

Metaxis and Recovery: Towards a New Vision of Health

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SUBJECTIVE POLE

How is it that some people are able to direct their lives through a terminal illness (or any boundary/limit) with equanimity and wisdom? How is it that some people enrich their love relationships and strengthen their family while they endure great suffering? Why is it that others succumb to despair and anxiety, pushing away friends and families, falling prey to great anger and denial? We are all familiar with people who always seem to be miserable and unhappy. No matter how kind we may be to them, or how willing we may be to try and help or lend a sympathetic ear they just never seem to change. On the other hand, we also encounter those rare people who always seem to have a smile on their face and a kind word on their lips. Just by being who they are they brighten our day and lift our mood.

Who *are* these two types of people? What goes on in their minds? Why, if a person always seems so miserable, doesn't he or she *change* the conditions of their life, or at least accept with good humor what they can't change? What is the secret known to a few that makes them seem so buoyant and full of sunshine? Most of us are somewhere in the middle. We have our "bad" days and our "good" days. Oddly, this isn't always easy to predict. We may have a day when nothing seems to go quite right, yet we laugh it off. "When life hands you lemons make lemonade." Other days we wake up "on the wrong side of the bed." We are talking here about extremes of our subjective experiences of life.

We always want to feel good inside; that is, we want our subjective pole to be a certain way. It is by means of our subjective experiences that we answer the question "Who am I?" We answer: "I am sad," "I am happy," "I am angry," "I am loving and giving," "I am someone who needs a change," "I am an accountant," "I am hungry," etc. It is our subjective experience of reality that informs us about the condition of our lives: are we moving towards fulfillment and health, or do we despair of ever reaching our goals? Our subjective experience identifies in what poles of the field we are lacking in balance: will I be happy if my social relationships change, if I become physically fit, if I start going to church?

We said earlier that the natural pole seems "close" to us. The realm of our bodies and physical environment cannot be denied or ignored. However, the natural pole is also shared or public. You can see my body, we can touch, we can pollute each other's environment. When we turn our attention to the subjective pole we look at those aspects of human experience that are the seat of our identity as unique individuals and that are never public unless actively shared. If you are hungry no one else will know this unless you tell them (or your stomach rumbles). We are all perfectly capable of hiding our feelings from other people. Feelings, thoughts, bodily sensations are a private, personal *subjective* experience. Here is where our inner feelings, thoughts, dreams and memories are found. The subjective pole is where our unique psychological styles of life are grounded. It is also where we discover the status of our

life journey, the state of our heroic courage and the dynamics of our creative symbolic imagination.

Usually, when we speak of "inner" experiences we are talking about the subjective pole, "outer" experiences usually indicate social and natural experiences (the divine is a class by itself). Of course, we have said repeatedly that the field is a whole. Our use of the words "inner" and "outer" to distinguish the subjective pole is, from the start, somewhat misleading. If the field approach is counter-intuitive it is even more so when we work out the field ramifications for subjective experience. Distinguishing between "inner" and "outer" experiences is a result of the biological wiring we had spoken of earlier called "positional identity," and so are somewhat misleading. However, it is in our subjective pole that the dynamic drama of our unique human life is played out.

DANGER OF ELEVATION OF THE SUBJECTIVE POLE

There is a radical difference between the field conception of the subjective pole and more traditional conceptions of subjectivity. The field paradigm views the subjective pole as embedded and inter-related in the four dimensional field. All four poles are equal. While the subjective pole is the center of much activity it is not the center of our field. We are prone to elevate the importance of the subjective pole. But health and vitality aims at balance and metaxis of four equal poles.

The realm of subjectivity has been written about extensively, and indeed it is what preoccupies most of us. It is "where" we feel good or bad, ill or healthy, fulfilled or despairing. For instance, our social relationships may be in turmoil, but we feel this as a subjective experience. We may be physically ill, but this is also felt as a subjective experience.

The existential philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre place great importance on this private dimension of life. The existential approach, however, often *over values* the subjective dimension. Human life is seen in such a way that our subjectivity is isolated from the other poles of the field. Personal choices seem to be made in relative isolation from social, spiritual and natural concerns. The ultimate goal of life then becomes the pursuit of authenticity through subjective control. While we agree with some of this view we assert that *metaxis* is necessary for ultimate fulfillment. Ultimate significance cannot be found through the subjective pole in isolation from the total field. The integration of, and proper balance between all four poles is that to which human formation should ultimately aspire. This is in contrast to the existential and psychological positions that stress the development of the isolated human subjectivity as the goal of authentic growth.

Issues from all poles shape and influence subjective experience. *The subjective pole is where we experience the field as a whole.* Because of this our subjective experiences somehow seem "stronger" or "louder" than do our experiences of the other poles. The subjective pole *seems* to be who and what we are, it *seems* to be the center of the field, the "place where we stand." It *seems* "inside" while the experiences of the other poles *seem* to be "outside." This results in what we call "subjective prejudice." We tend to place an emphasis upon this pole. It becomes what we are in isolation from the rest of the field. It takes on a value greater than the other three poles. The other three poles

appear to revolve around it rather than being in an equal relation to it. We become prejudiced towards subjective experiences, giving them a greater value than social, natural or divine experiences.

This over-valuation of the subjective is, in fact, a common problem in many philosophies and psychologies. The "mistake" of subjective prejudice asserts primacy to the subjective pole. Another way of describing subjective prejudice is as an *elevation* of the private sphere. The subjective pole is elevated above all others. This error results in a psychic reductionism, or inordinate emphasis on mental processes. The subjective dimension is important, but is only one of the four poles.

There is no room for a subjective prejudice in the field model. In the field approach our subjective experiences are de-centered. This is consistent with what is called post-structural philosophies of deconstruction. These philosophies, popular in France and with the Left in Europe, denounce a view that offers or encourages a center or mid-point to human life. They feel that the human has no core or center such as we tend to make out of subjective experiences. Instead, they view the human as decentered and diffusely spread out in the world. In our view we would say that *I am* a field, *the experience of which* is called "subjectivity." Traditional Buddhism also seemed to indicate this counter-intuitive insight by talking about six (rather than five) senses. In addition to smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing there is a "mind" sense. That is, our subjective, psychological experiences "sense" the world in a way similar to the more familiar senses. Just as we are not what we see, hear, touch, taste or smell, so too we are not what we "psychologize." We experience our own subjectivity just as we experience the other senses. The data for subjective sensation is the field as a whole. The question then becomes what is it that experiences the psychological sensation of subjectivity?

THE SELF AND THE FIELD

When we think of our subjective experiences we also think of our *self*. We think of the sensation of being "me," the "I," uniqueness and individuality. We have obviously become preoccupied with our self. We worry about issues of self-esteem, feelings of self-worth, self-actualization, self-expression, etc. But what *is* the self? It is not anything that can easily be pointed to, measured or identified, yet undeniably we all *have* some sense of self. The self is certainly more than our immediate consciousness. In an earlier chapter, when we discussed some basics of the human situation, we saw how full every moment of our day truly is. Even though we compartmentalize reality we must remain open to all levels of consciousness. We would certainly say that unconscious drives, motivations, impulses and urges are part of our self. There are aspects of our self that we deny and about which we sham ourselves. Obviously the self is a rather broad category. There are aspects of our self of which we remain, for the most part, unaware. The self has preoccupied many, many thinkers. For Freud, the self was a relatively stable entity, formed at an early phase of life. For Jung, the Self embraced both personal and archetypal dimensions. Erikson extended the concepts of the self by relating it to broader psychohistorical processes of human development such as trust v. mistrust. For Rank, the self was tied to the strivings of the will for some type of immortality. The self as a theoretical concept has many meanings. Throughout psychological theory terms such as mind, will, ego, imagination and memory are used in different and sometimes confusing manners vis a vis the self.

Our usual intuition of our lives is that our subjective experiences are the center of our being. It is what is closest to us. We know the subjective pole in a way unlike our knowledge of the other three poles which seem to be "outside" us. Our subjective experience is also much deeper than our actual or potential conscious awareness. We said above that the subjective pole is where we experience the field as a whole. When we talk of the "self," we mean that part, region or "organ" of the subjective pole that *integrates*, consciously and unconsciously, our experience of our being a dynamic field. *The self is the dynamic and integrated unity of our subjective experiences, both conscious and unconscious.* It is concerned with *dialogue* and *relationship* among symbolic meanings and *interpretation* by means of those symbols of events in the world. The self is that which propels us to integrate symbols and events. Those integrated symbols and events then, in turn, serve to provide for us a sense of self-identity.

This is most assuredly the most difficult counter-intuitive ramification of the field approach. One way to picture it might be thus: In our pictures of the field we have drawn connectors between each of the four poles. Again, we reiterate, we don't have four separate poles, we have indicated in our drawings that they are interconnected. One way of picturing the self is to highlight these connectors. The self is a structure of the human being that builds upon itself. The self is the "drive" to connect and integrate the four poles. The connections and integrations that are forged by the self then serve to define the self as a unique individual. The *symbolic connections* between the four poles are what gives us a sense of "self," "I," uniqueness and individuality. Our sense of self-identity is *not* derived from an isolated subjectivity.

Given this, we say that our subjective sense of self is *not* the center of our being. The field as a whole is our being. It is an illusion that we identify our total being with only our subjective experience of being an individual. We experience the total field as the interaction between symbol and event. We call the experience of this interaction "subjective experience." Our subjective experiences must be organized and integrated. They must "fit together." This is the function of the self. We can liken this to a jigsaw puzzle. Symbols and events are the pieces. The self connects them together. Then, the puzzle itself serves to provide us with our self-identity as unique individuals.

Let us suppose you were dreadfully abused as a child. It is quite possible that as an adult you would have no conscious memory of the abuse. You have blocked, repressed or suppressed it. The real event of your abuse does not disappear, it goes into what is called the unconscious. Your unconscious is a part of the subjective pole. It is private and inaccessible to other people. While you may be unaware of the abusive event, it can unconsciously effect your behaviors and attitudes--maybe through having problems with relationships. Consciously, if asked, you may say that you were not abused, but the connections between the poles that make up your sense of self carry the traces of the abusive event.

Now suppose you go to a therapist because of your problems with relationships. Astutely, the therapist recognizes some of your behavior patterns as indicating repressed memories of abuse. After months of therapy you consciously remember the abusive event. Your self as organizing *re-organizes* your field--the event is now conscious and must be given a meaning. As the self attempts to *re-integrate* the memory as a conscious memory you feel agitation and turmoil as the connections

between the poles shift and rearrange. Eventually, you come to accept the fact of your being abused. You see how it has effected your relationships and behaviors. The memory is integrated and you experience a *new sense of self*. In a sense your "self" has changed.

We often say both "I am not the same person I was ten years ago" and "I feel as I did at eighteen." Our self both changes and stays the same. We can go through drastic changes, but still remain "me," "I." This is understandable given the back and forth quality of the self. The self drives us towards organization and integration. Because the field is always dynamic this means that *how* we organize and integrate is always changing. Because our organizational and integrational patterns always reflect back and define our self we maintain the continuity we call "me." This is understandable only from within the field approach, not from within the Cartesian paradigm.

The self is a collection of dynamic processes and functions. The mind, imagination, memory and anticipation are included in these functions. The self is concerned with the real events of our lives combined with the symbolic meanings we give to those events. These together make human experience. We are constantly taking in meanings and events from all four poles into the subjective pole. This is where the self, as a subjective experience, processes the interaction between symbols and events.

Our view of the self also includes functions traditionally ascribed to the will. We consider the will as part of the self. *The will is the dimension of self which concertizes and applies our interpretations in the form of action.* This is what we call *embodiment*. The self, through embodiment, facilitates a personal sense of mastery, endurance, and resoluteness. Embodiment results in an expression of personal power. In other words, the "inner" powers of the human are related to our ability to embody or give form through meaning to the field; to have an effect on ourselves, others and the world.

THE EGO AND THE SELF

An important conceptual distinction in discussion of the subjective pole is that the ego and the self are radically different. So much of popular psychology (especially self-help books) reduces our subjective pole and concerns of the self to mere ego concerns. The ego, however, is a relatively limited and small part of the self.

We tend to identify the self with the ego. This identification is encouraged by the Cartesian model. In the post-Cartesian field approach the ego is de-centered. The ego is a smaller subset of the self. *The ego is **subsumed by the self**.* Franz Kunkel and later John Sanford have written extensively on this subject. Jung was fairly clear on this point as well. The egocentric life is but a pale reflection of the life of the real self. According to Sanford, "Kunkel used the term 'ego centricity' to denote the tendency of people to be interested mainly in the protection and advancement for their Egos. Kunkel saw that only the idea of egocentricity could explain the Ego's insatiable hunger for security, superiority, prestige and power. In modern psychiatric parlance we might use the term 'narcissism' instead."

The ego is an "imaginary" function. The ego clings to transient images mainly generated from the social pole (such as those symbols discussed in the previous

chapter). If the self can be pictured as the connections between all four poles the ego can be pictured as the connections between the subjective and social poles in isolation from the rest of the field. Images such as being thin, wealthy or powerful abound in our culture and prey on vulnerable persons who are primarily ego oriented. Concerns of the ego include all of the daily issues of style, fashion, personal and professional appearance, status and career success. Jung called these concerns the superficial concerns of the social persona.

The functions of the self are directed beyond transient images. Processes of the self seek connection, integration and movement within the entire field. For example, the self seeks connection to lasting transcendent images of ultimate meaning and purpose as found in the divine pole. Concerns of the self are dialogical and always aim towards metaxis.

The self's processes are directed towards what is genuinely human: the process of balance and dialogue. The self represents the "I" which is able to stand above, go beyond or transcend transient cultural influences. It is the self that is able to be the courageous hero of the life journey. The ego, on the other hand, clings to transient, socially determined supports and props. In the area of religion it is the ego that clings to immature, extrinsic or pseudo-spiritualities. It is the ego that succumbs to the securities of fundamentalism. The self is able to dwell within the insecurity elicited by encounter with the mystery of life and reality. It rises above the limits of the material world through healthy symbolization.

Following in the line of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, the I (self) is concerned with the symbolic. The me (ego) is concerned with the imaginary. For Lacan, the symbolic refers to universal and formative patterns of myth which structure and organize human experience and growth. The symbolic is capable of sustaining the human passage through boundary, pain, suffering and death. The symbolic guides through healthy dialogue. Dialogue shows itself through the field dynamics of connection, movement and integration. In contrast, the imaginary refers to more transient and arbitrary dimensions of symbolism which influence our functional lives. It is not concerned with patterns of connection, movement and integration which would promote transcendence and metaxis. The imaginary is not capable of inspiring transformation in the face of human limit, pain, suffering and death.

Take for example a young adult struggling to make a commitment towards marriage. Imaginary concerns fueled by the ego might be to find a physically attractive and wealthy mate. Symbolic and real concerns of the self would be to find a soul mate, a companion, someone who can support and inspire a meaningful marriage. The ego is more concerned with personal appearances and material status (especially in our culture), while the self is concerned with broader issues of meaning and personal compatibility. If one enters into a marriage based primarily upon ego concerns there will be problems as the partners grow through difficult transitions. An excessively ego oriented marriage is a marriage of interpersonal limit and superficiality.

The imaginary world of the ego is important and not necessarily neurotic. The ego forms the basis of our social and functional persona. We obviously need to remain functional and able to interact properly in our present culture. To avoid this would be tantamount to escapism, withdrawal and loss of metaxis. The human is always more

than the ego and the courage of the hero is not to be discovered through merely egoic activities. The essential point is that ongoing dialogue and balance must occur between all four poles. Both proximate and ultimate levels of dialogue are necessary. While life in the world involves a certain degree of ego strength an exaggeration of the ego, such as in narcissism, can prove dysfunctional for the dynamics of the human-as-field.

For example, take a common ego-oriented role: "the good bureaucrat" (technical, efficient and impartial). This role is what we refer to as an ego-persona. It certainly is not without value (it is not necessarily "neurotic"). It is appropriate if limited to the functional job role. We can, after all, only maintain our jobs and survive economically if we have healthy ego-personas. Imbalance develops when this ego-persona is generalized or extended to other areas of life. If this occurs then concerns of the ego prevail over the more authentic needs of the self in dialogue with the field and problems develop. If the concerns of the ego become *equated* with the concerns of the self then there is a real danger. In the social pole, being a good parent involves unconditional love--not bureaucratic efficiency. In the divine pole, surviving a serious illness involves connection to ultimate meaning and positive abandonment--not technical precision. There was a popular movie a while back called *The Great Santini* that illustrated this process in the family of an ex-marine who ran his home like a boot camp.

The general dynamics of the field are not properly understood as the *ego* in relation to the social, natural, divine poles. The on-going quest for connection, integration and movement occurs dynamically *between all four poles*. We experience the subjective pole just as we experience the social, natural or divine poles. Our experience of the ego is just one component of our self, which is just one component of the subjective pole, which is just one component of the entire field.

This distinction between ego and the self may not seem overly important to the average person. However, anyone in any type of recovery process, in search of greater fulfillment, or in a traumatic situation of boundary who is utilizing self-help literature must be on their guard. Much of this literature does not distinguish between the ego and the self, and it tends to utilize an understanding of the human as an isolated subjectivity. These two mistakes are attributable to our Cartesian heritage as it effected the early development of psychology.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE DESTRUCTION OF TRANSCENDENCE

Much of modern psychology, rooted in Cartesian style empiricism and behavioral philosophy, reduces all transcendent beliefs to being mere imaginary wishes. That wish is then reduced to a neurotic dissatisfaction with personal limits. Beliefs that orient the person to transcendence are understood to be unhealthy escapes from the harsh realities and injustices of life. According to this dominant paradigm in psychology, the human is merely an extension of matter with no soul and no lasting aspirations. Human cognition and consciousness are completely determined by the physical and social worlds. In this context, symbolic beliefs are products of naive, wishful thinking. The dream that life could have transcendent purpose is largely understood as a regression to an earlier, childlike frame of reference. The "psychologically healthy" adult will disdain wishful thinking and espouse rational,

pragmatic, functional thought. The healthy person will conform to the social world and will maximize his or her social functioning and technical proficiency.

There is a drastic mistake here. Mythic-symbolic beliefs that serve to orient the person towards transcendence are not properly understood as Cartesian style "facts." Rather, they function as systems of interpretations. We cannot escape our need to transcend and to embrace beliefs, nor can we escape the need to interpret events in the world. We are always immersed in these systems of interpretation regardless of whether or not we recognize that fact. We may, through lack of proper understanding, disparage certain transcendent beliefs, especially in their traditional religious versions. However, we will *always* provide some type of substitute belief--a "civic religion" if you will.

The modern tendency to reduce and disparage transcendent belief systems has its roots in the philosophical breakthroughs of what can be called the second scientific enlightenment. The influence of such thinkers as Nietzsche, Marx, and Freud are responsible in many respects for the scientific suspicion of belief. Nietzsche's view was that beliefs were imaginary compensations for real human or social deficits. Marx espoused his famous formula that religion was nothing more than the opium of the masses. That is, any form of transcendent belief is nothing more than an elaborate form of escape from alienation. For Freud, beliefs represented dream-like compensations related to infantile psychosexual wishes and repressed sexual desire.

This mistaken emphasis on material reality and the disparagement of transcendent reality is central to the Cartesian model. Because the natural sciences rely upon the experimental method all knowledge and research must be developed within quantitative and analytical frameworks. The very areas or realms of possible investigation are pre-determined by these requirements. This limits the subjects and phenomenon able to be studied. Science has limited itself to what is objective in human life. It has largely ignored what is non-empirical. Human aspirations, values and beliefs are largely non-empirical. The mystery of life is non-empirical. But these areas are vital for the human journey. Science has denied the importance of entire realms of actual, lived human experience. It therefore fails in its mission of disciplined observation. Simply because an experience is primarily non-empirical in no way means that it is somehow less real than an objective, mechanistic occurrence. This emphasis on experimental method, mechanistic evidence, and abstract knowledge comprises the crippling rational restraints of our era. The process of human symbolization is neglected and devalued. The vital processes of human transcendence are ignored or overlooked.

The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan has critically described this reductionistic approach to symbolic belief. To reduce life to the empirical places a false emphasis upon material determinants. What is incorrect, according to Lacan, is thinking that the "real" or material world determines our symbolic structures. The revised or correct understanding is that symbolic structures direct and give meaning to what is considered "real." Certainly the authors agree with this aspect of the Lacanian view. The notion that you can modify lifestyle and social behavior by technical programming in isolation from underlying symbolic processes is a fallacy. Rather, on one level, lifestyle change involves a transformation of symbolic meanings akin to a

religious conversion experience. Traditional mythic beliefs are often central to this transformation.

Psychoanalysis falls short of its promise to liberate the human from bondage. Much of psychoanalysis as practiced in the United States is based upon a conservative, medical model, expert driven, technologic approach. In this context it becomes an oppressive instrument facilitating social conformity. Personal transformation, if it does occur through psychoanalysis, is more often the result of indirect ritual solutions. Cures, when they occur in this context, are related to healing due to the intensity of belief in the psychoanalytic process generated during treatment. If the client truly believes in the tenets of psychoanalysis, then his suffering and boundary is satisfactorily explained. He is healed to the degree to which he experiences meaning from the psychoanalytic belief-ritual system. The client must undergo a conversion to the psychoanalytic cult, a cult that (in traditional systems) views the human as essentially a sexually desiring machine.

Many of the successes of the human sciences result from similar "ritual cures." Healing occurs to the extent that the client embraces the technical approach as a belief system. Then, and only then does change occur. When psychoanalytic practice generates significant persuasion to believe its view of the world, then it can heal. But it heals only in so far as suffering and alienation can be given explanation and context along with ritual solutions. In the case of traditional psychoanalysis the familiar couch ritual espouses free association, a more open sex drive, and the unfortunate tendency towards hyper-analysis. This is the habitual mode of always judging yourself or others on the basis of psychoanalytical theories, or more properly psychoanalytical beliefs. Most of the self-help literature functions in the same way.

What we need is a science that *recognizes* the need for belief and ritual, not sciences that merely offer implicit secular substitutes. A new psychoanalysis that recognizes the human longing for transcendence and meaning that will seek to guide and instruct the human in this quest. Such a new depth psychology seems to be appearing as evidenced by the work of Proffoff, Lifton and some neo-analysts working out of Jungian and Lacanian perspectives.

THE SUBJECTIVE POLE AND PSYCHOLOGY: THE EXAMPLE OF CARL JUNG

Much of popular psychology succumbs to subjective prejudice. Jungian psychology is probably the major paradigm in use today--especially where spirituality and psychology interface and so we shall utilize it as illustrative. The following is not meant to imply that Jungian psychology has little value. We both feel Jungian ideas are valuable and consistent with the field model. One of the authors has completed a number of years of Jungian analysis which he felt was very valuable. However, the Jungian model, as an illustration of today's psychological trends, is in need of a few important correctives.

Jung stressed the Self as the central archetype of wholeness and totality. It was the whole of the personality including ego, consciousness, personal and collective unconsciousness. The Self was synonymous with the total or whole personality. It was the Center or midpoint of existence. According to Jung, it binds and circumscribes

everything in our personality. The Self contained a numinous power which centered the person. The image of God was equated with the totality of the Self. Somehow the power of God and divine creation was found within the Self. The Self was supraordinate over all elements of the psyche, even the divine.

One weakness of Jungian psychology is that it can derail into a form of gnosticism. This is where the subjective experience of self is considered to be the ultimate source of meaning or wisdom. In such a case it elevates the subjective sphere. In our field model this derails and reduces the complexity of the four pole field to one dimension: the subjective.

This was probably not Jung's intention, but in practical terms many popularizations derail into gnosticism. The Jungian notion of individuation as the quest for totality refers primarily to a subjective *experience of* wholeness and meaning which is *not* necessarily the same as actually *living* holistically or meaningfully. Social, natural and spiritual dimensions are relegated as secondary. The spiritual dimension, as articulated by Jung's "God Image," is more mental than authentically spiritual (at least as we articulate spirituality). Jung put the human at the center of his universe with the psyche serving as the soul. While he spoke at length of transcendence this was more of a subjective process than a genuine spiritual abandonment to the mystery. He wrote at considerable length about the "God Archetype" which he described as a symbol of the *Self*. In the face of serious boundary such as pain, suffering and death, the God Archetype falls short of inspiring any lasting conviction or change.

The social dimension is notoriously absent in Jung's work. This is in spite of his many references to a cultural dimension of symbolism or a collective orientation of archetypes. More practical issues such as compassion, social justice and the realities of social inequity and evil were not integrated into his work. The natural dimension was also seen in a curious manner. Jung (being a medical doctor) was thoroughly indoctrinated into the natural sciences, but it seems as if Jung put the natural dimension, in most cases, as secondary to the psychic. In fact, Jungian psychology often places everything as secondary to the psychic. The psyche is elevated and given prime importance. Human fulfillment is seen as aiming towards psychic individuation with the other dimensions in a minor, supporting position. Meaning is essentially found and appreciated on the purely subjective dimension. Recovery and health is reduced to a task for the isolated subjective pole.

We have already discussed the relative weaknesses of gnostic approaches. It is no wonder that so much of new age mentality vigorously embraces popular Jungian ideas. If we return to Kant's idea of regional sciences we can further clarify our corrective. The subjective pole is one *region* of the human. And indeed, a specific psychology portrays, in turn, only one *region* of the subjective pole. Psychology is a regional science. It serves as a valid illumination and explanatory model for the subjective pole. It facilitates the excavation of psychic meanings. It powerfully guides, reveals and uncovers previously hidden dimensions of the "inner" life. The problem develops when psychological thought is extended or elevated to a metaphysical view of the total human. Psychology cannot serve as a metaphysic any more than can technologic biomedicine. The various schools of psychology are valuable as guides to understanding subjective experience, but they should not be

generalized to refer to any comprehensive vision of health. Psychology can not replace an authentic spirituality.

OTTO RANK'S CORRECTIVE TO PSYCHOLOGY: THE HEROIC, CREATIVE ARTIST

One of Freud's disciples, Otto Rank, recognized the deficiencies of traditional psychology. Rank was ostracized for his views at the time, but may prove to be the most significant thinker of the early efforts to build a science of psychology. At the First International Congress on Mental Hygiene Rank said:

"The scientific approach to human behavior and personality problems is not only insufficient but leaves out the most essential part of it, namely, the human side, the characteristic of which is just that it can't be measured and checked and controlled."

In response to this opinion Rank was all but labeled mentally ill by his colleagues. Of course, we now know that Rank was indeed correct. The scientific (as Cartesian) approach *does* neglect essential aspects of the human and so *is* insufficient in its ability to study the human.

Rank advanced a paradigm which moved beyond the Freudian model. For Freud, human formation occurred as a dialectic between two forces: the rational ego and the instinctual forces of the id. Rank's theory advanced the "Third Principle" which transcended both the ego and the vital instincts. We articulated this in the first chapter as the will to immortality. According to Rank, the very experience of birth leads to a deep fear of death and, by virtue of analogy, a fear of any change in life. But of course, life *is* change and so the person is constantly living under the fear of death, hence the striving for some sense of immortality through symbolic means.

This symbolic immortality, as we have already seen, may be expressed through the acquisition of wealth. It is also expressed through our children, or through extreme ethnic-*ism*, national-*ism*, religious-*ism*, etc. For instance, racist people, such as white supremacists and black extremists, express their neurotic response to death through their racism. Their sense of self, their self-identity, is reduced to skin color. Any perceived threat due to that skin color (such as being "oppressed" for blacks, or being "taken over" for whites) is also a threat to their own sense of individual uniqueness: an unconscious threat to their own individual life. (This is not to deny the legitimate fears and grievances of both blacks and whites.) They have responded to their fear of death by symbolically identifying with a *collective*, a social structure. Adherence to such collectives of symbolic immortality are neurotic responses to the fear of death. They are essentially unhealthy ways of coping with mortality. They are an expression of the denial of death. I reduce my fear of *individual* death, *the absence of subjective experience*, by reducing my unique self to the *collective*: the race, the people, the party, the nation, the Reich. I lessen death's real threat to my subjectively experienced self by abdicating my uniqueness and giving it to the other: children, spouse, leader, messiah, expert, Fuhrer.

Rank recognized these neurotic, unhealthy responses to the fear of death--the problem our mortality creates in our search for health and fulfillment. He saw these neurotic

responses present in all cultures. They are universal. However, he also recognized a solution, a healthy response to the issue of mortality.

"Rank saw the artist as the last in a historical sequence of individual and collective solutions to the problem of mortality. The next stage entails the creation of one's own life--within the limits imposed, and the possibilities granted, by the givens of biology and society. The creative type becomes the creator of a self."

Rank discovered that it was the *artist* who best epitomized a healthy response to the fear of death, and a healthy symbolic response to that fear. It is the artist who resists collective identity. It is the artist who truly accepts individual uniqueness and responsibility in life. It is the artist who comes face to face with death and so recognizes the real demands made upon us by life itself: a demand to *create*. *We are to be the artists, the creators of our own lives, of our own unique self.*

We briefly mentioned above the importance of the will as an aspect of the self. It is the will that embodies our uniqueness as a form-giving effect upon ourselves, others and the world. For instance, in the case of an artist embodiment takes the form of the painting, sculpture or other work of art. The artist needs not only the creative vision, but the will to make it an embodied reality. The strengthening of the will was a central goal in Rank's therapeutic and analytical methods, indeed he called those methods "will therapy." The artist often stands alone against collectives (i.e. so-called "community standards"). He or she often stands isolated from social structures. This demands a strong will. It is the will that distinguishes the courageous hero. By force of will the hero acts in spite of fear, in spite of social rejection, in spite of death. The artist *is* the hero.

CREATION OF THE SELF: MOVEMENT, CONNECTION, INTEGRATION

It is in our subjective pole that we experience health or illness, fulfillment or despair. It is our subjective experience that guides us as we create our own self. Our self is the totality of symbols that connect and integrate the four poles of the field. By virtue of what is distinct about the human, our spirituality, we have a small degree of freedom to reconfigure those symbolic connections. We create our self through reinterpretation and resymbolization. This demands the courage of the hero and strength of will. *The first step of the will must be to utilize the fullness of our subjective experiences.* We must resist the tendency to utilize any one pole in isolation from the others. For instance, we tend to rely upon our social experiences which, in our culture, will lead us to functionalism, materialism and narcissism. We must also resist the tendency to compartmentalize or deny our full subjectivity, or sham ourselves concerning the true content of subjective experience.

Creation of our own self entails the three main dynamics of the human-as-field: 1) movement, 2) connection and 3) integration.

1. The first step must be an openness or willingness to change, to grow, *to move*. We are *always* facing boundary and limit and so transcendence is *always* demanded of us. We are in a state of constant change. The human is dynamic. It would be more accurate to picture the human-as-field not as a two dimensional picture on paper, but as a moving, shifting, ever-changing structure on videotape. We use our subjective

experience to gauge the freedom and flexibility of our willingness to move. Chances are, whenever there is a demand for change such as a switch in jobs, a marriage, a friend pointing out our lack of compassion, our first response or experience is one of fear. This is quite normal, but we can remember that we always live under a sentence of death, the awareness of which will be elicited by demands for change. The willingness to move in response to those changes is just that: a willingness, an act of the will. We face our subjective experience of fear and gain support and courage from an acceptance of the basic human situation, from others' compassion, and from a positive abandonment to the mystery.

2. Once we face and accept our fear, and are thus ready to change, grow and move, we must be ready to direct the course of that movement. Think, for a moment, about generic movement. We can move, but stay in one place like a jogger on a tread-mill. Like a beginning ballet student we can move clumsily, or like a prima ballerina we can enchant with the grace of our movement. Movement can be superfluous like the nervous person's knee bobbing up and down or the wild gesticulations of someone who "talks with her hands." In terms of the human-as-field we can't move or change just for the sake of movement and change. Our movement must always forge healthy connections to each of the four poles. For instance, it is easy to move away from the social pole into social isolation. It is especially easy to move away from the demands of the natural pole by means of poor nutrition, lack of exercise, or pollution of the environment. Our movement and change must always forge connections between all four poles, each to the others. We utilize our subjective experiences as an indicator of the relative *strength* of these connections (do I feel lonely? weak? meaningless?). We assess the *health* of these connections through our subjective experience of the presence or absence of congeniality (my uniqueness), compatibility (my situation) and compassion (my being with others) in our lives.

3. Once again we hammer home that the field is a whole, the poles cannot be viewed as isolated one from the other. This demands the necessary field dynamic that the connections we form be integrated. A fine and familiar example of a lack of integration is the idea of a person who "goes to church on Sunday, sins on Monday." Let us say a business person forges a connection to the divine pole by going to church where he hears messages such as "store not your treasure on earth, give to the poor, turn the other cheek." At work though, he engages in unsavory practices that make it difficult or impossible for others to make a decent living. Because of this behavior he makes handsome profits and is considered a "success." He views these unsavory practices that give him these profits as simply the way things have to be done in the "real" world of dog-eat-dog competition. In reality he has failed to integrate the connections between his divine and social poles. He lacks integrity. In terms of the human-as-field he displays disease and illness.

It is in the dynamic of integration that we encounter the poignant vulnerability and insecurity we experience as human beings. Our connections are *never* fully integrated. This is another way of saying that we are dynamic and that change is always demanded. It is also another way of indicating that human health is not perfect physical fitness, not perfect social relationships, not perfect self-esteem, not perfect knowledge of God. Human health is *metaxis*: balance between the four poles. This balance is always a compromise. No matter how open we are to change and movement, no matter how skillful we are at forging connections, no matter how

integrated are our lives we will always subjectively experience an underlying sense of fear, insecurity, and compromise. In order to respond in a healthy way to this aspect of our subjective pole we must never forget the basics of our situation. The pain of this remembering can only be constructively dealt with through the compassion of others and through a positive abandonment to the mystery.

DYNAMIC CYCLES IN THE CREATION OF THE SELF

As said earlier, it is symbolic meanings that fuel the dynamism of the human-as-field. The processes of interpretation of meanings is cyclic. There is a back and forth, come and go, in and out, on and off quality to our dynamism. When we actively engage in field thinking and improve our skills at excavating meaning we will have a subjective experience of these cycles. Among scholars of hermeneutics this cyclic process has been described as the "hermeneutical spiral."

Picture a spiral staircase. At the very bottom is an event in the world. Now this event must be given a meaning, it must be interpreted. When we interpret the event it is like taking a step up the staircase. Because our interpretations of events always change (i.e. volcanoes are no longer interpreted as gods that demand a virgin sacrifice) we continue to move up the spiral. Up and up we go, step by step, interpretation by interpretation. Scholars use this image to indicate the nature of our understanding of the world. We interpret an event (a step), when that meaning is no longer adequate to explain the event we devise another meaning (up a step) and so on. This is the process of human knowledge.

These scholars use the image of a spiral rather than of a straight line for a number of reasons. Both a spiral and a line communicate the idea of progress, but a spiral communicates more of the back and forth quality of that progress. We move forward by looking at the event, forming an interpretation, then looking at the event again and forming another interpretation. We don't just look at the event once and then walk away from it. We always return to the event and re-study it. This allows us to uncover aspects of the event we may have missed before. We are then enabled to form a new interpretation.

In our own lives we engage in, and experience a similar process. What happens when you have an argument with a good friend? The sudden conflict takes you by surprise. It is a new event in the world that demands interpretation. The first meaning you give to the event (one step up the spiral) might be that your friend is, in reality, a real creep. Later, at home alone you experience turmoil. You replay the argument over and over in your head; that is, you return to the event. Your initial interpretation is inadequate: this person is your *friend*, not a creep. You feel confused and frustrated as you are taking a step up to the next interpretation. Perhaps a more accurate interpretation is that there was some hidden misunderstanding (next step up the spiral). You and your friend get together to talk it out: another return to the event. You resolve the conflict in some way and are again friends (third step up the spiral).

Growth, the creation of self, transcendence, is always experienced in the subjective pole as this back and forth cycle. We go "out" and encounter new experiences or events. We go back "in" to interpret or "figure out" those experiences and events. When we are "out" we are engaging in the dynamics of movement and connection.

When we are "in" we are engaging in the dynamics of connection and integration. When we are "out" we are active, extroverted and social, when we are "in" we may retreat into solitude and introverted reflection. An artistic, healthy creation of the self demands a proper balance between the two peaks of this cycle. Both can demand heroic courage, especially when our uniqueness and congeniality directs us towards a more introverted or extroverted style.

Another way of understanding the dynamic cycles of the growing human-as-field is provided by the ideas of Eric Voegelin. If you recall, it was from Voegelin that we adapt our understanding of symbolic structures that we use to order our experiences. There are three main structures that are able to order the four pole field. The cosmological explains all four poles in a "compact" form through myth and story. Noetic ordering is when we use reason to order our understanding. Reason *differentiates* between the four poles in a way the cosmological myth does not. This differentiation can then point out the limits of noetic explanatory power, and hence the mystery of reality as totally transcendent. This, in turn, leads to the pneumatic, or mystery-centered ordering of experience.

These three methods of ordering experience are not sequential. We do not leave the cosmological behind for the noetic, nor do we leave the noetic behind for the pneumatic. Though Voegelin saw each of these as dominant at certain times and in certain cultures (we are predominately noetic) they actually operate continuously. In terms of our subjective experience of the dynamic cycles we might say that we move "in" to a core cosmological myth wherein we order our entire field. We then move "out" to the peripheral differentiation provided by our reasoning capabilities wherein we may be concerned with the ordering of only one pole. For instance, our development of medicine, as an ordering of the natural pole, is a product of noetic differentiation. In the above example of the argument with a friend it is noetic differentiation that tries to figure out if the friend is a creep or the argument was a misunderstanding.

Ideally, these movements of consciousness are dialogical; from compact cosmological core to outer differentiated periphery and then back again, each illuminating the other (event-interpretation-event-interpretation). Each differentiation however, always brings with it a certain "forgetfulness" of the fuller, richer reality (core, compact, cosmological myth) out of which it emerges. At the same time, differentiation makes us implicitly aware of the mystery, and thus potentially pneumatic or mystery-centered.

An example of differentiation would be scientific thought. It achieves some level of clarification, but "forgets" the whole (this is related to Kant's notions of regional perspectives). Science moves forward by rational differentiation and develops in-depth analysis of *parts* of reality. In so doing it distances itself from a larger conception of the *whole* of reality. Scientific questioning also implies an awareness of mystery--it is this awareness that motivates the asking of questions. Science strives for clarity of the parts, but at the expense of a vision of the total picture, and at the expense of recognition of the primal importance of the mystery. Science remains in the noetic. It does not recognize the fullness of our experience-ordering capacity: cosmological, *and* noetic, *and* pneumatic. In personal correspondence William Thompson writes to us:

"Hence, the continual need to return to symbol and myth, which while more compact, is tuned into the fuller reality of the quaternarian structure. This means that symbol and myth occupy the `hermeneutical' starting point and return point. Note how John of the Cross uses poetry, comments on it, and always returns to it...Hence the theologian starts with the Scripture, as more originary and closer to the fullness of experience, then strives to throw some clarity upon it through noetic analysis and always back to scripture."

We today are largely noetically oriented. We tend to ignore the pneumatic as being "fantasy" and the cosmological as being "primitive." We have seen throughout the book that even though we may consciously ignore the importance of the mystery in our lives we always act in relation to it in a primal, foundational, unconscious way. The same is also true in regard to the power of myth in our lives. The function of myth is the key that unlocks our ability to artistically, heroically, metaxically create our own self. Reason is limited and so in itself can not lead us to health. The mystery is always completely transcendent: not known, no-thing, and so in itself can not lead us to health. It is only through myth that we are enabled to *combine* all aspects of our lives in such a way that we can *lead ourselves* to metaxic health.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF MYTH

When we think of "myth" what comes to mind are probably the stories of the ancient Greek and Roman gods and heroes: Zeus, Athena, Hercules, Prometheus. These stories are entertaining and imaginative, but we laugh a bit in our smugness. These ancients *believed* these stories, these *myths*. *We*, on the other hand, are modern and scientific. We have no need for myths--we have knowledge. We are a people who *de-mythologize*. Well, this is fine. It recognizes that we no longer utilize *certain* myths, but it fails to recognize the *function* of myth that continues to operate in the lives of all people.

Myth, as a compact explanation of reality, occupies a central role in any human experience of meaning. It serves as a foundation, mainly unconsciously, for the many real and possible interpretations of reality used by individuals and cultures. It is the way we grasp a sense of the whole of our lives in a compact way. The specific *content* of our myths may change, but the *function* of myth is an indelible part of all human life. In one form or another myth has been involved with the formation of language, the development of culture, and the meaningful coherence of society and individual human behavior. It is a complex and ubiquitous reality. Myth is not the product of an inferior primitive mental process as some might claim. Such a claim indicates a confusion between the content of certain myths and the universal function of myth.

Myth and science, as generic terms, are not mutually exclusive as we may tend to think. They both represent legitimate approaches to truth. Myth reflects a deeper, compact, holistic search based upon the automatic, existential, universal human impulse to discover the "truth" of the mystery of reality. Science, on the other hand, is a more formal search that seeks to discover the "truth" by breaking the whole into parts. The development of both myth and science is based on that same impulse to understand reality. The confused idea that only technical skill, reason and science can provide direction to the modern life is a fallacy. Myth continues to operate, even in our enlightened and rational world, at a deeper level of consciousness where we are

concerned with the wider meaning of our lives and of the universe. The mythic-symbolic order infuses our lives by providing (largely unconscious) models, images and metaphorical identities to guide our self-creation. "A life without myth is impossible."

THE MYTHIC HERO

Myths operate dynamically in the depths of the self, behind the levels of surface consciousness. In the deep symbolic layers of the psyche myths serve a vital role by explaining life in its totality. The ancient myths were not *just* stories. They operated in people's lives. Their symbols helped to explain life and especially the changes, boundaries and limits encountered in life such as birth, marriage, suffering, disease, and death. We moderns are at a disadvantage vis a vis our ancestors in responding positively to these boundaries and limits. While we necessarily are effected by mythic functions the explanatory content of our modern myths are neither as broad, nor as deep as the ancient stories.

One main character that is found over and over again in every culture's myths is that of the hero. It is Prometheus who goes to heaven to steal fire and thus bring warmth and security to humanity. It is the brave knight who travels to the dragon's lair, slays the dragon and rescues the maiden. It is Hercules who overcomes impossible tasks, such as descending to the underworld and returning, and thus becomes a god. It is Jesus who comes down from heaven, dies that all might be saved, and then returns to his father.

All of these heroes faced incredible boundaries and limits. Their stories served to instruct and explain to people how they too could face and overcome boundaries and limits. The hero often starts out as a relatively ordinary person (think of baby Jesus in a manger). It is by passing through the boundaries of life that he or she becomes a hero. How cheap are today's heroes by comparison? Sports figures, celebrities and rock stars, Donald Trump, Ollie North and Lee Iaccoca. Read the supermarket tabloids about Cher's Incredible Tragedy, Roseanne Barr's Troubled Childhood, Joan Collin's Secret Sorrow. Can their stories honestly compare with those told by the ancients?

The ancient myths (since they developed out of the human experience of life) have not lost their explanatory power, but they are no longer *our* myths. Deep within us we still order our experience of reality according to a cosmological mythic compactness, but the content of that mythic-symbolic ordering is unable to effectively guide us through life. Today's myths tell us that fulfillment is discovered through material acquisition. They fail to orient our growth in a healthy direction. They fail to connect us to each pole of the field. They fail to guide our integration of those connections.

"The usual hero adventure begins with someone from whom something has been taken, or who feels there's something lacking... This person then takes off on a series of adventures beyond the ordinary, either to recover what has been lost or to discover some life-giving elixir. It's usually a cycle, a going and a returning."

Something *has* been taken from our lives. Something *is* lacking. The onslaught of the Cartesian mechanistic world view has removed the most important aspect of human

being from the content of our myths: our freedom, our spirituality, our distinctiveness. As a consequence our mythic-symbolic structures are unable to do what they are supposed to do: explain the whole of reality. This means that as we experience the dynamic in and out cycles of movement, connection and integration, we are proceeding from, and returning to a mythic foundation that is incomplete. The content of our modern mythic-symbolic structure, to a large extent, does not include the divine pole. Because of this, its explanations of the other three poles are necessarily incomplete. As we proceed "out" from this compact cosmological foundation our attempts at differentiation through noetic reason is then necessarily imprecise (for instance, science calling all religious expression "neurotic"). As we return back "in" it is with interpretations that do not serve to correct our imbalance.

The answer is not to attempt a return to the mythic-symbolic structures of the past. That would be contrary to the very idea of growth. The answer is to learn to develop our own creative, unique, *personal* myth. This entails the great adventure of transcendence, of discovering the life-giving elixir of true human spirituality. It entails the development, and subjective experience of the dynamic cycles of the human-as-field. Through developing our own personal myth we will increasingly approximate perfect metaxis.

CONSTRUCTING THE PERSONAL MYTH: TOOLS FOR GROWTH

One of the dilemmas of modern health care is the problem of how to facilitate change of lifestyle. Many approaches have been advanced to mitigate the adverse influences of unhealthy lifestyles. The most prominent among these seem to be a combination of cognitive and behavioral strategies. These approaches aim to "convert" old ways or habits to new patterns of thought and behavior more conducive to our culture's dominant understanding of health. This usually entails an emphasis upon one or two poles depending upon the particular therapist's interests. For instance; physical fitness or nutrition for the natural pole, communication skills or assertiveness training for the social, positive thinking for the subjective.

We understand the process of lifestyle change to be deeper than mere behavioral conditioning or cognitive knowledge. Change of lifestyle entails change of our self. The entire configuration of our symbolic ordering of the field must be altered. Change entails creation and re-creation of our self: the connections between all four poles. This entails uncovering and then working with our personal myth. The myths under which we operate explain the whole of reality to us. In this sense, the myths under which we operate are synonymous with who we are. Our myth is the same as our self. Our myth is the story of our self. In general, we usually utilize (unconsciously) dominant cultural myths. In America these cultural myths almost exclusively have to do with practical functioning and the acquisition of material goods.

Most of us fail to utilize our creative freedom, our spirituality, that would enable us to 1) uncover and recognize the explanatory myths under which we currently operate and 2) begin to creatively change those myths in such a way that we slowly improve the state of our health and change our self. It is our subjective experience that guides us as we uncover the myths that now orient our lives, and as we heroically re-create the content of those myths. Usually, if we have a subjective experience of *resistance*

to certain ideas, truths or experiences this is a tip off to an area in which we need work.

We can fail in our task of change and transcendence if we are in the state of extreme resistance we have previously described as numbness. Numbness is a state of desensitization to symbolic forms or meanings. We are unable to be open to the fullness of our subjective experience and so lose this valuable guide for our growth and change. The person can become "stuck" and the opposites of connection, movement and integration; alienation, stasis and disintegration; will prevail in our lives. Numbness can result from a number of causes. One common example is where painful childhood experiences or memories "haunt" the subjective pole. Parts of the self and aspects of the content of our mythic-symbolic explanatory structures are then unavailable to us, and hence are unable to be re-created. In such a situation there is a need for some type of psychotherapy. Another example would be the case of a person with a biochemical imbalance such as is often found in chronic depression. This too will impact upon the person's ability to grow and change. It demands treatment by a psychiatrist or other medical doctor. Another very common, and usually untreated problem, are negative childhood experiences concerning God. A legacy of fear, guilt and terror must be overcome before a healthy spirituality can be developed. Unfortunately, at this time there is a dearth of competent spiritual directors.

Once any initial emotional, physical, social or spiritual problems are dealt with we are in a position to actively guide our life journey. Most of the usual self-help techniques such as dream work, visualization, meditation, etc. will be effective *as long as we remember that we are a field that demands balance between the four poles*. We must always keep in mind that much (if not all) of contemporary self-help literature is based upon the fallacy of subjective prejudice. Indeed, even most professional helpers will be operating from within the Cartesian world view. We must remember our goal and act accordingly: human health is *metaxis* between the four poles. We will never have perfection in any single pole. We will always live with a certain insecurity, a certain longing, a certain degree of fear.

We are hesitant to recommend any specific techniques for growth. There is too much danger that this might impinge upon the unique creative, artistic, heroic potential of the individual reader. However, we have found the techniques and efforts of Ira Progoff to be most impressive, illustrative and consistent with the field approach.

Progoff writes persuasively about the need for continuous dialogue between the depth layers of life (e.g. spirituality, the unconscious, myth and symbol) and the surface layers (e.g. rational thought, pragmatic involvements, "outer" experiences and events). This in and out, back and forth dialogue is central to his theory and practical techniques. We agree and consider it an essential task of what we call field thinking. The "inner" dimensions enrich and enlighten the "outer" processes. There needs to be a balanced movement between these two aspects of human experience. Progoff noted that while human growth was *expressed* in "outer" experiences, it always had an "interior" *source*. He notes that "Outward activity propelled from within is the essence of the creative existence."

Ira Progoff developed the Intensive Journal program as a practical means of achieving the movement from the depths to the surface levels of consciousness. His journal

method is in many ways complimentary to what we consider the means of achieving metaxis: symbolic flexibility and creativity, field thinking, and the excavation of meaning. The journal is structured as a collection of multiple dialogues with the various dimensions of the life process such as: time, works, body, society, events, persons, and depth dimensions (dreams, imagery, i.e. mythic content). Progoff's process aims at evoking, eliciting and uncovering the contents of our life. He calls this *psycho-evoking* (as opposed to psycho-analyzing). This is similar to what we call the excavation of meaning. The individual seeks to uncover the myths and images that direct (often unconsciously) the life process. Once uncovered these myths can be transformed with creative imagination. The journal method serves as an eminently practical system of integration where the contents of the "inner" and "outer" lives are evoked, recognized and thus able to be transformed.

REPRISE: THE DENIAL OF DEATH

Transcendence entails that our old, provisional forms of life must breakdown and give way to newer forms. We must transform our lifestyle and self-identity as our life situations change. Following differentiation, which is the breakdown of old patterns, the person then integrates. A restoration of the broken identity; broader, more balanced, with greater vitality is the hopeful result. This is the primal dynamic pattern of all life. Recognized and worshiped by our ancestors, still unconsciously acknowledged in many of our modern rituals, it is the basic truth of our lives, of the earth, of the universe. It is the truth of life's death and its continual re-birth.

The ancients noticed the changing of the seasons. The fullness of the harvest gave way to the dark, cold, lifeless winter which was always followed by the green and verdant spring. They saw that the seed in the ground died and from that death a new life sprung. They were aware that where the dead fish was buried the plant grew exceptionally green and strong. Every month the moon disappeared, died, went away, and then returned. Every day the sun disappeared and left all in darkness, and yet it always returned with its life-giving power. From the death of the bison came the life of the tribe. The elders of the group decayed into dust and from the loins of women came fat, wet, screaming promises. Death, and birth, and life, and the whole damn *mystery* of it all.

So they told stories of gods and heroes. They sang of the waters of the Nile and the triumphs of hunters and warriors. They tell of the great journey, the going out and the return back.

Quetzlcoatl sets sail upon the great ocean promising to some day Return. Orpheus descends to the underworld and returns, but without Eurydice. Ulysses sets out, is lost, and finally comes Home. The Medicine Man journeys to the spirit world and learns of a Cure for his patient. Moses scales the mountain and gives Law to the people. Buddha turns inward and then teaches the Noble Truths. Jesus dies and returns with Life.

Who among us dares the great journey? Who has the courage to face the great unknown? Who has the courage to stand up to death? Who will go and return with the great Gift? Is it only a dream? A dream of a world of beauty? A dream of a society of justice? A dream of a universe of love? A dream of a life fulfilled?

"The dream, then, is central to our evolutionary heritage. In it we find, most profoundly, both clue to and expression of the human capacity for good and evil--for holding visions, for prospective imagination. More than ever, we must dream well if we are to confront forces threatening to annihilate us, and if we are to further the wonderful, dangerous, and always visionary human adventure."