enlightenment and is sadly not a ticket to heavenly experiences per se.

Likewise - spiritual practices may not offer engineering capacities or fund material existence to one's liking. The differences between the two lines of thought is simultaneously a resemblance: spiritual experience - if carried out at an intensity level of Ph.D. studies for instance - will have modified one's individual perception of reality to an extent that is likely to make Ph.D. studies look like detail fetishism. Reversely - after a full Ph.D. intensive spiritual practice could appear trivial next to sincere scientific research. These very different but limited examples conclude in the same understanding - a subjective perception of reality is all that can be said to be certain. Still - not in a
solipsistic manner - but regardless of how one's experience-construct (body, mind and beyond) is informed from external resources - its perception is subjective. Sure - in science, experiments need to be replicated to be verified - but this is certainly the case with spiritual practices as well. The details of the latter does however concern an intangible construct why the individual's current ability to reach the desired state of consciousness largely dependent on his training - as is the case within the sciences. Even if logic was the only way to describe the world it is not really a way of experiencing it. When scientists propose hidden dimensions, parallel worlds or a holographic existence as the matrix we live in - can spiritual practice not be one of the methods through which access to these alternative realms is granted?

The bottom line of this argument is thus: It is not the ability to intellectualize nor the theories you are capable of forming or understand fully - it is the individual philosophy you live by and understand your reality through that matter most for your own experience of life, existence and everything. What else do you have?

Make me proud - prove it to yourself!

Nandi Nobell, EDG, Konstfack, 2012
Some of the game dynamics in use or thought to be useful for the extension of the project after the first exhibition, include\textsuperscript{16}:

\section*{Achievement}
Definition: A virtual or physical representation of having accomplished something. These are often viewed as rewards in and of themselves.

Example: a badge, a level, a reward, points, really anything defined as a reward can be a reward.

\section*{Appointment Dynamic}
Definition: A dynamic in which to succeed, one must return at a predefined time to take some action. Appointment dynamics are often deeply related to interval based reward schedules or avoidance dynamics.

Example: Cafe World and Farmville where if you return at a set time to do something you get something good, and if you don’t something bad happens.

\section*{Avoidance}

\textsuperscript{16}The entire Appendix A is quoted from Erick Schonfeld’s article for techcrunch.com, 2010. The same content can also be found in the iPhone app Game Design.
Definition: The act of inducing player behavior not by giving a reward, but by not instituting a punishment. Produces consistent level of activity, timed around the schedule.

Example: Press a lever every 30 seconds to not get shocked.

**Behavioral Contrast**

Definition: The theory defining how behavior can shift greatly based on changed expectations.

Example: A monkey presses a lever and is given lettuce. The monkey is happy and continues to press the lever. Then it gets a grape one time. The monkey is delighted. The next time it presses the lever it gets lettuce again. Rather than being happy, as it was before, it goes ballistic throwing the lettuce at the experimenter. (In some experiments, a second monkey is placed in the cage, but tied to a rope so it can’t access the lettuce or lever. After the grape reward is removed, the first monkey beats up the second monkey even though it obviously had nothing to do with the removal. The anger is truly irrational.)

**Behavioral Momentum**

Definition: The tendency of players to keep doing what they have been doing.

Example: From Jesse Schell’s awesome Dice talk: “I have spent ten hours playing Farmville. I am a smart person and wouldn’t spend 10 hours on something unless it was useful. Therefore this must be useful, so I can keep doing it.”
Blissful Productivity

Definition: The idea that playing in a game makes you happier working hard, than you would be relaxing. Essentially, we’re optimized as human beings by working hard, and doing meaningful and rewarding work.

Example: From Jane McGonical’s Ted Talk wherein she discusses how World of Warcraft players play on average 22 hours / week (a part time job), often after a full days work. They’re willing to work hard, perhaps harder than in real life, because of their blissful productivity in the game world.

Cascading Information Theory

Definition: The theory that information should be released in the minimum possible snippets to gain the appropriate level of understanding at each point during a game narrative.

Example: showing basic actions first, unlocking more as you progress through levels. Making building on SCVNGR a simple but staged process to avoid information overload.

Chain Schedules

Definition: the practice of linking a reward to a series of contingencies. Players tend to treat these as simply the individual contingencies. Unlocking one step in the contingency is often viewed as an individual reward by the player.
Example: Kill 10 orcs to get into the dragons cave, every 30 minutes the dragon appears.

**Communal Discovery**

Definition: The game dynamic wherein an entire community is rallied to work together to solve a riddle, a problem or a challenge. Immensely viral and very fun.

Example: DARPA balloon challenge, the cottage industries that appear around McDonalds monopoly to find “Boardwalk”

**Contingency**

Definition: The problem that the player must overcome in the three part paradigm of reward schedules.

Example: 10 orcs block your path

**Countdown**

Definition: The dynamic in which players are only given a certain amount of time to do something. This will create an activity graph that causes increased initial activity increasing frenetically until time runs out, which is a forced extinction.

Example: Bejeweled Blitz with 30 seconds to get as many points as you can.

Bonus rounds. Timed levels

**Cross Situational Leader-boards**
Definition: This occurs when one ranking mechanism is applied across multiple (unequal and isolated) gaming scenarios. Players often perceive that these ranking scenarios are unfair as not all players were presented with an “equal” opportunity to win.

Example: Players are arbitrarily sent into one of three paths. The winner is determined by the top scorer overall (i.e. across the paths). Since the players can only do one path (and can’t pick), they will perceive inequity in the game scenario and get upset.

**Endless Games**

Definition: Games that do not have an explicit end. Most applicable to casual games that can refresh their content or games where a static (but positive) state is a reward of its own.

Example: Farmville (static state is its own victory), SCVNGR (challenges constantly are being built by the community to refresh content)

**Envy**

Definition: The desire to have what others have. In order for this to be effective seeing what other people have (voyeurism) must be employed.

Example: my friend has this item and I want it!

**Epic Meaning**

Definition: players will be highly motivated if they believe they are working to achieve something great, something awe-inspiring, something bigger than themselves.
Example: From Jane McGonical’s Ted Talk where she discusses Warcraft’s ongoing story line and “epic meaning” that involves each individual has motivated players to participate outside the game and create the second largest wiki in the world to help them achieve their individual quests and collectively their epic meanings.

**Free Lunch**

Definition: A dynamic in which a player feels that they are getting something for free due to someone else having done work. It’s critical that work is perceived to have been done (just not by the player in question) to avoid breaching trust in the scenario. The player must feel that they’ve “lucked” into something.

Example: Groupon. By virtue of 100 other people having bought the deal, you get it for cheap. There is no sketchiness b/c you recognize work has been done (100 people are spending money) but you yourself didn’t have to do it.

**Lottery**

Definition: A game dynamic in which the winner is determined solely by chance. This creates a high level of anticipation. The fairness is often suspect, however winners will generally continue to play indefinitely while losers will quickly abandon the game, despite the random nature of the distinction between the two.

Example: many forms of gambling, scratch tickets.

**Loyalty**
Definition: The concept of feeling a positive sustained connection to an entity leading to a feeling of partial ownership. Often reinforced with a visual representation.

Example: fealty in WOW, achieving status at physical places (mayorship, being on the wall of favorite customers)

**Meta Game**

Definition: a game which exists layered within another game. These generally are discovered rather than explained (lest they cause confusion) and tend to appeal to ~2% of the total game-playing audience. They are dangerous as they can induce confusion (if made too overt) but are powerful as they’re greatly satisfying to those who find them.

Example: hidden questions / achievements within world of warcraft that require you to do special (and hard to discover) activities as you go through other quests

**Micro Leader-boards**

Definition: The rankings of all individuals in a micro-set. Often great for distributed game dynamics where you want many micro-competitions or desire to induce loyalty.

Example: Be the top scorers at Joe’s bar this week and get a free appetizer

**Modifiers**

Definition: An item that when used affects other actions. Generally modifiers are earned after having completed a series of challenges or core functions.

Example: A X2 modifier that doubles the points on the next action you take.
**Ownership**

Definition: The act of controlling something, having it be *your* property.

Example: Ownership is interesting on a number of levels, from taking over places, to controlling a slot, to simply owning popularity by having a digital representation of many friends.

**Pride**

Definition: the feeling of ownership and joy at an accomplishment

Example: I have ten badges. I own them. They are mine. There are many like them, but these are mine. Hooray.

**Real-time v. Delayed Mechanics**

Definition: Realtime information flow is uninhibited by delay. Delayed information is only released after a certain interval.

Example: Realtime scores cause instant reaction (gratification or demotivation). Delayed causes ambiguity which can incent more action due to the lack of certainty of ranking.

**Reinforcer**

Definition: The reward given if the expected action is carried out in the three part paradigm of reward schedules.

Example: receiving a level up after killing 10 orcs.
**Response**

Definition: The expected action from the player in the three part paradigm of reward schedules.

   Example: the player takes the action to kill 10 orcs

**Reward Schedules**

Definition: the timeframe and delivery mechanisms through which rewards (points, prizes, level ups) are delivered. Three main parts exist in a reward schedule; contingency, response and reinforcer.

   Example: getting a level up for killing 10 orcs, clearing a row in Tetris, getting fresh crops in Farmville

**Rolling Physical Goods**

Definition: A physical good (one with real value) that can be won by anyone on an ongoing basis as long as they meet some characteristic. However, that characteristic rolls from player to player.

   Example: top scorer deals, mayor deals

**Shell Game**

Definition: a game in which the player is presented with the illusion of choice but is actually in a situation that guides them to the desired outcome of the operator.

   Example: 3 Card Monty, lotteries, gambling
Social Fabric of Games

Definition: the idea that people like one another better after they’ve played games with them, have a higher level of trust and a great willingness to work together.

Example: From Jane McGonigal’s TED talk where she suggests that it takes a lot of trust to play a game with someone because you need them to spend their time with you, play by the same rules, shoot for the same goals.

Status

Definition: The rank or level of a player. Players are often motivated by trying to reach a higher level or status.

Example: white paladin level 20 in WOW.

Urgent Optimism

Definition: Extreme self motivation. The desire to act immediately to tackle an obstacle combined with the belief that we have a reasonable hope of success.

Example: From Jane McGonical’s TED talk. The idea that in proper games an “epic win” or just “win” is possible and therefore always worth acting for.

Viral Game Mechanics

Definition: A game element that requires multiple people to play (or that can be played better with multiple people)

Example: Farmville making you more successful in the game if you invite your friends, the social check-in
Virtual Items

Definition: Digital prizes, rewards, objects found or taken within the course of a game.

Often these can be traded or given away.

Example: Gowalla’s items, Facebook gifts, badges
Appendix B

With subjectivity at the core I will present a summary of my spiritual experiences throughout life - as these have been key elements in forming the person who is now designing experiences for others.

My life as a story is not without mythical elements - for all that is worth to an officially written article on consciousness. I was born in the mountains of the Indian Himalayas in a tiny little house outside a very small, rural society called Almora. My mother gave birth in front of the open fire assisted by a wise and experienced woman - outside the room people of twelve nations waited to greet us both as the labour took place. My mother described this experience of giving birth at that time of her life and on the location, in a letter to my grandmother, as very animal. After giving birth my mother got very ill, *bebris puerperalis* is the latin term for the illness that nearly cost her life and would have orphaned me at the time. I was named in fire by a local brahmin priest and got myself a range of tantric, hindu names I only beginning to understand the symbolism in. For a being with an interest of symbology - regardless of its current status within the sciences - names ought to have a great importance. The use of names goes far back in time historically, culturally - and possibly even genetically - it is certainly one of the things that makes us human. My names translated into English means: *The Vehicle of Superior Consciousness, The Lord of Breath and the Original Axis Mundi - the seat of Superior Consciousness*. Nobell is just the roots and circumstances that eventually landed my ass on these premises...
Assuming that birth itself is a spiritual experience for everyone involved, I had thus already undergone my first spiritual experience and the first spiritual ceremony at the age of maximum seven days.

The spiritual context was always around me - as my mother has passed on her own interest of studying the spiritual paths throughout her life. My first introduction to the personal use of a spiritual practice was meditation. At the age of five an acquaintance of my mother gave me - with great intent - a foul introduction to meditation. The foulness was perhaps not in the technique itself, but trying to tell a five-year old not to think about anything at all, was far from a brilliant method for me. In retrospect I can see how it may seem like a soft gesture in trying to deliver the message in an open format, but to me it was not an open format - it was the most ultimately hard thing to do and the memory of these words have affected my relationship to consciousness ever since, it is a milestone in my very existence as a person, or being, or consciousness - depending on your understanding of existence as a whole. I cannot say I practiced anywhere near frequently at that age - mostly never to be frank - but meditation was something special and specific to me - and not just a cross-legged stance.

Then life was all play in the old gothic town of Visby, where I grew up until the age of ten when my mother and I moved to a suburb outside Stockholm, where she began her studies of theology and social anthropology at university level completing a Bachelor’s degree in the latter before she much later took on studying psychology. At this time in her private life, my mother studied and practiced several of the ancient shamanic techniques of the Nordic countries and passed on whatever I was receptive
towards. So at the age of about 12-13, I once again had further introductions to spiritual practices which continued to direct and form my personal perspectives of reality - including everything I am capable of experiencing by any means what so ever. This spiritual practice I undertook until I was about seventeen years old and started to lose a grip on my relationship to reality as I understood it, and I then retreated in my spiritual investigation for some time as I classify this as a period in my life when I could have lost my mind - in a Western sense. I do however firmly believe that various forms of insanity could lead to great things both individually and personally as well as culturally and possibly even technologically - this is a possible research topic for the future - lifetime studies of so called insane people that are not medicated by any means. Regardless - I am glad I took the route I did.

At the age of nineteen I went to India to learn yoga before I had to go to the army - needless to say I quit the army ASAP and went into civil service instead.

The Indian practices of yoga grew on me and still does - possibly because the Eastern formats for teaching you about existence are all practical up to a certain level - then it is possible to select an intellectual meditative path or a completely experiential path that exist beyond verbalization and - needless to say - beyond discussion. There is no hierarchy between the two and their aim is mutual.

I have now practiced various forms of Eastern spiritual techniques, with a focus on the Buddhist Vipassana meditation and Tantric Yoga - which literally is what we call yoga in the West - but stretching extremely far beyond the postures that you would be taught at yoga class. In addition I have some experience of Taoist techniques but not
only have I less knowledge of them - they have also not been as influential on my perspectives of reality and understanding of being.