

SYNTHESIS



SYNTHESIS

FOUNDING EDITOR

Roberto Assagioli

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

James Vargiu

EDITORS

Stuart Miller

Susan Vargiu

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Heidi Firman

ART DIRECTOR

Peter Bailey

BUSINESS MANAGER

Richard Gordon

Assistant to the Editors

Julie Jepsen

Staff

Sally Stevenson Beverly Fruda

Circulation Manager

Theo Hand

EDITORIAL ADVISORS

George I. Brown
Director, the Ford Foundation
Center in Confluent Education
U. of Calif., Santa Barbara

Joseph Campbell
Professor Emeritus
Sarah Lawrence College

Haridas Chaudhuri
President, Calif. Inst. of Asian Studies
San Francisco
(1913-1975)

Arthur Deikman
Director, Institute for the Study
of Human Consciousness, San Francisco

Viktor Frankl
Professor of Psychiatry & Neurology
University of Vienna

Martin Goldman
Senior Editor, *Time Magazine*

Anagarika Govinda
Tibetan Lama and Author
Kumaon Himalaya, India

Alyce Green
Co-Director, Voluntary Controls Prog.
The Menninger Foundation

Elmer Green
Head, Psychophysiology Laboratories
Research Department
The Menninger Foundation

Stanislav Grof
Chief of Psychiatric Research
Maryland Psychiatric Center

Richard Grossman
Assoc. Director, The Family Center
Montefiore Hospital, New York

Laura Huxley
Author/Musician, Los Angeles

Wolfgang Kretschmer
Prof. of Medicine & Psychotherapy
University of Tübingen, Germany

John Levy
Executive Officer
Assoc. for Humanistic Psychology

Hiroshi Motoyama
Director, Inst. of Religious Psychology
Tokyo

Clark Moustakas
Professor, The Merrill-Palmer Institute

Michael Murphy
Chairman, Board of Directors
Esalen Institute

Virginia Satir
Lecturer, Consultant
Family Therapy Institute
San Rafael, California

Jean-Louis Servan-Schrieber
Publisher, *L'Expansion*, Paris

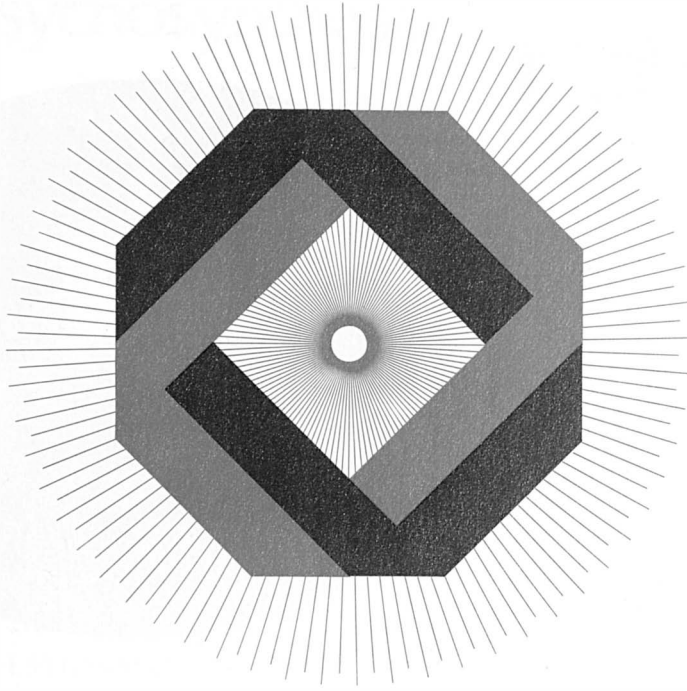
Huston Smith
Prof. of Religion, Syracuse Univ.

Paul Tournier
Founder, *Medecine de la Personne*
Switzerland

Gerald Weinstein
Director, Center for Humanistic Ed.
University of Massachusetts

CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The *PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK* has been prepared in collaboration with the Psychosynthesis Institute, San Francisco, and with the assistance of the Canadian Institute of Psychosynthesis, Montreal, and of the Institute of Psychosynthesis, London. ● Betsie Carter-Haar served as one of the Editors of the first and second printings of *SYNTHESIS 1*. ● Some of the techniques in the *PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK* section exist in other variations, used by many different practitioners in fields such as psychology, education, and the like. The particular versions offered here were designed specifically for the purposes of this *WORKBOOK*. ● "Drive in Living Matter to Perfect Itself" is reprinted with the kind permission of the author, of *The Graduate Faculty Newsletter* of Columbia University, and of the *Journal of Individual Psychology*. "The Repression of the Sublime" was presented at a seminar of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation, New York, and is reprinted from James Fadiman, *The Proper Study of Man*, Macmillan, 1971, with the kind permission of the author and publisher. Photographs pp. 27, 29, 34, 36, 39, 40, 43, by Paul Fusco. "Pegasus Captive," p. 124, by Peter Bailey, after a painting by Odilon Redon.

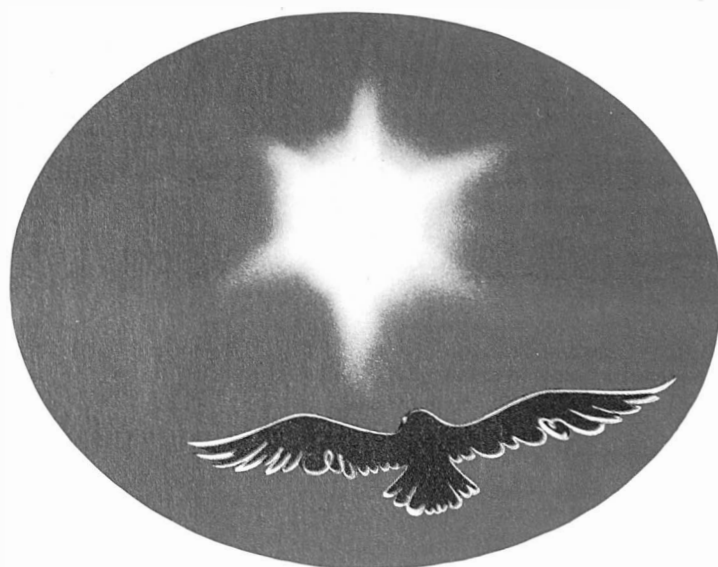
Subscription rates: Charter Subscription (begins with *SYNTHESIS 1*) one year, \$10, two years, \$18; Regular Subscription one year, \$12, two years, \$20. Outside U.S. add \$1.50 per year. (Canada and Mexico, add \$1.) Air Mail rates to overseas countries available on request. Single copies: \$6. Quantity Discounts for ten or more copies of one issue available at \$3.50 per copy to educators, psychotherapists, associations and groups. ● Contributions should be submitted in duplicate, double spaced. *SYNTHESIS* is published twice a year. Copyright © 1974, 1977, The Synthesis Press, 830 Woodside Road, Redwood City, California 94061. Distributed in Europe by *SYNTHESIS*, Highwood Park, Nan Clark's Lane, Mill Hill, London NW7, England. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent, but permission will usually be given on request. First printing, 1974. Second printing, 1975. Third (revised) printing, 1977. *SYNTHESIS* is operated on a non-profit basis. Paid circulation 45,600.



SYNTHESIS 1

The Realization of the Self

SYNTHESIS 1



CONTENTS

- 6 LETTER FROM THE EDITORS
- 9 THE DEPERSONALIZATION OF SEX
by Viktor Frankl
The limitations of sexualism without love.
- 14 DRIVE IN LIVING MATTER TO PERFECT ITSELF
by Albert Szent-Gyorgyi
A Nobel Prize winning biologist describes the biological, psychological, and spiritual implications of a universal principle of nature.
- 27 THE FARTHER REACHES OF GESTALT THERAPY:
A Conversation with George Brown
An experienced Gestalt therapist and educator looks at some neglected areas of this popular approach to personal growth.
-

Psychosynthesis Workbook

A regular feature with practical ideas and techniques for enhancing one's personal development and integration. The theme of this issue is the subpersonalities or inner personages in each of us.

46 HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

47 THE "WHO-AM-I?" EXERCISE

51 Principles:

SUBPERSONALITIES

by James G. Vargiu

91 Practice:

93 THE DOOR

97 THE PIE

103 THE EVENING REVIEW

108 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

112 WHAT IS PSYCHOSYNTHESIS?

116 A HIGHER VIEW OF THE MAN-WOMAN PROBLEM

by Roberto Assagioli and Claude Servan-Schreiber

The principle of synthesis intervenes in the Battle of the Sexes.

125 THE REPRESSION OF THE SUBLIME

by Frank Haronian

Why we often refuse to hear the voice of our higher nature.

137 A NEW HUMANISM IN MEDICINE

by Stuart Miller

The crisis in health care and some efforts to develop humanistic alternatives.

✓ 145 FAT SELF, THIN SELF, by Naomi Remen

✓ 156 A DYING PATIENT, by Robert Belknap

162 RESOURCES

166 INDEX

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS



IT IS WITH A SENSE OF JOY that the Editors present this first issue of *SYNTHESIS*. The initial concept of *SYNTHESIS* came as an intuition over three years ago. In the intervening time, and with the help of a great many people, the intuition has clarified itself.

One looks at the world and sees immense need, immense conflict — troubled times. And, simultaneously, one sees our own era as a moment of unique opportunity. As so many major thinkers have observed (Teilhard, Aurobindo and Fuller are only some of these), the world is waking up. Everywhere beneath the surface disarray, one sees thousands, even millions, of individuals beginning to take conscious charge of their own evolution. People have seen that they can develop themselves, harmonize their inner conflicts, and align themselves with higher human purposes in a most deliberate way. In America, in Europe, and in Asia, among the young and among the old, among all peoples, there is this same stirring toward individual development in the interest of serving the evolution of mankind. More and more, it would appear, the hoped-for solution to basic problems will be born as individuals, and then groups of individuals, come to terms with their own inner impulses toward full human development.

This awakening is part of a broad process — the process of Synthesis. One aspect of this process is a natural tendency within people to harmonize their inner lives at ever higher levels. It is a process that occurs in each one of us — and we can help it occur. Sometimes helping means getting out of the way of nature; sometimes it means being there to help our inner natures flower with an appropriate method.

Observers who take the long view have recognized the same process at work in humanity as a whole — the slow birth and gradual integration of man's highest elements, of love, caring and wisdom. Again, beneath the surface factions of time, one can discover a synthesis occurring in separate peoples, as families bind themselves into communities, and communities into nations, and nations into the wise and loving world order which all of us hope for. It is also a process that one can see in the physical and biological worlds — as Nobel Laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgyi suggests in his article this issue.

The process of individual synthesis, which is essential to all other human development, is facilitated in these days by a myriad of methods for personal growth. But the sheer abundance of such methods can confuse. *SYNTHESIS* is an attempt to show, in regular articles like the one in this issue by George Brown — when the various methods are most useful, and how they can be harmonized and used more effectively to foster the process of personal synthesis. Contributions to the practice of personal development come these days from all areas of the world: sifting these contributions and showing their interrelations will be another ongoing endeavor. The polarities of the human constitution — such as feminine and masculine, libidinous and the sublime — also need to be recognized and harmonized. To such purposes, articles like those in this issue by Assagioli on the man-woman question, or Haronian's on the repression of the sublime, will be a regular part of *SYNTHESIS*.

The crucial synthesis, in a way the necessary condition of any effort to make real the human idea within each of us, must be one bringing together the highest concepts with practice in the workshop of our own lives. Theory and practice, the idea and the experience, are the methods of contemporary empirical science. Borrowing on that tradition, each issue of *SYNTHESIS* presents the reader with practical tools he can use to apply and refine the ideas in various articles, and to move effectively toward his own individual synthesis. The special section of each issue called *PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK* is the place where a reader can make his or her tests and refinements, and where he can find methods to advance his own growth. It represents a combination of many methods that have proven effective for both lay persons and professionals who work with others.

We offer you this Journal on behalf of ourselves, the Editorial Advisors, and the dozens of others who have volunteered time,

labor and resources, in the hopes that it will truly be useful to you as we all journey toward the most human realizations we can reach in our lifetimes. We need and ask for your collaboration in making this vehicle as useful as it can be. To assist in the birth and development of what we are offering, we need your comments and suggestions. With that wish, and with wishes for good progress in the journeys of all of us, we send to you and to all readers, greetings on the occasion of this new beginning.



THE DEPERSONALIZATION OF SEX

Viktor E. Frankl

Reductionism
prevents correct
understanding



WHEN WE SPEAK AND THINK ABOUT LOVE, we should remember that it is a specifically human phenomenon. We must see to it that it is preserved in its humanness, rather than treated in a reductionistic way. Reductionism is a pseudoscientific procedure which takes human phenomena and either reduces them to, or deduces them from sub-human phenomena. Love, for example, is frequently interpreted in a reductionistic way as a mere sublimation of sexual drives and instincts which man shares with all the other animals. Such an interpretation blocks a true understanding of all the various human phenomena.

Self-transcendence
is intrinsic

In fact, love is one aspect of a more encompassing human phenomenon which I have come to call *self-transcendence*.¹ By this term I wish to denote that being human always relates to and is directed toward something other than itself. Man is not, as some current motivation theories would like to make us believe, basically concerned with gratifying needs and satisfying drives and instincts, and by so doing, maintaining, or restoring, homeostasis, i.e., the inner equilibrium, a state without tensions. By virtue of *the self-transcendent quality of the human reality* man is basically concerned with reaching out beyond himself, be it toward a meaning which he wants to fulfill, or toward another human being whom he wants to lovingly encounter. In other words, self-transcendence manifests itself either by one's serving a cause, or loving another person.

Loving encounter, however, precludes considering, and using, another human being merely as a means to an end. It precludes, for

example, using a person as a mere tool to reduce the tensions aroused and created by libidinal, or aggressive, drives and instincts. This would amount to some sort of masturbation, and in fact, many of our sexually neurotic patients actually speak of their own way of treating their partners in terms of “masturbating on them.” Such an attitude toward one’s partner, however, is a distortion of human sex.

Metasex

This is due to the fact that *human sex is always more than mere sex*, and it is more than mere sex precisely to the extent to which it serves and functions as *the physical expression of something metasexual*, namely, the physical expression of love. And only to the extent to which sex carries out this function of an embodiment, an incarnation, of love—only to this extent is it also climaxing in a really rewarding experience. Thus, Maslow was justified when he once pointed out that those people who cannot love never get the same thrill out of sex as those people who can love. And among those factors which contributed most to enhancing potency and orgasm the highest ranking, according to 20,000 readers of an American psychological magazine who had answered a pertinent questionnaire, was romanticism, that is to say, something that comes close to love.

Of course, it is not quite accurate to say that only human sex is more than mere sex. As Irenaeus Eibl-Eibesfeldt² has evidenced, in some vertebrates sexual behavior serves group cohesion, and this is particularly the case in primates that live in groups; thus, in certain apes sexual intercourse sometimes exclusively serves a social purpose. In humans, Eibl-Eibesfeldt states, there is no doubt that sexual intercourse not only serves the propagation of the species but also the monogamous relation between the partners.

Neurotic sexuality

But while love is a human phenomenon by its very nature, the humanness of sex is only the result of a developmental process—it is the product of progressive maturation.³ Let us start with Sigmund Freud’s differentiation between the *goal* of drives and instincts over against their *object*: one might say that the goal of sex is the reduction of sexual tensions whereas its object is the sexual partner. But as I see it, this only holds for neurotic sexuality. Only a neurotic individual is out first and foremost to get rid of his sperma, be it by masturbation, or by using the partner as a means to the same end. To the mature person the partner is no “object” at all; the mature person, rather, sees in him another *subject*, another *human being*, seeing him in his very *humanness*; and if he really loves him, he even sees in him another *person* which means that he sees in him his very *uniqueness*—and it is only love that enables a person to seize hold of another person in that very uniqueness which constitutes the personhood of a human being.⁴

Uniqueness of
human being
perceived
through love

Promiscuity
and pornography
are regressive
phenomena

Promiscuity is, by definition, the very opposite of a monogamous relation. An individual who indulges in promiscuity need not care for the uniqueness of a partner and therefore cannot love him. Since only that sex which is embedded in love can be really rewarding and satisfactory, the quality of the sexual life of such an individual is poor. Small wonder, then, that he tries to compensate for this lack of quality by the quantity of sexual activity. This, in turn, requires an ever more multiplied and increasing stimulation as is provided, for example, by pornography.

From this, one might understand that we are in no way justified in glorifying such mass phenomena as promiscuity and pornography by considering them as something progressive; they are rather regressive; after all, they are symptoms of a retardation that must have taken place in one's sexual maturation.

We should not forget that the myth of sex-just-for-fun's-sake (rather than letting sex become the physical expression of something meta-sexual) as something progressive is sold and spread by people who know that this is good business. What intrigues me is the fact that the young generation not only buys the myth, but also the hypocrisy behind it. In an age such as ours in which hypocrisy in sexual matters is so much frowned upon, it is strange to see that the hypocrisy of those who propagate a certain *freedom from censorship* remains unnoticed. Is it so hard to recognize that their real concern is *unlimited freedom to make money*?⁵

Existential
vacuum

But there cannot be successful business unless there is a substantial need that is met by this business. And in fact, we are witnessing, within our present culture, what one might call an *inflation of sex*. We can only understand this phenomenon against a comprehensive background. Today, we are confronted with an ever increasing number of clients who complain of a feeling of meaninglessness and emptiness, of an inner void, of the *existential vacuum*⁶ as I am used to calling it. This is due to the following two facts: In contrast to an animal, man is not told by drives and instincts what he must do; and in contrast to man in former times, he is no longer told by traditions and values what he should do. In our day, he sometimes no longer knows what he really wishes to do.

It is precisely this existential vacuum into which the sexual libido is hypertrophying. And it is precisely this hypertrophy that brings about the inflation of sex. As any kind of inflation, e.g., that on the monetary market, sexual inflation is associated with de-valuation. And sex is devaluated inasmuch as it is dehumanized. Thus, we observe the present trend to living a sexual life which is not integrated into one's

Symptom
of existential
frustration

personal life, but rather lived out for the sake of pleasure. The *depersonalization of sex* is understandable once we diagnose it as a symptom of what I call *existential frustration*: the frustration of man's search for meaning.⁷

Happiness from
living out
self-transcendence

So much for causes; but what about the effects? The more one's search for meaning is frustrated, the more such an individual embarks on what since the American Declaration of Independence has been termed the "pursuit of happiness." In the final analysis, the pursuit is intended to serve the purpose of intoxication and stupefaction. But, alas, it is the very pursuit of happiness that dooms it to failure. *Happiness cannot be pursued because it must ensue*, and it can ensue only as a result of living out one's self-transcendence, one's dedication and devotion to a cause to be served, or another person to be loved.

Nowhere else is this general truth more perceptible than in the field of sexual happiness. *The more we make it an aim, the more we miss it.* The more a male client tries to demonstrate his potency, the more he is likely to become impotent; and the more a female client tries to demonstrate to herself that she is capable of fully experiencing orgasm, the more liable she is to be caught in frigidity. And most of the cases of sexual neurosis I have met in my many decades of practice as a psychiatrist can easily be traced back to this state of affairs.

Accordingly, an attempt to cure such cases has to start with removing that demand quality which the sexual neurotic usually ascribes and attributes to sexual achievement. I have elaborated on the technique by which such a treatment can be implemented, in a paper published in the *International Journal of Sexology* in 1952.⁸ What I want to state here, however, is the fact that our present culture which, due to the motivation outlined above, idolizes sexual achievement, further adds to the demand quality experienced by the sexual neurotic, and thus further contributes to his neurosis. The use of the Pill, by allowing the female partners to be more demanding and spontaneous, has unwittingly encouraged the trend. American authors observe that the women's liberation movement, by having freed women of old taboos and inhibitions, has had as one result that even college girls have become ever more demanding of their sexual satisfaction, demanding it from college boys. The paradoxical result has been a new set of problems variously called "college impotence" or "the new impotence."⁹

*Konrad Lorenz has shown that it is not only in humans that the demand quality or—for that matter—sexual aggressiveness on the part of the female partner can result in impotence for the male; this also happens in animals. There

Real freedom
must be lived
in terms of
responsibility

The Victorian sexual taboos and inhibitions are going, and to the extent that real freedom is gained, a step forward has been taken. But, freedom threatens to degenerate into mere license and arbitrariness, unless it is lived in terms of responsibility. And that is why I do not tire of recommending that the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast.

is a species of fish whose females habitually swim "coquettishly" away from the males who seek mating. However, Lorenz succeeded in training a female to do the very opposite—to forcefully approach the male. The latter's reaction? Just what we would have suspected to be shown by a college boy: a complete incapacity to carry out sexual intercourse!

REFERENCES

1. V. E. FRANKL: *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, Washington Square Press, New York, 1967.
2. I. EIBL-EIBESFELDT: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 28, 1970.
3. V. E. FRANKL: *The Doctor and the Soul*, Vintage Books, New York, 1973.
4. ———: *Man's Search for Meaning*, Pocket Books, New York, 1963.
5. ———: "Encounter: The Concept and Its Vulgarization," *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 1, 1973, p. 73.
6. ———: "The Feeling of Meaninglessness: A Challenge to Psychotherapy," *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 32, 1972, p. 85.
7. ———: *The Will to Meaning*, New American Library, New York, 1969.
8. ———: "The Pleasure Principle and Sexual Neurosis," *The International Journal of Sexology*, 5, 1952, p. 128.
9. G. L. GINSBERG, W. A. FROSCHE AND T. SHAPIRO: "The New Impotence," *Arch. Gen. Psychiat.*, 26, 1972, p. 218.



Viktor E. Frankl is one of Europe's leading psychiatrists. He was born in 1905 and received his degrees from the University of Vienna. During the second World War he was imprisoned for three years in Dachau, Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps. The suffering and degradations of those harrowing years led to his development of the School of Logotherapy—a therapy emphasizing the human need for meaning. He is president of the Austrian Medical Society for Psychotherapy. He has been guest lecturer at Harvard, the Royal Society of Medicine in London and many other institutions. Currently, among his other duties, he is professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna

Medical School and professor of Logotherapy at the U.S. International University. His fifteen books, translated into many languages, include *Man's Search for Meaning*, *The Doctor and the Soul*, and *The Will to Meaning*.

DRIVE IN LIVING MATTER TO PERFECT ITSELF

Albert Szent-Gyögyi



FOR QUITE SOME TIME science has recognized the principle of entropy as a fundamental factor in the universe. Entropy causes organized forms to gradually disintegrate into lower and lower levels of organization. This tendency by itself leads one to consider the world as a whole to be like a great machine running down and wearing out.

But there is mounting evidence for the existence of the opposite principle: *syntropy*—or “negative entropy”—through the influence of which forms tend to reach higher and higher levels of organization, order, and dynamic harmony. In the following essay, Albert Szent-Gyögyi, research biologist twice awarded the Nobel Prize, describes his conception of an “innate drive in living matter to perfect itself,” and suggests that such a syntropic principle can be found even at the sub-atomic level of matter.

Syntropy is closely related to the process of synthesis, and today many are calling increasing attention to a *psychological* drive toward synthesis, toward growth, toward wholeness and self-perfection. Szent-Gyögyi’s conception has therefore far-reaching implications not only for the physical and biological sciences, but perhaps even more for psychology and for our view of the human being, of society, and of the world.

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi's paper was originally presented as a lecture delivered for the Symposium on the Relationship between the Biological and Physical Sciences at Columbia University.

I have always been an amateur scientist but a professional poacher. I have never been married to any single principle, and my relations to sciences have been most promiscuous. This is perhaps the reason why I was chosen to discuss here The Relationship Between the Biological and Physical Sciences.

That title suggests some basic difference between the animate and inanimate world, and so at the outset we find ourselves in a contradiction. We probably all feel that there is some basic difference between the living and the non-living, while as scientists we cannot believe that the laws of the universe should lose their validity at the surface of our skin. Life must actually have been created by these laws. So our first step has to be to clear our minds about this contradiction.

They can be so cleared, to a great extent, by the simple fact that things can be put together in two different ways, at random or meaningfully. This is a cardinal point. I would like to illustrate it by an example. Six toothpicks and two corks on a table will be but six toothpicks and two corks. Their qualities are additive. However, if I put these toothpicks and corks together in a specific way, they will make a (somewhat symbolic) horse which can no longer be fully described in terms of the constituents. New qualities are developed which are no longer additive. With a few more pieces I could set a man on this horse; then I would again have something new — neither a horse nor a man but a man-on-a-horse. This is what is called “organization,” putting things together in a meaningful way; it is one of the basic features of nature.

If elementary particles are put together to form an atomic nucleus, something new is created which can no longer be described in terms of elementary particles. The same happens over again if you surround this nucleus by electrons and build an atom, when you put atoms together to form a molecule, etc. Inanimate nature stops at the low level of organization of simple molecules. But living systems go on and combine molecules to form macromolecules, macromolecules to form organelles (such as nuclei, mitochondria, chloroplasts, ribosomes or membranes) and eventually put all these together to form the greatest wonder of creation, a cell, with its astounding

Difference
between
animate and
inanimate world

Organization

Hierarchy of
levels

inner regulations. Then it goes on putting cells together to form “higher organisms” and increasingly more complex individuals, of which you are an example. At every step new, more complex and subtle qualities are created, and so in the end we are faced with properties which have no parallel in the inanimate world, though the basic rules remain unchanged.

LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION

Reductionism

Any level of organization is fascinating and offers new vistas and horizons, but we must not lose our bearings or else we may fall victim to the simple idea that any level of organization can best be understood by pulling it to pieces, by a study of its components – that is, the study of the next lower level. This may make us dive to lower and lower levels in the hope of finding the secret of life there. This made, out of my own life, a wild-goose chase. I started my experimental work with rabbits, but I found rabbits too complex, so I shifted to a lower level and studied bacteria; I became a bacteriologist. But soon I found bacteria too complex, and shifted to molecules and became a biochemist. So I spent my life in the hunt for the secret of life.

It is most important for the biologist to give himself an account of these relations when he asks himself on which level of organization to work when embarking on research with the desire to understand life. Those who like to express themselves in the language of mathematics do well to keep to lower levels.

Energy transformations

We do not know what life is but, all the same, know life from death. I know that my cat is dead when it moves no more, has no reflexes and leaves my carpet clean – that is, no longer transforms chemical energy into mechanic, electric or osmotic work. These transformations of energy are most closely linked up with the very nature of life. We, ourselves, get our energies by burning our food and transducing its chemical energy into heat and various sorts of work.

So for twenty years I studied energy transformations by going to the source of the vital energies and worked on biological oxidation on the molecular level. These studies netted me a Nobel Prize (which was most pleasant) but left me eventually high and dry without a better understanding.

So I turned to muscle, the seat of the most violent and massive energy transformations. This study led me and my associates to the discovery of a new muscle protein, and we could then ourselves make little muscles and make them jump outside the body. To see these little artificial muscles jump for the first time was, perhaps, the most exciting experience of my scientific life, and I felt sure that in a fortnight I would understand everything.

Then I worked for twenty more years on muscle and learned not a thing. The more I knew, the less I understood; and I was afraid to finish my life with knowing everything and understanding nothing. Evidently something very basic was missing. I thought that in order to understand I had to go one level lower, to electrons, and — with graying hair — I began to muddle in quantum mechanics. So I finished up with electrons. But electrons are just electrons and have no life at all. Evidently on the way I lost life; it had run out between my fingers.

I do not regret this wild-goose chase — because it made me wiser and I know, now, that all levels of organization are equally important and we have to know something about all of them if we want to approach life. The biologist wants to read in the book of creation. If there was a creator, he could not have been a molecular biologist only. He must have known a great deal of quantum mechanics and mathematics, too, and must have been a good geneticist and physiologist. He must have been all of that, and so if we want to follow his trail and read in the book of creation, we must be a bit of everything. Even if limiting our work to a single level, we have to keep the whole in mind. Naturally, the higher we climb on the ladder of organization and complexity, the less our material becomes accessible to mathematical analysis, but we must not think ourselves to be scientists only when speaking in equations.*

To finish my life's story, now I am climbing up again on the ladder of organization on which I worked my way down through half a century, and am working on the cellular level—for the cell is the cornerstone, the greatest wonder, of living nature, and is, today,

*A holistic attitude is just as important for the psychologist and the educator, who deal primarily with functions and processes which occur at the highest levels of organization in the individual. A simple reductionist approach will prevent a correct evaluation of such processes and the understanding of their true nature, and might in some cases hide the very fact that they exist. [ed.]

a somewhat neglected dimension. Not only do I not regret my earlier climbing down to electrons; I even feel I might not have climbed down far enough, and it is possible that we have to wait for discovery of new science, some sort of super-wave-mechanics, till we can really approach life; but electrons and quantum mechanics are the limit set to the biologist by physics today.

Quantum mechanics, which deals with the electronic structure of molecules, taught me something most important: how wonderfully subtle and complex is a structure of even a simple molecule. As a student I learned that the benzene ring is a hexagon, and this was all there was to it. Quantum mechanics has taught me that in the simplest aromatic molecule every carbon atom has its individuality which can be described only by half a dozen electronic indices, which give to the molecule a very sharp profile, a very specific individuality, most complex in the very complex molecules of the living edifice.

This brings me to the problem on which I plan to spend the next fifty years of my research. The problem is this: most biological reactions are chain reactions. To interact in a chain, these precisely built molecules must fit together most precisely, as the cog-wheels of a Swiss watch do. But if this is so, then how can such a system develop at all? For if any one of the very specific cogwheels in these chains is changed, then the whole system must simply become in-operative. Saying that it can be improved by random mutation of one link sounds to me like saying that you could improve a Swiss watch by dropping it and thus bending one of its wheels or axles. To get a better watch all the wheels must be changed simultaneously to make a good fit again.

DRIVE TO IMPROVEMENT

There is no need to descend into the electronic world for examples on this line. In the winter, at Woods Hole, the sea gulls are my main company. These gulls, the "herring gulls," have a red patch on their beaks. This red patch has an important meaning, for the gull feeds its babies by going out fishing and swallowing the fish it has caught. Then, on coming home, the hungry baby gull knocks at the red spot. This elicits a reflex of regurgitation in mama, and the baby takes the fish from her gullet. All this may sound very simple, but it involves a whole series of most complicated chain reactions with a horribly complex underlying nervous mechanism. How could such a system develop? The red spot would make no sense without the

Uniqueness



Random mutation
insufficient as
cause of
evolution

complex nervous mechanism of the knocking baby and that of the regurgitating mother. All this had to be developed simultaneously, which, as a random mutation, has a probability of zero. I am unable to approach this problem without supposing an innate “drive” in living matter to perfect itself.

Unsolved problems

I know that many of my colleagues, especially the molecular biologists, will be horrified, if not disgusted, to hear me talk about a “drive” and will call me a “vitalist,” which is worse than to be called a communist. But I think that the use of such words as “drive” does no harm if we do not imagine we have found an explanation by finding a name. If we look upon such words as simply denoting great unsolved problems of science, they can even lead to useful experimentation.*

Life keeps
life going

By “drive” I denote here simply the ability of life to maintain and improve itself. You know this from your daily life. You know well that if you use your car too much and your legs too little, your car gets worn out while your legs atrophy, just fade away. This is one of the most characteristic differences between the living and non-living. The non-living is worn out by use, while the living is improved, developed by it. Life keeps life going, building up and improving itself, while inactivity makes it go to pieces.

An early American physiologist, Bowditch, discovered an unexpected phenomenon which reflects these relations and makes them accessible to experimentation. I am alluding to his “staircase.” If I ask you what you expect if I make the heart rest for a little while and then make it go again, your guess will probably be that the first beat after the rest will be stronger than the last one before it. But the opposite is true: it will be weaker, and the tension developed will gradually rise to its original level in the subsequent beats. Here is the same problem in a nutshell.

Dr. Hajdu and I have tried to find out what is behind this “staircase” phenomenon and found that what happens is simply that, in rest, potassium leaks out of the muscle fibers, and is pumped back in the subsequent contractions. For the muscle to work well the

*Previously the author had spoken of a tendency rather than a drive, as in the following: “My feeling is that living matter carries, in itself, a hitherto undefined principle, a tendency for perfecting itself” (“The promise of medical science.” In G. Wølstenholme (ed.), *Man and his future*, Little, Brown, Boston, 1963, pp. 188-195). [ed.]

potassium must have a high concentration inside the fibers and low outside them. What happens in rest is an increase in randomness; the entropy of the potassium increases in rest and decreases again in function. Function thus keeps the living system on its low entropy state, in its highly specialized spatial structure – puts or keeps everything in its place. Life thus keeps life going, building up itself.*

*Entropy, which we described as the tendency of organized forms to gradually disintegrate into lower and lower levels of organization, is predominant in *inanimate matter*, and is easiest to observe (the machine ultimately breaking down, energy eventually being used up, etc.). It has long been accepted by science and is described by precise mathematical formulations. Syntropy, the opposite principle, the tendency to reach higher and higher levels of organization, harmony, and order, is predominant in *living* organisms. It becomes increasingly prominent in the more advanced species – those where consciousness is most developed – thus culminating, as far as we know, in man.

Syntropy is only now beginning to capture the attention of the scientific community and is far from being generally accepted, yet some of the foremost contemporary thinkers consider it a fundamental principle of nature. Buckminster Fuller, for example, states: “The history of man seems to demonstrate the emergence of his progressively conscious participation in theretofore spontaneous universal evolution. . . . My continuing philosophy is predicated . . . on the assumption that in dynamic counterbalance to the expanding universe of entropically increasing random disorderliness there must be a universal pattern of omnicontracting, convergent, progressive orderliness and that man is that anti-entropic reordering function . . .” (R.B. Fuller, *No More Secondhand God*, Southern Illinois University Press, 1963, p. xii.)

The concept of syntropy, in such views as Fuller’s, has, as we have said, the most far-reaching implications, both philosophical and practical, for the full development of the human being, his integration within the scheme of nature, and his ultimate purpose. The fact that syntropy is much more difficult to observe than entropy has been the cause of much perplexity, and an obstacle to its wider acceptance as a principle of nature. An Italian mathematician, Luigi Fantappiè, suggested a reason for this difficulty: human consciousness, he observed, is at the top of the organization ladder of nature, and intimately associated with the syntropy side of the entropy-syntropy polarity. Therefore it is normally oriented toward, and attracted by, its polar opposite, entropy, and able to observe the entropic world from a most detached and objective perspective, with greater ease and precision. In his book, *Principi di una Teoria Unitaria del Mondo Fisico e Biologico* (1944) (Principles of a Unified Theory of the Physical and Biological World), Fantappiè offers a clear presentation – based on rigorous mathematical formulations – for both syntropy and entropy, and deals with the implications of syntropy in the physical, biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. An abridged presentation of this work will appear in forthcoming issues of *SYNTHESIS*. [ed.]

These are not merely abstruse problems of biology. We could show, with Dr. Hajdu, that if your heart fails in some infectious disease and you die, this is because it behaves like a heart which rested too much; and if digitalis pulls you through, it is by doing to it what work should have done.

But the heart may be too complex to allow a more detailed analysis, and according to the rules of my life I should take you lower down from the molecular to the electronic dimension. So I will talk about "charge transfer." It has become clear during the last decades that under certain conditions an electron of a molecule, say molecule A, can go over to . . . another molecule, molecule B. For this the two molecules must be in very intimate contact. . . . Evidently the electron goes over because by its doing so the free energy of the system decreases and the system becomes more stable.* The "charge transfer energy" will thus contribute to the forces keeping the two molecules together. Without it the system would be less stable, would tend more to go to pieces. Here then is a simple example of

Least free
energy systems

*Other more familiar examples of energy transfer are a boulder rolling down the slope of a mountain, or a piece of iron being attracted by a magnet. In both cases, energy that was initially stored as *potential energy* becomes transformed into *kinetic energy* as the two elements (the boulder and the earth, or the magnet and the piece of iron) move toward each other. When the two elements again come to rest, finding a new, more stable point of equilibrium, the kinetic energy is released, and either is dissipated as heat or can be utilized to do useful work.

In general, each time two or more elements come closer together, energy is released. It is interesting to observe that often as the process continues, and all elements in a system come as close as possible to one another, releasing the greatest amount of energy, they arrange themselves not randomly, as an aggregate, but according to specific patterns, determined by geometrical laws, where order, harmony, and often great beauty are readily apparent. Crystals, are formed this way. They have qualities and properties beyond those of their component parts, and are thus a true *synthesis* of atoms.

We can see therefore that synthesis not only does not require energy — except when needed initially, to get the process going — but releases energy that was up to then locked in matter, and makes it available.

This same process is very apparent in the psychological domain. When a number of individuals form a harmonious group, thus becoming psychologically close to one another, much energy is released, which becomes available and can be turned outward to useful purposes. Or within the individual, when, as the result of effort, we "overcome a psychological block" and feel "more together," we have supplied the initial energy to allow some of our personality elements to



function maintaining structure. We could continue this spirited game and add molecules C, D, E, and F to the system and imagine the electrons flowing from B to C, and from there to D, E and F continuously.

This is not a meaningless speculation, a “jeux d’esprit,” for all of our vital energies are actually derived from such an electron flow. The energies which are driving you are the energies which these “flowing” electrons gradually lose in this transfer from one molecule to the other. Finally this energy is translated into “high energy phosphate,” the immediate source of the energy by which your cells live. This flow of electrons can be expected to help keep the molecules of the chain together, in their very specific steric relations, and we can expect the system to tend to go to pieces as soon as the electron flow stops. We have thus a clear-cut example of life being kept in the living condition by life itself, kept by work in good working order. We can even expect the system of our molecules A and B to tend to add further molecules, to decrease free energy further, and thereby to become more stable, better and more complex. So actually we arrive at a “drive” to improvement, to building up.

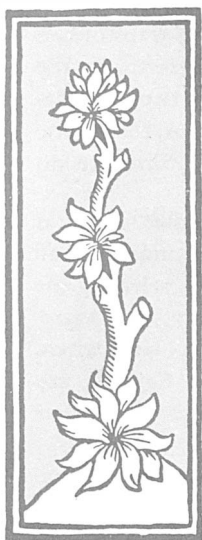
In thermodynamics such a system as I just described would be called an “open system,” which reaches its energy minimum—that is, its greatest stability—by working. So the “drive” can even be expressed in the idioms of accredited science.

“WISDOM” OF LIVING MATTER

These problems are so fascinating that I would like to spend a few more minutes with them. Many years ago I proposed, with my colleagues, Isenberg and McLaughlin, that electrons may be trans-

move closer to each other, and form a more harmonious structure. The energy released by such a step toward greater *psychological synthesis* is immediately experienced, often as a feeling of elation or greater well being, or as the urge to action, sometimes even as a “peak experience.” Whenever such energy becomes available—and particularly if suddenly, or in large quantity, as in the case of a psychological “breakthrough”—it can be deliberately channeled and utilized to keep the process of synthesis going, and accelerate it. If this is not done, it will largely dissipate—thus wasting much of the potential benefit of the breakthrough—or even disturbing other aspects of the inner synthesis, occurring in nearby psychological “space.” [ed.]

System gives
out energy
as it improves



Hallucinogenic
drugs

ferred by certain molecules at specific points only, and showed that indoles will probably transfer their electron at Carbon No. 3.* Many of the drugs which provoke hallucination, the "hallucinogens," contain an indole ring. With Karreman and Isenberg we also showed that hallucinogens have a strong tendency to give off electrons, are good "electron donors." We concluded that hallucination, in this case, may be caused by transfer of electrons from the drug to the nerve cell. Both our assumptions have found corroboration very recently—the first by Green and Martieu in Pullman's laboratory, the latter by Snyder and Merrill, who showed that the hallucinogenic property goes parallel to the electron-donating ability in a great number of hallucinogens and related compounds.

In order to be able to pass an electron on at a certain point, the molecules must be fitted together most accurately, and linked together strongly in two dimensions to form a "membrane" as in the case of mitochondria, where all our vital energies are generated by the flow of electrons. So these considerations may lead even to an answer of one of the most puzzling problems of biology: what is a membrane? The knowledge gained might also help to cure mysterious diseases, answer problems of everyday medicine.

Since I was not afraid to use the word "*drive*," I might as well be even more audacious and use the word "*wisdom*." I am not the first to do so. The great American physiologist, Walter B. Cannon, talked and wrote a great deal about the "wisdom of the body."

"Wisdom" of
the body

I would like to illustrate with one example what I call "wisdom." If you look at a motor nerve cell, which gives the immediate command to your muscles to contract, you will find a great number of fibers from other nerve cells, hundreds of them, ending at its surface. These fibers bring messages from faraway nerve centers and modify the action of this motor nerve cell and the motion this nerve cell will induce.

Perhaps I could make this clearer by a little story about a kitten which shared my tent once in Cornwall, England. One day a snake crept into our tent. My kitten stiffened in horror. When I touched its tail, the kitten jumped up vertically about two feet high. This

*The term "indole" refers to a particular type of ring pattern formed by some of the atoms within certain organic molecules. "Carbon No. 3" is a carbon atom placed at a specific location in the indole ring. [ed.]

happened because the nerve fibers which ended on the motor nerve cells conveyed the message that there was danger of life and any motion had to be fast and violent. These messages came, as I said, from faraway complex nerve centers which worked up and evaluated the visual impressions of my kitten.

The problem I want to bring out here is this: how could these hundreds of nerve fibers, coming from faraway nerve centers, ever find the right motor nerve cell? All this could not have been coded into the egg cell from which my kitten grew. Of course, this egg cell must have contained (in conjunction with the sperm) all the information which is necessary to build such a wondrous organism as a cat. But all those excessively complex networks which make a brain could not have been inscribed into the egg cell. The egg cell cannot be a blueprint; it can only be an instruction manual, which contains instructions on how to build macromolecular systems with sufficient wisdom to find their place and function. That all this could not have been inscribed in the egg cell we could show by cutting these nerve fibers and introducing a new factor of which the egg did not know. We could expect that the fibers would again find their severed ends through their own wisdom. As suggested by the experiments of Sperry, even if we should cut a great number of these fibers simultaneously, they would not get mixed up and each of them would find its very own ending again—a really remarkable wisdom.

This “wisdom” may be even much more difficult to understand than the “drive,” but also must have its well-defined mechanism. Perhaps this “wisdom” and “drive” are essentially the same, and may be the property of living matter in general—the property that has driven matter to generate life, which then tends to build its own mechanisms. I feel strongly that, for instance, the human speech center was not developed by random mutation, but had to be developed as soon as man had something to say—the function generating its own mechanism. Of course I know that to make any such change permanent, the change must be communicated by some sort of feedback mechanism from periphery to DNA. We do not know of any such feedback, but it was only a few years ago that we had not the least idea of how DNA communicates with the periphery either.

Maybe this drive is not an exclusive property of living systems, but is the property of matter in general. We know today that fairly complex organic molecules can be built without the intervention of living matter, while by the word “organic” our scientific fathers

Genetic coding
not blueprint
of individual

Function
generates its
own structure

wanted to express the idea that it is only life which can build such molecules. Sidney Fox in Florida even builds protein-like substances without life. It may have been this innate drive of matter which led to the origin of life and played, later, an important hand in its evolution.

AREAS OF IGNORANCE

I have tried to show that many of the greatest problems of biology are unsolved, if not untouched, and that we can expect to solve them by applying physics. But whether physics in its present state allows us the analysis of the underlying mechanisms, I do not know. I rather doubt it, and we may have to wait for the discovery of entirely new physical sciences till we can penetrate deeper into the nature of life. In my student days we hardly knew more than the structure of a few amino acids and sugars, and we felt obliged to explain life. It was not so long ago that the young Max Planck was advised by one of the best physicists to become a pianist rather than a physicist because physics was a finished and closed subject to which nothing could be added. So we biologists have to look out most anxiously for any new development in physics and any new instrument physics may give into our hands. Meanwhile, we must not feel obliged to explain life with our present knowledge, and we should not shy away from admitting our ignorance—the first step towards new knowledge being to recognize ignorance.

I have been often reproached for being a vitalist, mysticist, obscurist, and teleologist while the real situation was clear and simple, there being a complete interdependence between structure and function. Since every function must have its underlying structure which must be of physical nature, all we have to do is to apply physics to structure. This may be so, but, all the same, I feel we must be careful with this interdependence as we don't know how many unknowns our equations still contain. Certainly there is such an interdependence as there is complete interdependence between the needle of your gramophone and the groove on your record; and once the needle follows the groove, your victrola must produce the sound it does. All you have forgotten is only Beethoven or Bach, whose music you might have been playing, and without whose genius your gramophone would be useless. Of course, Bach and Beethoven, too, were built of macromolecules, but, all the same, we do well to keep our reverence before their genius, which is still far

Discovery of
new physical
sciences needed

Unknown factors

beyond the possibility of detailed physical analysis. Such a speechless deep reverence and amazement before the wonders of nature is the main result of my half a century's poaching, and if I were to sum up my summary now, I would do it in Shakespeare's words, saying: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."



Albert Szent-Gyorgyi has the unusual distinction of being awarded two Nobel Prizes (1937 and 1955) for his scientific researches. He was born in Hungary in 1893 and was educated at the University of Budapest, and then at Cambridge University. Before coming to the United States in 1947, he was professor of medical chemistry at Szeged, Hungary and professor of biochemistry at the University of Budapest. Since 1947, he has been director of research at the Institute for Muscle Research, Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. His books include: *Oxidation, Fermentation, Vitamins, Health and Disease*; *Muscular Contraction*; *Contraction of Body and Heart Muscles*; *Bioenergetics*; *Submolecular Biology*; *Bioelectronics*; *The Living State*.

THE FARTHER REACHES OF GESTALT THERAPY

A Conversation with George Brown



HIS ARTICLE IS THE FIRST OF A SERIES on some of the major approaches to personal development. Among the new psychological methods for enhancing personal growth, a few have become very well known and Gestalt Therapy is one of these. Gestalt Therapy is an approach pioneered by Dr. Frederick Perls, a German-born psychiatrist who lived in many parts of the world, finally settling in America and Canada. His method only became popular during the last years of his life (Perls died in 1970 at the age of 76). Perls was a colorful, outspoken and controversial personality who is remem-



"The same thing you're doing for your client, do it for yourself, continually. And for Christ's sake, drag out your skeptic."

This interview was conducted by Betsie Carter and Susan Vargiu of the SYNTHESIS staff.

bered for many unflinching epigrams ("Psychoanalysis is a disease masquerading as a cure;" "The 'Good Boy' is a spiteful brat"). He was a charismatic therapist and teacher who delighted in his flowing gray beard and flamboyant costumes.

*Two of the Editors of SYNTHESIS went to Santa Barbara, California to get George Brown's latest thinking about Gestalt Therapy and its evolution during Perls' last years and since. Dr. Brown is an internationally known professor of education, famous for his development of "Confluent Education," author of **Human Teaching for Human Learning** and **The Live Classroom**, and a longtime student of Perls. Dr. Brown has practiced Gestalt Therapy for some ten years and integrated it with educational theory and technique.*

The conversation that resulted from this visit to Santa Barbara evokes much of the essential spirit of Gestalt and some of its theory and techniques. But as a brief introduction to Gestalt, it may be useful to summarize some of its main elements for readers who are not familiar with them. Gestalt Therapy is not primarily for sick people; it is a method of growth for developing the potential of the healthy individual. It is generally practiced in groups. It emphasizes the acquiring of awareness, especially the need for people to become aware of the existential moment, the "now," for full experience of life. It equally emphasizes the need for each person to become aware of neglected or unconscious aspects of himself. Integrating these aspects is another important theme, as is the theme of taking responsibility for one's actions, one's thoughts, one's feelings.

A typical session of Gestalt Therapy will find a group of some fifteen people seated on chairs in a circle. One chair is empty and when a person wants to use the group he will move to that chair and sit in it. Then, with the help of the therapist sitting beside him and the rest of the group, he will "work," using the situation to increase his own awareness. A common first step might be simply getting in direct touch with the experience of the moment. For example, the therapist might ask:

"What is your experience now?"

"I feel there are several persons I don't know in the room and perhaps they may not understand what I say."

"That is a thought, and an expectation, not an experience. Try to express your experience now."

"It is like what I feel when . . . I guess it could be called fear."

"Can you describe what you are feeling now?"

*"My hands are trembling. My voice quivers. I am afraid."**

The reader will learn more about Gestalt as this article progresses.

Some critics of Gestalt Therapy have complained that it can be unfeeling, even cruel, at times. Dr. Brown begins by dealing with this criticism.



*"Our relationship is a priestly one:
I don't think we came to
this consciously. In essence,
we've learned from the people
we've worked with."*

SYNTHESIS: George, when we talked last month to set up this conversation, you said you wanted to share your ideas about moving beyond Gestalt Therapy. Can you tell us what you mean by "beyond" Gestalt?

GEORGE: Well, there are two views of Gestalt Therapy. One is narrow, and it's prevalent enough: there are some people practicing it that way. It has limitations which are very serious in terms of therapy and education, and it's this view that's important to move beyond. Gestalt in its essential nature, the way Perls saw it, was more holistic and more realistic. So while what I have to say goes beyond Gestalt Therapy as practiced by many, it is not actually beyond Gestalt in its essential nature and composition. For instance, Gestalt has a very important loving, or "I-Thou," aspect. But not many people know about this, you don't see it much anymore.

I-Thou

SYNTHESIS: Anymore?

GEORGE: Well, let me go back a little. My teacher, Fritz Perls, used to talk about the "extension of ego boundaries" – and to me this is

*The example is taken from Claudio Naranjo's pamphlet, "I and Thou, Here and Now: Contributions of Gestalt Therapy," Esalen Institute, 1967, p. 3.

a very fascinating concept. The concept applies to love and loving: it seems quite possible for one person to extend his ego boundaries to include at least one other person within these boundaries, so that he will, in effect, take this other person as seriously as he takes himself. This is similar to Martin Buber's concept of the "I-Thou" relationship. I can remember Perls talking about this, talking about the "I-Thou" in the first workshops I went through and when I first started training with him.

SYNTHESIS: When was that?

GEORGE: Oh, back in '64. We used to talk a lot about "I-Thou" for about the first year or two that I was in the work. And then something happened and there was more emphasis on comments like "frustrating the manipulations" of clients, and teaching people to "stand on their own two feet," and cruelty and things like that. What I suspect happened was that this was the nature of what Fritz Perls was going through.

SYNTHESIS: How did you perceive that? What was he going through?

GEORGE: I think what may have happened is that as Perls became more and more well known, he started to attract many people through Esalen. He used to get a lot of psychologists and psychiatrists. I can remember the supervisory workshop that my wife, Judy,* and I were in. There were ten of us: Judy and me, and the rest were psychologists and psychiatrists. The therapists were there, motivated (ostensibly) by their desire to help people, and, of course, this is a complex desire. But essentially, that was their statement, their overt statement, anyhow. And out of their desire to help, one could see that they would take responsibility for people and were easily susceptible to being sucked into their patients manipulations — which doesn't help the patient. So in order to counteract this, Fritz would push this idea of "frustrating" the patient, and he himself would set up the model. I think he became tougher at that point.

Frustrating the
patient

SYNTHESIS: In response to training these therapists?

GEORGE: Yes. When he was working with people he became tougher, and when he talked he stressed toughness, so that one didn't hear very much about the extension of ego boundaries anymore. This, I think, is very important to appreciate.

*Judith Brown is married to George Brown and has practiced Gestalt Therapy with him and in her own practice for many years.

Mysticism in
private

Fritz would also deny mystical and spiritual things during this period. He put them down most of the time. On the other hand, he would talk privately about very mystical experiences he had had. I remember him describing his experience with Ida Rolf this way. He had a very serious heart condition, and he was talking about Ida putting her hands above his body in a certain place, and how he felt the “vibrations” from her hands moving into his heart and doing something to his heart. Well, you know, that’s not “reality.” That’s not your everyday Gestalt trip. Yet, he would talk about these things, but not in a very public kind of context.

SYNTHESIS: If he tried to compensate for the therapists’ tendencies to be sucked in, what do you think was the part that was left out? What got lost?

GEORGE: Well, I don’t think it was a matter of it being altogether lost, because it would still manifest itself from time to time. For example, when someone was working and being very real in their work, he was always very tender. I would say he gave love — care, concern, love and empathy, which start to get very close to “I - Thou.” This happened consistently.

Tenderness not
emphasized

However, in terms of the emphasis, when he *talked* about his work he stressed how to avoid the manipulations of patients in Gestalt Therapy. Now, of course, there were more people who were in the manipulating mode than people who were really working to realize themselves. And so, I think what happened was that the people who were there to be trained didn’t see the love as much as they saw the frustrating part. All this was colored and heightened by Fritz’s proclivity to be a ham, and a clown, and an actor generally. He did things that were play, sometimes cruel play, with the person who was manipulating.

For instance, if someone was acting, dramatizing himself, Fritz would pretend to hold up a movie camera, and people would really eat this up because he was very good at it. I think there was a tendency to remember that side of his work, especially since there was quantitatively more of it, than to appreciate the tenderness. And this was especially true when the frustrating of manipulations resonated with some unconscious part of the therapist himself, his own cruelty, his own bastardliness. Now, the therapist could allow all that to emerge in his own work, because he was doing it for the other person’s good, right? So as a therapist you can be a bastard, and be cruel, and meet all your needs to act this way, justifiably.

SYNTHESIS - A Conversation with George Brown

Identification
as technician

SYNTHESIS: Do you see Gestalt being misused and misunderstood?

GEORGE: Sure, people who are doing crazy trips, and who have the implicit “shoulds” — “You should stand on your own two feet;” “You should not say ‘should’ ” . . . Of all the therapies, Gestalt has the most potential for somebody really being cruel and hurting other people.

I think the problem here is that people can get so into the technique that they are, in a sense, captured by the *program* of being a technician. The essential thing to remember, however, is that we are dealing with human beings. It’s the person, not the goddamn technique that’s important. Fritz would talk about this too, you know, about the importance of “dealing with whatever emerged.” I, myself, sometimes tend to operate in *patterns* of therapeutic behavior. In a way, it’s all right because I’m aware of when I’m doing it — that I’m using a kind of automatic response. At least I hope that I’m aware of it. And sometimes these responses are quite appropriate. But sometimes they capture you and then you become a technician.

SYNTHESIS: What can therapists do to get out of this pattern?

GEORGE: They can ask themselves, “What am I doing and how am I doing it?” The same thing you’re doing for your client, do it for yourself, continually. And for Christ’s sake, drag out your skeptic. I do a lot of thinking about Gestalt, and its inaccuracies and weaknesses. This is true of anybody in any kind of thing, whether psychoanalysis or TA or primal therapy. An unexamined approach becomes a goddamn religion! I object to this. I think it’s unhealthy not to be continually re-examining what you’re doing.

And it’s important to have a clear grasp of *theory*. Theory makes a great contribution to technique, improves your attitude towards the people you’re working with, and when you put all these things together, it makes a much healthier Gestalt. Now, one idea of Perls’ theory is “learning to stand on your own two feet.” That’s the most acceptable description for conventional discussion, among the more or less poetic metaphors he used to describe *self-support*.

SYNTHESIS: Would you say more about this, George?

GEORGE: Most of us have learned a variety of manipulations to use to get support from our environment, especially from other people in our environment. We learn these manipulations in childhood, and because we never — or seldom — get the chance to experience or learn alternatives, we continue to use what we know — those manip-

Manipulations
distort reality

ulating roles and games. I'm talking about the manipulative patterns we all have of being charming or playing dumb, or impressing people with how clever we are, and so forth. Instead of responding to each situation in ways appropriate to that unique situation, we distort and deny our perceptions of the situation. Or, using our manipulating roles and games, we attempt to modify the situation to fit our fantasy of who we are, and thus maintain the status quo. Our status quo, of course, stems from how we experience ourselves, and has all the limitations we imagine we have.

But what are these limitations? They are a consequence of the narrowness in our choices of ways to be, or ways to respond to the world. In other words, through manipulative roles and games we enslave ourselves in a no-growth prison.

I should point out that this process is usually not conscious. Most of us believe that we are responding realistically to whatever is occurring within ourselves or in the universe around us. But the actual condition of our narrow existence is simply a consequence of our limited choices.

What Perls was trying to do when he frustrated the manipulations of his clients, was first to demonstrate to them, dramatically, that for at least this one time, the habitual ways of responding or reacting did not work. The person who was in therapy with Perls would have to find other ways to act. So, through frustration, Perls hoped first to help the client become aware of what he was doing, that he was attempting to manipulate. Then, through other Gestalt methods, the client could *experience exactly how* he was doing what he was doing. And, as I've said, Perls described this process as moving the client from a position of requiring "environmental support" to a stance of self-support.

Beyond
self-support

Now, every Gestalt Therapist tries to do this, but the question which has to be asked by anyone practicing Gestalt Therapy or anyone engaged in the Gestalt learning process for himself, is this: after the individual can stand on his own two feet, what does he do then? Just stand there?

SYNTHESIS: And this is where the "essential Gestalt," as you've called it, goes *beyond* the more narrow view of Gestalt?

GEORGE: Absolutely. Now, the individual doesn't just stand there. He begins to move. He wants to move. And it seems obvious that he probably wants to move *toward*, as well as away from, and that the direction toward could have another human being as its goal. This

SYNTHESIS - A Conversation with George Brown

can evolve into a movement toward many human beings, or perhaps toward all human beings, or perhaps even ultimately toward all manifestations of life and energy.

Ultimate goal

What I have just said in no way negates the fact that individuals need to learn “to stand on their own two feet.” But that isn’t an end unto itself—it is only one part of a *process*, and in this process there is an ultimate goal, and that’s expanding the capacity for healthy love, experienced in a real universe. But it’s movement that is the important thing. From one angle, towards or away from are the same thing.

And I think it’s an exponential process. It’s people being stuck in their programs that I find so depressing—how we have programmed ourselves and others so carefully. And it’s such a banal existence; boredom. I know I overreact to this. I resist programs, not always, but when I do, I do, and I can be a real pain in the ass to my wife and a lot of other people.

Lack of
alternatives

I care very much about programs, and I realize how much I was programmed. I see so much of it around me and in the people who come to the workshops. Then, of course, the whole world—watching the news and reading newspapers. The stupidity of it is incredible—like wearing blinders. At the same time, I feel compassion: people frequently have no real alternatives; they don’t know how to break out.

And what’s really sad is the children in schools growing up, who try to fight against programming, and wind up with chaos and anarchy. We haven’t developed educational systems and models to



“As they start to let their humanness emerge, I start to let mine emerge, and it’s a very beautiful experience.”

provide for *growth*. For example, there are only one or two of all the high schools I know about that deal with the adolescent as philosopher. Adolescents are deeply into the big life questions – and what the hell do we do about it? We repress philosophy, we stamp on their questions. We deny it, we laugh at them.

I remember the time (I was fifteen) three of us were out, one cold fall night in New Hampshire. It was very dark, there was no moon, but there were a lot of stars. And the three of us were suddenly enormously moved by the immensity of the universe, and how small we felt. And the feeling of exaltation we had – instead of being depressed by this – was a marvelous discovery, and we were so excited. It may seem naive, perhaps, but for us this was an enormous opening up, an extension of our consciousness. And I'm sure that everyone has this sort of thing at one time or another.

Denial of the
transcendent

So much of the time we pass off these experiences as, "Oh well, that was nice." And then let them go. I think this happens with a whole lot of transcendental experiences. I think everyone has them, even if they're something as cliché as looking at the sunset. That can be a transcendental experience. We're so cynical – no, that isn't the word . . .

SYNTHESIS: We're embarrassed, feel shame?

GEORGE: Yes. We've been so put down for any kind of thing like this, so we deny these experiences. But we may remember them from time to time, with nostalgia. This, I think, is a cultural thing. In many societies these experiences would be reinforced. Perhaps at the expense of other things, so there's a problem of balance. I think, however, that Europeans are even more cynical than we are about this. I think that is where we got it. But it's a shame. We fit into the programs, and the programs are so strong and so carefully delineated, and so continually reinforced, that only rarely do you find someone who can break out of them.

Breaking out of
programs

For example, I think of Judy and me as people who are able to break our own programs. Now probably I learned this from my father. When he went to MIT, majoring in engineering, he took an English course about George Bernard Shaw, and Shaw really hit him. He really bought the whole idea of Shaw as an iconoclast, and he too became an iconoclast. Though much of what he did was highly programmed, and the program was passed on to me, I also got some of that iconoclast, the skeptic. But, I don't know. It's really hard. *Who can put a finger on their own program?*

SYNTHESIS - A Conversation with George Brown



"An atypical response, but very exciting, is people entering into the impasse and going through a physical 'rebirth' experience. They curl up and start crying – and it's the eeriest thing because the cry is a baby's cry, and it's coming out of nowhere. I get chills even thinking about it."

SYNTHESIS: You said earlier that Fritz's view of Gestalt was different from this emphasis on, "You should stand on your own two feet." What was Fritz's goal; what did he want to bring people to?

GEORGE: I think essentially he viewed mankind as part of nature. He saw life as a developmental process. He felt one should appreciate the nature of one's developmental process, enjoy it and go with it. That was one part, and he would often use analogies from nature, from animals and plants. For example, I remember a little cat that used to play around that he liked very much. And the cat would often go off to sleep during a group session, and Fritz would point and say, "See? The cat doesn't have to take sleeping pills." I suspect, though he would have denied it, that Fritz saw this as a natural manifestation of what you might find in some kind of "higher being." He would never have used that term, but it was implicit in his statements about the order of the universe and the order of life.

Fritz would talk a lot about the "growth of the organism," and part of the organism is the mind. I've recently read accusations that Gestalt is anti-intellectual. There is great confusion on that, because Fritz, indeed, wrote that "intellectualism is the whore of intelligence." He rightly protested the use of intellectual behavior as a strategy of avoidance. So many of the people who came to him were living in their heads that it became almost a cliché to tell people to turn off their "computers." But the idea that Gestalt is anti-intellectual is an overreaction to an overstatement!

Life as process

Many of the people who came to Esalen to work in Gestalt relied on their minds so much. You can read the transcripts of their sessions in *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim* or *Eyewitness to Therapy*, and you see these intellectuals who come to get Gestalted, and who struggle like hell to avoid giving up the way they've used their minds. So there was a great deal of time spent on getting people to move out of their heads and into their bodies and feelings. This is a great struggle for people who have for years and years invested themselves in their heads and who have been rewarded for doing just that. They've been rewarded by their families, they've been rewarded by the schools, and they've been rewarded by society – given high-paying positions – and you have all these damn reinforcements. And all of a sudden, here's somebody who's saying, "No, turn it off, it's getting in your way; that's not good." When you hear a lot of this, then the assumption is, well, the *mind's* no good. But there were times I remember Fritz saying, "O.K., use your head." And he would ask, "What have you learned from this experience?," and "What is the message of your dream?"

He, himself, loved using his mind; he wrote extensively in a very logical way, and – something people have either forgotten or didn't catch – he would talk about the *place* of the mind. The mind was part of the developmental aspect of being human, and it was important that the mind function in a *real* way. He meant that through the use of the senses the mind would contact the real world, and that there would be, hopefully, no distortion of the connection between the person and the universe.

I want to expand another point concerning another misconception about Gestalt – I mean the mystical aspect of Fritz. There was always this mystical part of him which, as I have said, he would sometimes allow to emerge. It seems to me that Gestalt, strangely enough, becomes a kind of spiritual/mystical thing – it's just underdeveloped; not enough attention has been paid to that side of it. For instance, I think there are definite spiritual implications in the Gestalt concept of "the impasse."

SYNTHESIS: Would you describe the impasse, George? What is that experience?

GEORGE: In the theory of Gestalt, there are a number of layers to the personality. You start with the layer of clichés – "How are you today?," "I'm fine," "Nice weather we're having," – whatever. Then below that is a layer we call the "role layer." The role layer is very similar to the concept of subpersonalities in some ways. In this layer,

The mind makes
contact with
the real world

Spiritual side
of Gestalt

I conceive myself as a “professor,” or “husband,” or “father,” or “lover.” The concept of the role layer is more contextual and functional than subpersonalities. Subpersonalities can include that, but can also include other things, like being a coward, being shy, being brave, sabotaging yourself. I think there is a distinction. The subpersonality is a broader, more-encompassing concept, and therefore more valuable, I think.

The impasse

Well, when you move below the role layer in Gestalt Therapy, you start to get to the unfinished, disowned, unintegrated aspects of your personality. You move into what is called the “implosive layer.” What is happening in this layer is that these parts of the personality are being anaesthetized, denied. Very near here – and this has never been made really clear in Gestalt theory – is “the impasse:” the mechanism that moves one from the implosive layer into the impasse has never been precisely described, not to my satisfaction. What I think happens is that, as the implosive layer takes over, one really gets stuck in there, and then one moves to the impasse. Fritz used to describe it as the “sick point.”

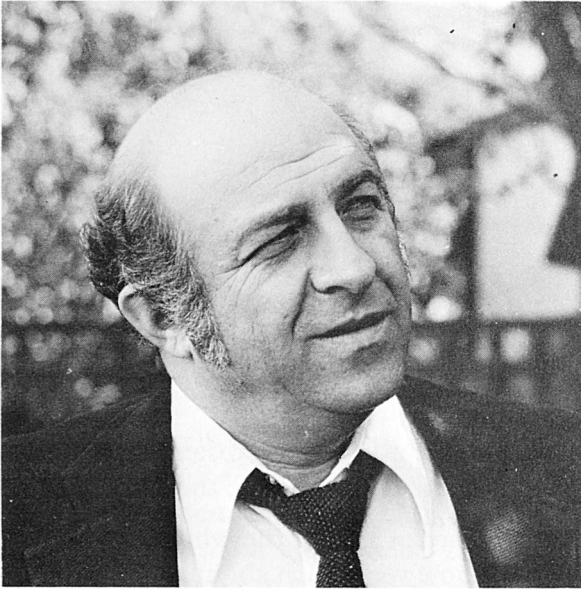
A form of death

Behaviorally, people become confused, disoriented, when they are in the impasse. Many things are happening here. Analogies have been used to describe the impasse – two forces pushing, or two forces pulling, with equal strength, so that nothing moves. That’s graphic, but it doesn’t describe precisely what happens. Fritz used to describe it as where “Top Dog” and “Under Dog”* were of equal strength. But really what is going on is that you’ve got almost a complete cessation of life force. Life force is not manifesting itself, it’s cut off. In effect, what’s happening is a form of death. Now, the more people can go *into* the impasse and allow it to take over instead of fighting it, then the closer they get to moving through.

I encourage people to move into the impasse more, and I intentionally give reinforcers. I’ll ask, “What temperature do you feel?,” and if they say, “I feel cold,” I will say, “O.K., allow the coldness to take over.” “Move into the blackness,” and when they start to move, I’ll say, “You’re doing fine, that’s good; of course, you realize you can stop any time.” What is going on is this: the impasse is a *fantasy*. It’s something the individual is creating out of his “stuck-

*“A great many and perhaps the most significant [internal dialogues in Gestalt Therapy] are particular forms of the widespread split in personality: the ‘I should’ versus the ‘I want’ . . . the parties appear again and again with the distinctive feature that inspired Perls . . . to call them Top Dog and Under Dog.” (from Claudio Naranjo, op. cit., p. 9)

ness,” and the stuckness is a fantasy. But it’s being substituted for reality; it’s very real to the person, of course. If they can move into their own “death”—which takes a great deal of courage—the instant they accept it and no longer fight it, there’s a realization that it doesn’t exist, it’s a fantasy.



*“To sit in that
goddamn chair
is valor, and
often heroic.”*

SYNTHESIS: Would you clarify what the fantasy is?

GEORGE: Well, the fantasy is that they’re stuck. That’s the main one. We create a fantasy of who we are by disowning aspects of our personality, and taking in other aspects that aren’t really ours. We all do this to ourselves. This fantasy of who we are may have originated in reality-based experiences, as children, but the fact is that the parent is no longer there. The parent can put a trip on a child, and the child can hang onto the trip. (If the parent is still around, hitting the adult over the head, that is something else.) *The fantasy* is a highly complex combination of all kinds of little fantasies, which have been internalized to the extent that the person can no longer separate what is real and what is not.

SYNTHESIS: It sounds like you’re talking about self image or identity.

GEORGE: Sure, those notions would fit, but I don’t think that the fantasies I spoke of are conscious. They become so much a part of the personality, and of one’s paradigm of the world — how he uses the world, doesn’t use the world; responds and doesn’t respond to the world — I sometimes think it’s more than identity.

SYNTHESIS - A Conversation with George Brown



"The happiest way to think about it is that mankind is evolving gradually, has some kind of collective consciousness as well as unconscious and that there is a wisdom in people they don't know about."

SYNTHESIS: And that's what dies when a person passes through the impasse experience in Gestalt, the whole unconscious fantasy?

GEORGE: Part of it, not the whole. I wish to hell it would. I don't think we know very much about the impasse. When people really let go to the experience of it, they go into a blackness, into coldness — sometimes there's a spinning sensation, a vortex, then they become calm and tranquil. It's a giving-up. They've given up the fight and they are resting. They become very peaceful — it's very good. They're being refreshed.

The impasse experience could be described in a lot of ways. There are transpersonal energies involved. People talk about floating sensations, tranquility and peace. And we don't push them. We say, "That's fine, keep reporting what's happening to you." And sometimes we ask them if they can touch anything where they are; if they can't, that's fine. If they do, what usually happens is that they begin to see some light. This might very well be a movement towards the transpersonal. They frequently see light and go towards it, and they come out and there is sun and beautiful things: green trees and blue sky and white clouds. Then, when they are finished with that experience and open their eyes, they see colors more clearly, their vision is more acute, their perception heightened, they've cut out the filters which their fantasies and pathologies have placed over them at that moment in time.

Transpersonal
energies

An atypical response, but very exciting, is people entering into the impasse and going through a physical “rebirth” experience. They curl up and start crying – and it’s the eeriest thing because the cry is a baby’s cry, and it’s coming out of nowhere. I get chills even thinking about it. I don’t know what’s going on here – whether this is some kind of spiritual rebirth – I don’t know and I suspect they don’t know. The kinds of childlike screams that we get coming out of the impasse situation are striking – but the people in primal therapy have taken this one thing and are beating it to death. That, I think, is a gross oversimplification, just as the things I’m saying about the impasse are probably gross oversimplifications. The impasse is a very fruitful area to explore, however, and probably could be described in many ways.

SYNTHESIS: We’ve talked about the importance of a clear grasp of Gestalt theory, and about some of its aspects which might be seen as transpersonal. Can you say something about the client-therapist relationship in Gestalt?

GEORGE: When we were up at Esalen last week, Joseph Campbell, the mythographer, gave a lecture on Buddhism. And he said about the good leaders of Esalen, that here are people who are showing *compassion without attachment*. I think that’s a marvelous phrase, and I’d like to think that’s the way Judy and I are when we work. We have compassion for these people, but we don’t use them. The temptations are there – all kinds. You get very sexy people, rich people, famous people. I have to set all those qualities aside so I can respond to them. *Our relationship is a priestly one*: I don’t think we came to this consciously. In essence, we’ve learned from the people we’ve worked with.

We had a group a week ago. It’s the beginning, I look around and see sixteen men and five women – what a drag. I look at them; they’re sitting with no expression on their faces, and I think to myself, “Oh my God, what am I doing this for?” I often have these feelings when I start a group. Misanthrope – I hate people. Then people start to work and take some risks, and really get into things, and their humanness emerges, and it touches not only me, but everybody in the group. As they start to let their humanness emerge, I start to let mine emerge, and it’s a very beautiful experience. And even in a brief weekend workshop, twenty strangers become close people, caring about one another. People who come from all kinds of backgrounds and professions and value systems. It’s true that one thing they have in common is that they choose to come; but com-

Compassion
without
attachment

A tragedy queen

pared to all the other variables, that's infinitesimal, believe me. Some people say, "Well, they have courage to come." And that's true, but they're so *scared*, some of them. To take an example, we had a girl who had rewritten the book of Job in her own life. Her mother was a highly religious woman, a fundamentalist, and put a tremendous guilt trip on the daughter – even wearing lipstick was a sin. At seventeen the girl became pregnant and got married. She was really badly off, so she went to a psychiatrist. Third or fourth time, the psychiatrist seduces her. She's paying a hundred dollars a week for this, and he's telling her not to tell her husband. And then the psychiatrist moves away, after three years of this – I mean, it was just one thing after another. Well, the first time she worked, I didn't know any of this and she appeared to be on what Fritz called a "poor me" or "tragedy queen" trip. My reaction was "Oh my God," and all I wanted to do was hurry through. Then she came up to work a second time and all these things emerged. If anybody in the world had a reason to play a "tragedy queen" she did. We worked with her and she got in touch with the fact that she had given all her power away, to her mother, her husband, her psychiatrist. It was very beautiful to see this person begin to grow, it was like a little bud unfolding. It was a very lovely thing.

You see, this was the first time she had ever been in a group. She had all her manipulative games, and no alternatives. In effect, what I said to her was this: "You're playing your games, but you don't know any other ways to be. There's nothing we can do at this point. But I experience you as very strong, because you play your games very well. This is coming from some real strength."

And, O.K., you can also say that here's a woman who's allowed these things to happen to her. Agreed, that many times she didn't have the power of doing otherwise, or the ego-strength; but still, ultimately, she had permitted this. The world is full of people like her. More, far more, people are like her than aren't. But here she begins, and I can see it's a turning point, a real change in her life. And what does this say to me? This says that people can be greater than the way they are; they can realize their potential. People can live together, and share, and be very caring.

The happiest way to think about it is that mankind is evolving gradually, has some kind of collective consciousness as well as unconscious and that there is a wisdom in people they don't know about. They behave in certain ways; they know how fast they're ready to move.



Sacredness of
therapy

So there is a kind of sacredness in the therapeutic relationship that I'm appreciating more and more, and which I find very useful in helping me from letting my own ego needs enter client situations. I take the people that come up to work as seriously as I take myself, sometimes more seriously. When someone is sitting there, a human being, that is precious, and I'm not saying this because of some sugary religious thing. It is precious because I know, I've experienced them in terms of their courage. To sit in that goddamn chair is valor, and often heroic. Now, he or she may not always manifest their heroism, but sometimes they do. And the experiences are so moving it makes theatre pale by comparison. These are "common," "ordinary" human beings. I feel a kind of sacredness about this relationship.



Psychosynthesis Workbook

Contents

46 HOW TO USE IT

An Introduction to the *WORKBOOK* and guidelines for using it.

47 THE “WHO-AM-I?” EXERCISE

A way of getting a quick personal grasp of the theme of this *WORKBOOK*: the subpersonalities in each one of us.

51 Principles:

SUBPERSONALITIES

by James Vargiu

An overview of working with subpersonalities — typical patterns of personal work, conceptual considerations, a framework for continuing use of the *WORKBOOK*.

91 Practice:

EXPERIENTIAL TECHNIQUES

for continuing use in one's personal explorations and self-development.

93 THE DOOR

97 THE PIE

103 THE EVENING REVIEW

108 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Clarifying frequently raised issues about subpersonalities.

112 WHAT IS PSYCHOSYNTHESIS?

The overarching framework of personal and transpersonal unfoldment from which the *WORKBOOKS* are generated.

How to use it

The *WORKBOOK* section of *SYNTHESIS* is the reader's opportunity to apply major ideas presented in each issue to the practical task of his or her own personal development. It is a chance for you to take such concepts as synthesis or harmony or values, and to work with them in your life in a systematic way.

Each issue of *SYNTHESIS* will have a new *WORKBOOK* about different subjects. The *WORKBOOKS* will be arranged in a general sequence which has proven useful.

This first *WORKBOOK* deals with *subpersonalities*. Subpersonalities is a name for the many diverse personages (or psychological formations) that make up our personality. How to discover our particular subpersonalities, how to understand them, and how to get free of their control, are some of the questions treated in this first *WORKBOOK*. The final aim of working on subpersonalities is the freedom to use any or all of our individual qualities and gifts at will, in the interest of fulfilling our humanity. Clearly, reaching such a goal will be a very long process, though useful progress can be made quite early.

Specific ideas and practical techniques presented here have proved themselves over a long period of time. They have been used by many people — lay persons as well as professionals in psychology, education, medicine, social work and other fields — with good results. As you see from the “Table of Contents” to the *WORKBOOK*, it is divided into a number of sections. The “Who-Am-I?” exercise is designed to give a first personal glimpse of some of your own subpersonalities. Next, the “Principles” section provides basic concepts for working with your subpersonalities — healing their fragmentation and conflicts, and establishing a harmonious cooperation with them. The “Practice” section, which follows, forms the most practical part of the *WORKBOOK*. It contains four exercises which you can use to make the concept of subpersonalities a fruitful one in the context of your own life. “Questions and Answers” is a section which expands upon some basic theoretical issues. And “What Is Psychosynthesis” is a section describing the gen-

eral thinking behind all the *WORKBOOKS*.

Different readers will want to use the *WORKBOOK* in different ways. Some people may find part of its content obvious. They will want to pick and choose. Other people may already be fruitfully following a specific, well-defined course in their self development, and may choose to continue in that direction for the time being. Still others may want to make full systematic use of the *WORKBOOK*. Each reader must finally make his or her own judgment about how to use it, and in what order to tackle the separate sections. But as a suggestion, we recommend the following as a general sequence. First, do the brief “Who-Am-I?” exercise to get a simple grasp on your own subpersonalities. Then, read through the “Principles” section aiming at a general view of what they are and how to work with them. Then go to the “Practice” section.

This is, in a personal sense, perhaps the most important part – the one which actually gives you a chance to change your life – to introduce in your everyday living the concepts you read about. These exercises can, in many cases, be usefully done in a regular way between now and the next issue of the *WORKBOOK* – six months from now. Over that period of time, we suggest you go back and study the “Principles” section with some care, because it is designed to provide ongoing guidance in your efforts. You will also want to refer to the remaining sections for clarification of special points, and for examples of how others are using the subpersonality concept and techniques.

The Editors and other writers responsible for this *WORKBOOK* hope you find it useful and will be very grateful for your comments.

Who Am I?

— A PSYCHOSYNTHESIS EXERCISE —

Find a place where you can work quietly and undisturbed. At the top of the next page, write the date. Then, ask yourself the question – “Who Am I?” and write down your answer. Ask and answer it repeatedly, writing your answers to this question as freely and honestly as possible. Be sure you ask yourself the question each time. You alone will see the answers. You will probably find that

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK

you come up with a long succession of differing answers. That's good. Write as long a list as you like. Five to fifteen minutes is a reasonable time to complete the exercise.

* * *

After doing this brief exercise, you should have a feeling for some of the various elements that make up who you are. The discussion of subpersonalities that follows will now have a personal relevance for you.



Who am I?





Principles:

Subpersonalities

SUBPERSONALITIES

James Vargiu



HO AM I?

I am George, I am Peter, I am Martha, I am Judy.

Whatever my name, I know that I am some one person—I sense that “I am me,” though it is hard to express what this means. When you ask me to describe it, when you press me to answer the question, “Who Am I?” I waiver. I will write, “I am George.” But that doesn’t say it. I will write, “I am a teacher” because that’s my profession, but that doesn’t say it either. I will write, “I am kind,” then, “I am mean (sometimes),” “I am bold,” “I am timid,” “I am a father,” “I am faithful.” The list can extend for pages: qualities, social roles, attitudes, peculiar habits, typical foibles. The list is endless. And yet as I give more and more answers, adding complexity upon bewildering complexity (so that it might seem that the very thread of “me” would break in shreds), my *sense of identity*, the awareness that “I Am Me,” *also* gets stronger.¹ I see that I am one person — the *same* person — and that I am made up of many aspects, also and at the same time.

THE INNER ONE AND THE MANY ONES

Frequently, we do not pay attention to our sense of “I-ness.” We take it for granted. Just as we may not pay real attention to our inner complexities. Yet our sense of identity is no mere theoretical concept. It is an existential reality, which can be experienced directly. The *intensity* of this experience, its energy charge, varies between individuals and, within the same individual, from time to time. For example, our sense of “I-ness” seems to dissolve every night when

Identity can be
experienced

we go to sleep, then, mysteriously, reappears when we awake in the morning. It decreases when we throw ourselves into an activity or is painfully amplified when we feel shame. When we are in the process of making a decision, our sense of “I-ness” may be especially strong, as it is when we willingly assume a heavy responsibility.²

But despite these variations, we take for granted, in practice, that there really is an “I,” and that it is the same “I” (George or Judy) who gets up this morning as went to sleep last night. The fact that our sense of personal identity remains, intact in the long run, regardless of our actions or the actions of others, is what generates the sense of *continuity* in our existence. So our “I-ness” is most precious to each of us, literally as precious as life itself. Even though we usually take it for granted, we resist people and forces that would diminish it or take it from us, and a serious threat to it will instantly mobilize our survival instinct. Some have argued that even the fear of death itself is not basically fear of pain, of loneliness, or even of the unknown, but is at the core fear that this basic sense of personal identity will be wiped away.

Resistance to
diversity

Accordingly it is not surprising that some people have great resistance to seeing their personality as other than one monolithic, coherent unit. Something inside them resists the awareness that their personality is made up of many different parts – as if to admit such a breakdown would cause the breaking down into non-being of their identity itself.

More often, once we become aware of the diversity of elements in our personality, we accept them in principle, but continue to reject them operationally, in practice. As we live our lives, we continue thinking about ourselves and about others as if we were made “all in one piece,” as if we were *already* whole. We seldom think of ourselves – and of others – as made up of different parts. We sort of know it in theory, but in practice forget about it. So if we are talking to somebody who’s being obnoxious, we say, “He’s obnoxious,” and may get angry at him. And if an hour later he becomes happy and cheery, we say, “Well, he changed, he’s almost like a different person.”

But of course if we stop and think about it, we realize that it is not that simple. It is not really that *we* change. It is rather that we express different *aspects* of ourselves at different times. So the aspect we are expressing now is not the same one that was there an hour ago. Very simply, we play different roles in different circum-

stances, as we all know. But what we often don't know — and don't think to ask — is *who chooses the role we play?*

SUBPERSONALITIES

Roles as
expression of
subpersonalities

Often it is not us who choose our roles, but one or another of the many distinct aspects, or psychological formations in our personality. So these formations can be considered to be true *subpersonalities*.

There are in each of us a diversity of these semi-autonomous subpersonalities, striving to express themselves. And when any of them succeeds in doing so, we then play the corresponding role. But during that time the other subpersonalities are cut off. Yet they are still very much present — even though we may be unaware of them — and they are likely to create a lot of inner conflict. They may also have some very beautiful, useful qualities that we may need, but not be in touch with. So one of the easiest and most basic ways to facilitate our growth is to get to know our subpersonalities. As we understand them better, we can regulate and direct their expression according to our own needs and goals, making them our helpers and our allies, and bringing them increasingly close to each other, toward greater harmony and integration.

And an increasing number of people have discovered that recognizing the diversity of subpersonalities in us, learning to direct them, and to deal with them operationally, *in the moment*, enhances, rather than diminishes the sense of “I” — of personal identity and unity.

Unity and Diversity, the One and the Many are a central paradox in all thought from all times. The intuition has been that an essential unity underlies the myriad diversities of manifested life. Philosophers, religious leaders, scientists of all ages have dealt with this paradox. We have come to accept it as one of the central mysteries of nature and the universe. But the *personal* aspect of this paradox is still largely neglected.

The phenomenon
of identification

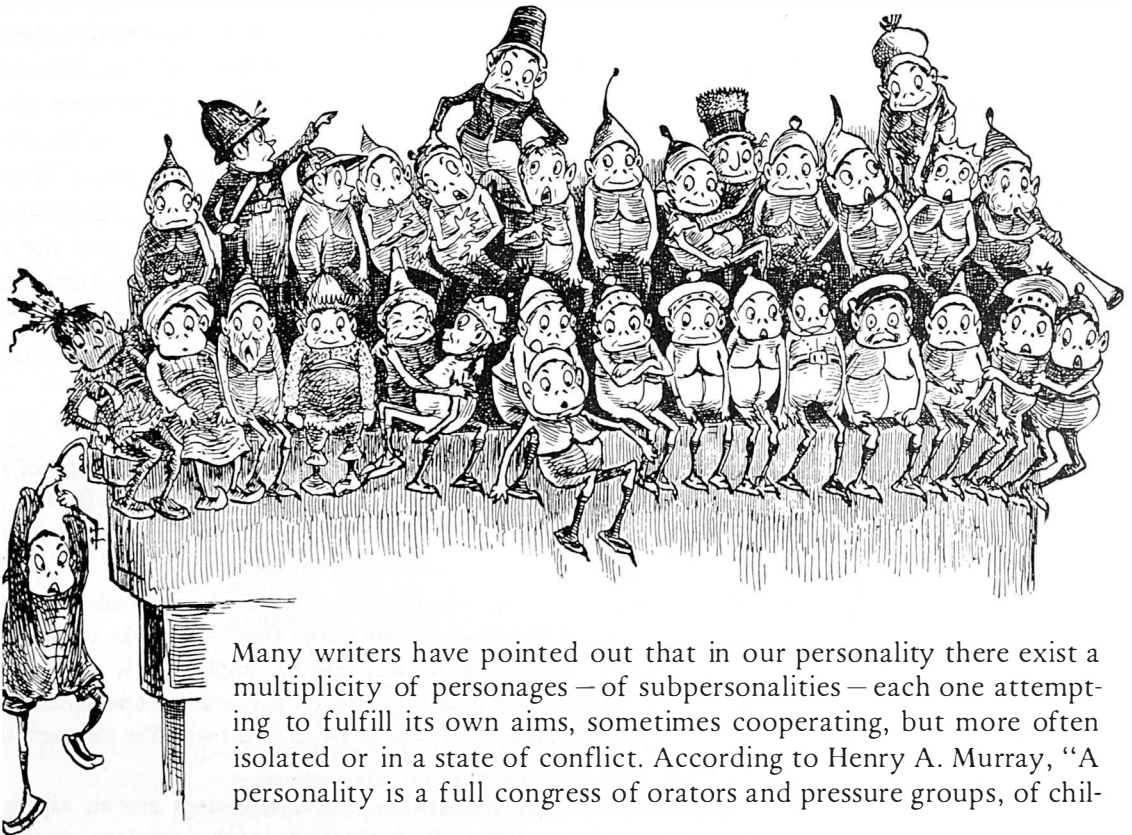
A rather extreme example of this paradox is the well known case of some actors who become so identified with their part that they “forget about themselves,” and truly experience themselves as the one they are impersonating.³ If, at that time, such an actor were to ask himself, “Who am I?,” he would answer, “I am Hamlet,” “I am Othello.” Yet after the play he would have no doubt that the “I”

who said, "I am Hamlet" was the same who would say, before and after, "I am an actor." But if, later on, he were to give up acting, and become involved perhaps in business, he would then likely answer, "I am a businessman." Yet he would be sure of being the "same one" who had experienced himself as the actor.

In the same way, each of us is One and Many, we have Unity and Diversity in our inner life. And it is a psychological reality that exploring our inner diversity, and working systematically to harmonize the multiplicity of elements within our personality, leads to a stronger sense of identity and unity, and to greater effectiveness in the outer world.

EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLEXITY

"There are times," said Somerset Maugham, "when I look over the various parts of my character with perplexity. I recognize that I am made up of several persons and that the person that at the moment has the upper hand will inevitably give place to another."⁴



Many writers have pointed out that in our personality there exist a multiplicity of personages — of subpersonalities — each one attempting to fulfill its own aims, sometimes cooperating, but more often isolated or in a state of conflict. According to Henry A. Murray, "A personality is a full congress of orators and pressure groups, of chil-

Inner multiplicity

dren, demagogues, Macchiavellis . . . Caesars and Christs. . . .”⁵ In the Orient as in the West, the inner complexity is vocal as the Buddhist scholar Alexandra David-Neil makes clear: “A person is an assembly . . . where discussion never ceases. . . . Often several members of the assembly rise at the same time and propose different things. . . . It may happen that these differences of opinion . . . will provoke a quarrel. . . . Fellow members may even come to blows.”⁶ The philosopher Keyserling goes even further: “Each fundamental personality tendency is actually an autonomous entity, and their combination, conditions and transmutations produce . . . an inner fauna, an animal kingdom the richness of which is comparable to the external one. It can truly be said that in each of us can be found, developed and active in various proportions, all instincts, all passions, all vices and virtues, all tendencies and aspirations, all faculties and endowments of mankind.”⁷

Healing personality splits

During the last one hundred years, this inner complexity has been a major theme of psychology. From the time of William James, psychologists have recognized the importance of the divisions within our psyche, and the corresponding psychological formations that result from them. There has been an increasing attempt to examine scientifically, and to describe, the inner divisions of man. Recently, many personality theories and therapies have been developed which recognize these divisions, and work to heal them. Among them are such approaches as Berne’s Transactional Analysis,⁸ Perls’ Gestalt Therapy,⁹ and Shapiro’s Ego Therapy.¹⁰ Transactional Analysis emphasizes one common subdivision of the personality, and the corresponding constellation of subpersonalities—Parent, Adult, and Child. Gestalt Therapy has brought to light another common constellation: “Top Dog” and “Under Dog,” usually found in conflict with each other.*

*Note to professionals: Both approaches recognize a specific *type* of subdivision with its specific subpersonalities. And each has developed effective and powerful techniques for dealing with the typical conflicts between those subpersonalities. Therefore, each approach is of great usefulness.

And yet there is the case of an experienced Gestalt therapist who described a client as having “three Top Dogs and no Under Dog”—and who worked with the client accordingly. The point he was making, implicitly, is that when a therapist uses any system that puts emphasis on particular subpersonalities in preference to others, he must eventually come to terms with the *uniqueness* of each individual.

The uniqueness and the similarities of human beings are an aspect of the unity-and-diversity paradox. It is implicit in the previous quote by

In literature, we find the same point: Pirandello's Six Characters who search for an author, Hesse's Steppenwolf and his personal Magic Theatre, Stevenson's tortured Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. We see this multiplicity of subpersonalities in the lives of the greatest men: Tolstoy, Michelangelo, St. Paul, Goethe. And St. Augustine

Keyserling. He said that *in each of us can be found all instincts, all vices and virtues, all tendencies of mankind*. This is the basis of the similarity between individuals, which underlies empathy – the direct understanding of another person through identifying with that part of ourselves which is the same as he is – and which generates the feeling of brotherhood for one's fellow man.

But Keyserling also said that these common qualities are developed and active *in various proportions* within each person. This difference of proportions is fundamental to the *uniqueness* of each individual. Because although in each of us are found the same basic qualities – which will develop, interact, combine, and be harmonized following the same basic patterns – yet for each human being the development and combinations of these qualities, and the *order* in which these combinations occur happens according to a wonderfully unique process – a process that has unique requirements, unique timing, and unique outcome.

So in practice there are some basic subpersonality constellations that are common to most of us, so approaches to growth that focus on them are highly effective. But the more an approach is effective and powerful, the more it is important to consider its application in the light of the person's unique existential situation, as a whole. Because, as we have said, there are certain clusters of subpersonalities that are likely to be present, more or less developed, in every individual, so if we look hard enough for a specific one, we are very likely to find it. And, having at our disposal a powerful psychological tool to deal with it, we may yield to the temptation to do so before considering what else there is in the unique constellation of elements of that individual. While such intervention is often useful, and at times of major importance, we may have missed other aspects that were more crucial at the moment, and more in line with the individual's next natural step of development. So it will be most effective to first consider a client's personality – or for that matter our own – without any *expectation* of finding the subpersonalities that will fit any particular system. Rather we can strive to recognize that personality's unique formations, subdivisions, and interactions. And *then* we can apply whatever model and techniques best fit that person's specific existential situation – modifying them, or adding to them, as needed.

Needless to say, this caution applies even more to the concept of subpersonalities itself. On the one hand, the concept of subpersonalities is an overarching framework that can augment and integrate – without in any way replacing – the approaches that deal with specific types of subpersonalities. But on the other hand it is *only one* of a number of possible ways to look at the personality.

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK



She grabbie
'I control' I can make
you afraid so do what
I say, or you'll be sorry.



She great high glue
I can do anything better than
anyone else (usually followed by a
disgustingly true revelation) and
there is no better way because I
know so shut up and admire
I need your energy.

Integration
through inclusion

gave a profound description of the struggle—and its resolution—between his two main subpersonalities: the “animal man” and the “spiritual man.”

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

Once we turn our attention to them, we will find many subpersonalities in each of us. Some are typical, some are practically unique. Students and clients have identified hundreds: The Hag, The Mystic, The Materialist, The Idealist, The Claw, The Pillar of Strength, The Sneak, The Religious Fanatic, The Sensitive Listener, The Crusader, The Doubter, The Grabbie, The Frightened Child, The Poisoner, The Struggler, The Tester, The Shining Light, The Bitch Goddess, The Great High Gluck, The Dummy, to name a few.

Subpersonalities exist at various levels of organization, complexity and refinement. Within any one person, they exhibit a tendency toward greater organization and integration: the cast wants to get together. No specific cluster or combination of subpersonalities can be considered to be central for everyone, though certain patterns are quite common. Rather, the focus in working with subpersonalities is on the particular natural processes through which each individual's subpersonalities evolve and become harmonized with the other subpersonalities, leading to an integrated, whole personality.

Here is an account of integration between two opposite subpersonalities:

A client in her early forties . . . had long been identified with being a “good daughter, wife and mother.” She had centered her life on pleasing first her father, then her husband and finally her three children, doing all the “right things.” Just after her fortieth birthday, however, she discovered women's lib, started a career, got a divorce, and became, in her words, a “new person.” But now she had difficulties in relating to her teenage children. She wasn't experiencing any feelings of love or caring for them, which distressed and confused her very much. In one period she had become depressed and for a few weeks had “fallen back into the old me,” and she was able then to feel love and closeness to her children. Her question was: should she be the “old self” or the “new self”?

This woman had begun to integrate many parts of herself which she had previously disowned (need for independence, a good intellect, competitiveness, ambition, etc.) around a new identity of being a strong, independent, intelligent person. Yet the “old self” contained many important and valuable qualities, such as emotional sensitivity and the ability to give and accept love. She was subsequently able to see that she did not need to choose between them, but to form a broader identity which could include aspects of both. The solution lay not in disowning, but in *including*.¹¹

Different combinations

In essence, the approach used here consisted of the *fusion* of two opposite subpersonalities, through which process a new, more highly evolved subpersonality was formed – one that includes the desirable aspects of both subpersonalities. This is often an important undertaking, which may need considerable time and effort. It may have to be preceded by further development of each subpersonality, and by temporary, intermediate solutions. We will discuss this further on, dealing with the stages of subpersonalities harmonization.

But subpersonalities do not only appear in pairs of opposites. Many are interrelated without being opposite to one another. The following account, written by a 23 year old woman experienced in subpersonalities work, deals with a sequence of four interrelated subpersonalities.

Putting aside my healthy subpersonalities for the time being, I'll focus on four of my real troublemakers: the Dictator, the Martyr, the Bitch, and the Clinger. They seem to be related to each other in a continuous breakdown of *trust*. The Dictator stems from a lack of basic trust in myself and in life. The Martyr fears the Dictator. The Bitch doesn't trust the Martyr. And the Clinger is the final low point.

The Dictator rules, and he expects perfection in everything: in my daily schedule, my work, my lovemaking, my relationships with people, my meditation. His basic fear is that all will not be run harmoniously and smoothly, should *he* lose control.

The Martyr reacts to the force of the Dictator. She is the one who feels the brunt of the Dictator's whip of conscience. She feels guilty for not being good enough, but also sorry for herself for having to do so much, and being so little rewarded.

The Bitch is a reaction to the incapacitation of the Martyr. She lashes back. She's sharp and cruel, and always hits her mark. She teases nastily and puts down those around her, especially my husband. She's not aware of the cause of her pain, but only of the need for revenge.

The Clinger is a stage that only occasionally is reached, and it's sheer misery. The Clinger is in despair over the chaotic situation. There seems no way out of the mess and she tries to escape, especially into warm baths. It's an infantile, clinging self that's especially prone to being overcome by emotion and can't see the fog around it. All of life seems too difficult to manage.

I can see the chain extending from the Dictator to the others, and I see that the Dictator *misuses* his power. He's strong, with power of planning and execution, a strong will, which instead of strengthening myself as a totality, focuses rigidly on partial plans and schemes of action.

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK

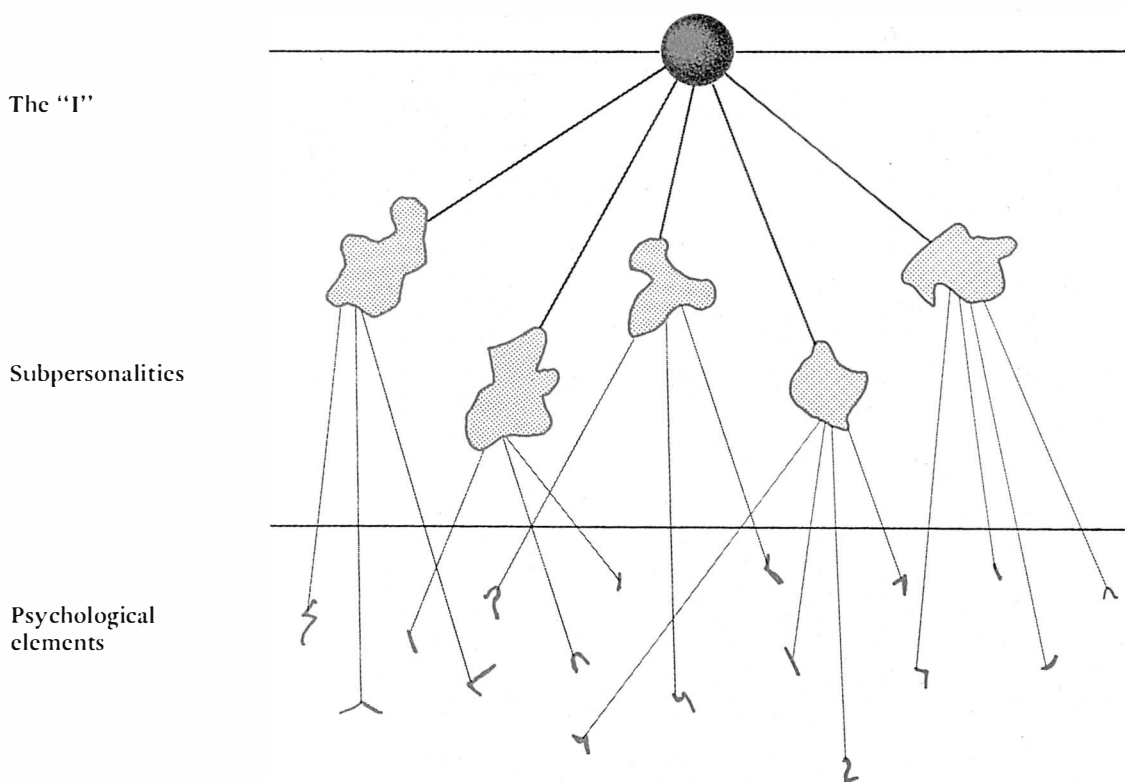
Transmutation of energy

If the Dictator's energy can be reconverted to serve the whole from the center of myself, tempered by the love of that self, there would be no need for the Martyr, the Bitch, or the Clinger to arise. I see the Dictator as a potential source of energy that could be useful in my daily life as well as in my more long-range development and growth.

HOW THEY GET TOGETHER

A subpersonality is a synthesis of habit patterns, traits, complexes and other psychological elements. But *in order to have a synthesis, there has to be a center around which the synthesis occurs*. In a subpersonality, this center is an inner drive, or urge, which strives to be expressed, to be realized. It is this center that attracted and synthesized various personality elements to create what can be considered as its own "body"—its own means of expression.

There are, in each of us, a large number of these subpersonalities. What do we do with them? As we gradually recognize and harmonize



them, they, in turn, become organized and synthesized around a *higher order center*. This higher center is what we have called the “I,” the personal center of identity, of “I-ness.”* It is to the many subpersonalities as the center of a single subpersonality is to the many elements that make it up.

Increasing
freedom

This higher order synthesis becomes the *integrated personality* – the harmonious and effective means of expression of the self-actualized human being. As we move toward this goal, we become increasingly able to choose, at any moment, which subpersonality we want to express. Until then, we are controlled by whichever subpersonality we are identified with in the moment, and thus limited to its particular good and bad qualities. But as the integration of the subpersonalities proceeds, every quality in us, every aspect, becomes available to us. We have the greatest freedom of expression; whatever is in us can be brought out and actualized.

From conflict
to cooperation

Before this integration, not only can we be limited by a particular subpersonality, but also by the conflicts that often arise between two or more of them. In such a conflict situation, each subpersonality wants to control us, and express itself. But often none will yield, and they become deadlocked. Then energy is wasted – and there is much conflict and pain. But as the integration proceeds, it leads to harmony. It is then possible to find a means of expression where all subpersonalities involved get what they need. Then they will learn to cooperate with each other, *and with you*. Gradually, everything becomes accessible to you.

For example, let us say that a person has a subpersonality called “the mystic,” made up of a visionary quality and of kindness. Then let’s say he has an efficient “businessman,” made up of aspects such as one-pointedness, will power, etc. Initially, the mystic and the businessman, being so different from each other, are likely to be in conflict. They don’t understand and don’t like each other, and each wants to have its way completely. So they keep getting in each

*The nature of this center, its value in daily life, and practical techniques to experience, develop, and identify with it, will be a central topic of the next workbook. In the meantime, readers can consult *The Act of Will*, by Roberto Assagioli, Viking Press, 1973, pp. 211-217.

other's way, and neither allows the other to ever express itself freely and fully.

Time-sharing

But if, for example, they can be persuaded to a kind of “time-sharing,” where each allows the other freedom to express itself part of the time, the person will have access to the qualities and strengths of both, by shifting his identification from one to the other. And the conflict will be largely eliminated.

This is often fairly easy to achieve, and although it is mostly in the nature of a compromise, it is a major step toward integration. True, for a time the person will only allow himself to be kind when he is identified with the mystic, and to be efficient when he is identified with the businessman. But in time, mystic and businessman will recognize and appreciate the good qualities of each other. They will be willing to cooperate, and will eventually fuse together into a more evolved subpersonality. So we may have a kind businessman or an efficient mystic – or even a completely new subpersonality with all the good qualities of both.*

The process of harmonization of our subpersonalities consists of five phases: recognition, acceptance, coordination, integration, and synthesis.



*Recognizing subpersonalities is also very useful in our interactions with others. For example, if we try to give constructive criticism to somebody, we can get into all sorts of misunderstandings. As we all know, criticism is often hard to accept, because *we take it personally*. But once we think and speak in terms of subpersonalities, the process is much easier. . . . “I think your martyr is trying to make me feel guilty. Do you agree?” When we put things this way, we remove any implications that “you are bad.” Rather, we are really talking straight, by saying, in effect, “have you seen that part of you? I know it’s not *you*, but you may want to do something about it.” Communicating in this way is not only easier, but more effective, because *it corresponds to what is really going on*. One never has to say “you are bad” or even “you are doing a bad thing.” It is just that one subpersonality may be out of control. And of course it becomes the person’s responsibility to do something about it. We are responsible for our subpersonalities, just as we’re responsible for our children, our pets, and our car. We certainly need to see that they don’t cause trouble to ourselves or to others. But *we are not* them.

People can use the concept of subpersonalities very effectively when they’re dealing with problems in interpersonal relationships – especially in

Integration

We have already considered the phase of integration, in which subpersonalities interacting with one another establish increasingly harmonious relationships, and often combine. Eventually, this process results in one whole, *integrated personality*.

Coordination

But for integration between subpersonalities to occur, there must be also changes *within* the subpersonalities. This is the same as with people. Suppose a number of people get together and form a group. Before the group can become well integrated, and function as a unit, interpersonal problems are likely to emerge, which need to be solved. And to be solved, they require some inner changes by the people in the group. Similarly, for the integration of the personality to proceed, there must be the *inner* refinement and harmonization of the subpersonalities involved. This process is called *coordination*.

Recognition and acceptance

Recognition and *acceptance* are clearly necessary prerequisites to coordination and integration. The acceptance can be acceptance of a subpersonality by the individual, or acceptance of a subpersonality by another subpersonality.

Synthesis

Synthesis (as I use the term here in a specific sense, to indicate the last phase of the harmonization process) concerns primarily the personality as a whole, and is essentially *interpersonal* and *transpersonal*. While it has an influence on subpersonalities, it has to do with the interaction of the individual with others and with the world, and is mediated by the Transpersonal Self.

In the following pages is the work of a client that will give you a practical sense for these five phases of subpersonality harmonization. Afterwards, I will consider each phase in some detail, and give some specific guidelines and techniques to facilitate progress through the phases.

couples. Doing so takes away a major stumbling block to real communication — *blame*. To the extent that people learn to work with the concept, it has the potential of detoxifying relationships and breaking the endless circle of blame and guilt, blame and guilt. Rather, it's you and I — and our subpersonalities, which we have to harmonize. And we can help each other in this, because you and I are fine. It is these characters that are giving each other trouble, when many of them could nurture and help each other.

HOW IT HAPPENS

The client's work is centered on a "*guided daydream*." The guided daydream "... is a means of establishing two-way communication with the unconscious. The client, relaxing and with his eyes closed, may be told for example, to imagine himself in some neutral place (e.g., a meadow) and proceeds in his imagination, experiencing whatever comes, and reporting his experience and his feelings to his guide. The guide, in turn, encourages him and helps him to move on and to face and resolve problem areas, usually at a symbolic level. Such images as a dragon, a wise old sage, a sword, a fountain, the sun, or others of high symbolic value often arise during this process and can be confronted or utilized as appropriate. The technique can be used to open up a channel to the superconscious, and to tap superconscious energies. It also brings up unconscious material in symbolic form, making it accessible, and can allow for cathartic experiential release and substantial relief in conflict areas."¹²

The initial imagery of a guided daydream often reflects the *present* situation of the client. With the assistance of an experienced guide, it is often possible to trace the *causes* of that situation, which have their roots in the *past*. One can thus arrive at a better understanding of what is going on and why, and, through the two-way communication with the unconscious provided by the imagery, suggest the changes which seem most suitable to im-

prove the situation in the direction of the client's values, goals, and desired growth. This last can be considered as a journey into the *future*, and can become a road-map, or "*ideal model*"¹³ at the symbolic level, that the client can then realize in his normal life.*

The client** was a 23 year old woman who came to her first session saying that she desperately wanted to grow, to move on to a more creative and fulfilling expression of herself. But, she said, she felt badly blocked by something within her . . . something experienced as anxiety, mental confusion — even despair. Relating to other people, she said, had begun to feel unreal and unsatisfying. And more and more she found herself feeling depressed, not wanting to be with anyone, and incidentally, overeating to try to compensate for her depression. Her friends were concerned; her husband was worried; and, she said, she wanted very much to do something about it.

The problem which seemed to concern her most deeply was the pain of wanting to contribute something valuable to the world and feeling that she never would be able to make a real contribution. She was extremely critical of herself, unable to see value or usefulness in anything she had

*Many articles on the Guided Daydream and other Mental Imagery techniques have been written.^{14, 15, 16, 17} "The Directed Daydream," by Robert Desoille, a pioneer of mental imagery, will be published in a future issue of *SYNTHESIS*, and other material will appear in later issues.

**This session was conducted by my wife and myself, with a client who will be called Sharon for the purposes of this history.

already done. Yet she was someone who would be called “successful” by most people . . . honors in college, a good marriage, friends who loved and appreciated her, even a respectable portfolio of poems and stories she had written in the rare moments she allowed herself to try. She was a lovely looking person, with delicate fine features, a general aura of sensitivity and intelligence, and unmistakable good will. But her critical view of herself undermined her efforts and held her back from all that was within her reach.

When we explored her feelings during the session, we tried to see what lay behind the anxiety. She talked of subtle underlying feelings, hard for her to recognize in her daily life – of disgust, and a kind of nameless hostility. We decided to explore the disgust and hostility and use these feelings as the entry point of a guided daydream.

As a result of this daydream, three central subpersonalities emerged, which she called the “Hag,” the “Doubter,” and the “Idealist.” During the guided daydream, Sharon was able to work out a *symbolic resolution* of the subpersonality conflict that lay behind her severe self-criticalness. This symbolic resolution then served as a “map,” or set of guidelines, for her to work with the subpersonalities in her daily life – to begin in actuality the process of real-life resolution. You will notice how the guided daydream included, at a symbolic level, all of the five phases of subpersonality harmonization: recognition, acceptance, coordination, integration and synthesis – and helped to give her a clear sense of direction.

With the help of an experienced guide, the guided daydream is an unusually effective means for getting at the underlying psychological drama of our subpersonalities which expresses itself in our behavior. In general, it is a powerful instrument to bring to light the deeper inner dynamics of our personality. But very effective and fruitful work can be done on one’s own, without using the guided daydream technique (see “The Work” section of this *Workbook*). A daydream is presented here because it represents a complete panoramic view of the process of subpersonalities harmonization, from the initial recognition to the synthesis.

The comments following the daydream transcript consider the daydream in terms of the five stages. In the transcript, the numbers at the side of the text refer to these later comments, for your convenience. The transcript follows.

SHARON’S DAYDREAM

Guide: Close your eyes . . . relax . . . take some deep breaths . . . (pause) . . . now let yourself experience again those feelings of anger and disgust. Tell me when you are in touch with them.

Sharon: I have them.

G: Good. Stay in touch with them . . . let an image appear for those feelings, and tell me what it is.

S: I’m having trouble . . . my mind is confused.

G: That’s all right. The image will come. [1]

S: Yes, and it’s one I’ve seen before. It’s an old hag, very ugly and all twisted inside.

G: Tell me more about it.

S: Well, she’s made up of twisted pieces

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK

that babble a lot . . . and wear back and forth and eat away.

G: How do you feel toward her?

- [2] S: I hate her and I'm disgusted by her . . . and I disgust her.

G: Let yourself feel that . . . (pause) . . . Now what is she doing?

S: She's looking at me with all her twisted parts writhing around, knowing that I'm looking at her and being very disgusted by her. But it doesn't bother her because she knows I can't get rid of her, that she's a part of me.

G: Ask her if there's anything she'd like to tell you.

- [3] S: She said to stop being phony, that my standing and looking at her and trying to put her away from me — making her not part of me — was very, very phony and pretentious.

G: How do you feel about that?

S: Angry. Of course I put her away from me. She's ugly and twisted. Maybe I'm phony, but I don't know how else to make her go away if I don't ignore her. I despise her, I hate her. I want her to go away:

Why won't she go away? . . . (cries) . . .

She's right. I do feel phony and pretentious, trying to pretend that she's not a part of me.

G: Okay. Tell her that.

S: I did, and she said, "Okay, you admit that I'm part of you, but there's still contempt between the two of us."

G: You mean from both sides?

S: Yes.

G: Is there anything you would like from her?

S: Just to be straight with me so that we can deal with each other.

G: How isn't she straight?

S: Well, she's not straight because she

hates and accuses me. But I'm not straight with her either, because I hate and accuse her, too. When we stop and admit the truth, like I just admitted to her that I knew it was phony to pretend she wasn't there — then that's being straight.

G: Tell her that.

S: Hag, I'd like you to be straight with me.

G: Ask her if there's anything she needs from you [4]

S: Yes, she says there is. . . . She needs understanding and help.

G: How do you feel about that?

S: I feel sorry for her. [5]

G: Let yourself feel that. . . . Really get into that, it's very important.

S: (begins to cry) It's so good to let those feelings out. (continues crying)

G: Yes . . . (pause) . . . Tell her that you feel sorry for her.

S: I told her. We both have to help each other.

G: How can she help you?

S: She can help by reminding me who I am, and what we are together, and that we can work together. . . . She has to remind me that she's there. [6]

G: What I'd like you to do now is to see if you can become her and then tell me how it feels. [7]

S: I'm the ugly part now, and I'm talking to Sharon. I feel very cynical, very scornful of her.

G: Tell me more. What are you like?

S: I'm bitter . . . and cynical . . . and I hate her for trying to pretend that I'm not here.

G: What don't you have that you need?

S: Her help.

G: What kind of help?

S: Her help in understanding and recog- [8]

nizing me so that I can get out of this twistedness I'm in . . . because I really don't want to be this way.

G: Say again "I don't want to be this way."

S: I don't want to be this way.

G: Say it again . . .¹⁸

S: I don't want to be this way!

G: And again . . .

S: I don't want to be twisted this way!

G: Keep saying it. Let the feelings come.

S: I don't want to be twisted this way!

(shouts) **I don't want to be this way!**

I DON'T WANT TO BE THIS WAY! PAY ATTENTION TO ME!

G: Yes . . . (pause) . . . how are you feeling now?

[9] S: Energized and relieved. Strong. Sharon finally heard me. And she's saying, "I'm sorry, I didn't realize, I'll help you."

G: How do you feel about that?

[10] S: I still feel a little hurt, but it's okay.

G: Tell Sharon why you're hurt.

S: I'm hurt because it's been so long, and you've neglected me for so long.

G: Do you understand why she neglected you?

[11] S: Because she wanted to be pure.

G: How do you feel about that?

S: Like she was just a little pretentious child, going off and chasing all her ideals.

G: How do you feel about those ideals?

[12] S: Well, they're good—in relation to the world—but she's not on the right track with them because she was trying to be something that she wasn't ready to be.

G: How wasn't she ready?

S: She has to start at home, in everyday life. Those ideals became an escape for her . . . she was trying to force herself into this image of a high, pure being. She's never even accepted me.

G: Tell her all that.

S: I told her she has to come back and start right from where she is, one step at a time, looking at where she's going, and looking at herself.

G: How does she respond to that?

S: She says, "You're right, but it's hard."

G: How can you help each other so you can do it one step at a time?

S: She has to look at me and see all this [13]

twistedness in me, and she has to look inside and see that I'm in here. And I have to look at her and accept her ideals and

her desires to be pure and help her realize them . . . and we have to come together.

G: Okay, in the future then, how can you get Sharon's attention when you need help or feel you can help her?

S: I can ask her to send some of her energy, some of her ideals, some of her will . . .

G: Why don't you try that now . . . (long [14]

pause) . . .

S: I asked her for some positive energy, for some will, and she said, "Yes. Okay." But then something started nagging at me . . . something new . . . and now I feel different.

G: What was it?

S: I don't know exactly, some kind of [15]

negative feeling, possibly doubt, or something.

G: Let yourself feel it. Let it come.

S: It's a fear . . . of being alone, of being insecure and alone.

G: And you became afraid of being alone just as Sharon was starting to help you?

S: Yes. Because I don't know where I'm going.

G: I see. Does Sharon know?

S: She said "yes," but I don't feel that she does.

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK

G: Do you trust her?

S: I guess not, no.

G: Okay, tell Sharon that.

S: She said, "It's all right. I know where I'm going. Take my hand." And I said, "But where?" and she pointed ahead and said, "See that light down there, that point of light?" And it was straight ahead, in a channel. "That's where we're going."

G: You said you felt different. How?

[16] S: I am the one who has real doubts — the Doubter.

G: I see . . . and how do you feel when Sharon says "Come with me"?

S: I feel resistant. I hold back.

G: How come?

S: I don't know where that funnel of light is, or what it is.

G: I see.

S: And I'm afraid, and I feel that I don't know where I am. I don't know what's happening. I see myself standing with Sharon and she's pulling my hand. I'm looking around saying, "Wait a minute, wait a minute! Where am I?" I have to know where I am before I can go there, toward the light.

G: How do you feel toward the light?

S: It's small and very far away, but everything funnels toward it.

G: Yes . . . how do you feel toward it?

S: I don't know. I don't have any fears of it now, but I just don't know.

G: Tune in to the light . . . and see if feelings of any kind come.

S: I imagine myself there, what it would be like to be there, and the feeling is joy — my heart is beating fast — I'm going through a funnel and near the end it opens up . . . forever. And it's very bright.

[17] G: Okay. Now things are going to change slightly. Step back and observe Sharon . . .

(pause) . . . now be aware of the Doubter as well . . . and of the Hag . . .

S: Yes, they are all there . . . and Sharon is just one of them . . . I can really see her clearly now. She's not Sharon, she's . . . [18] the Idealist! I'm not her! I *have been* her, but I'm not her, am I? She's the Idealist! Oh, wow!

G: Good . . . This is an important insight . . . take some time to experience it.

S: (long pause) . . . yes . . . now there's [19] someone else . . . there's someone else here too . . . kind of the greater me, the high me.

G: And what is the "high you" like?

S: She's what I want to be. She's looking at the Hag, and the Doubter, and the Idealist. And what's so special is that she accepts them. All of them. And she feels compassion towards them. She knows the Hag is critical and twisted, and the Doubter afraid, and mistrusting, yet she accepts



them. And she sees through the Idealist too, the unrealistic ideals and the refusing to accept her limitations, the pretention and the desperate spirituality. She accepts them all, and loves them in spite of their faults. And she's humming . . . she hums all the time . . . she's in touch with the light. G: Can you talk to her?

S: No. She doesn't talk with words. She's silent.

G: Can you communicate with her in some other way?

[20] S: Yes . . . (pause) . . . she showed me an image of a circle, a loop of light. I'm getting some meaning from that. It is a message, but I don't quite have it. The connection keeps getting broken.

G: What breaks the connection?

S: The other parts keep coming in, and I keep listening to them.

[21] G: Okay . . . now things are going to change again. Imagine that you are at the foot of a mountain with the Idealist, the Hag and the Doubter. The "Higher" Sharon is somewhere above, probably close to the top, and she'll guide you whenever you need her. What I'd like you to do is to take the others with you to the top.

S: They're climbing with me, slipping and chattering away, making lots of noise like little kids . . . (pause) . . . we're still climbing . . . (long pause) . . . we're getting near the top now. . . . We're at the top.

G: And is the "Higher" Sharon there too?

S: Yes, she's here.

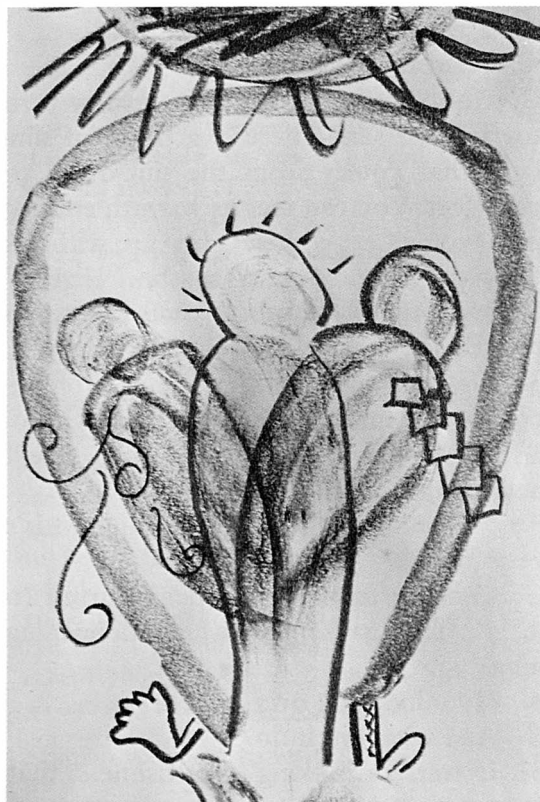
G: Turn to her and ask her what to do.

[22] S: She says they all need to turn to each other and look at each other and lean in together so that they flow into one.

G: Okay. Tell her you are going to do that now, and ask her to help you. Let the sun shine down very brightly. Now go

ahead and tell me what happens.

S: She's circling them with a ring of light that hums, and she's energizing them with this until they too start to hum and they're looking at each other and taking hands . . . and they're flowing together now and they're one. They're ringed by light.



G: How does that feel?

S: The feeling is of being in touch again . . . (long pause) . . . [23]

G: What's happening now?

S: They've merged, and a new one has formed in the ring of light. And she's different. She sort of has qualities from all the other three. And she has a bearing that's not puffed up, or on an ego trip, but sure of herself, knowing who she is. She's very, very solid. She doesn't get all carried

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK

- away so she doesn't have to be so critical. She has high ideals, but they're somehow more connected to reality, more grounded. And she's not all sweetness and light, either . . . she's somehow more human, wonderfully human.
- G: Are you watching her or are you being her?
- [24] S: I'm becoming her . . . now I am her . . . it's beautiful.
- G: Good . . . (long pause) . . . now turn toward the sun. There is a beam of sunlight that comes from the sun down to your feet. You can feel its warmth coming into you. Let yourself fill up with its energy . . . now turn to the "Higher" Sharon and tell her that you'd like to go toward the sun, and would she help you.
- S: She said to establish a connection between the sun and the top of my head.
- G: Okay. Go ahead and do that. She'll help you. And tell me what happens.
- S: I'm going up toward the sun . . . it's very joyous.
- G: Tune in to the joy. Open yourself to it . . . (long pause) . . . what's happening now?
- [25] S: My mind took over.
- G: And what did it do?
- S: It started thinking of selfishness, that I was being selfish.
- G: How were you being selfish?
- S: Getting so much joy, so much attention from you.
- G: Turn to the "Higher" Sharon and ask her if you are being selfish.
- S: She says, "No, not now, not way up here."
- G: Okay, do you want to try again and go toward the sun?
- S: Yes.
- G: Go ahead . . .
- S: I tried, but I can't get over the feeling that I am taking a lot of time whereas I can work on this alone later.
- G: Why not do it now, the easy way? It's [26] not selfish to take things. It's selfish to hold onto them after you have them.
- S: That's right! What the high Sharon [27] does, what I want to do, is to draw in the light and then share it, and give it out, and help.
- G: Yes . . . and how can you share it without first taking it in?
- S: That's right.
- G: So, go ahead.
- S: The flow is re-established and I'm back [28] in the sun.
- G: Now let yourself really feel the flow . . . (pause) . . . what is it like?
- S: I am one . . . with everything.
- G: Let the energy flow to you and out [29] from you. Let it flow through you and practice radiating it in all directions . . . (pause) . . . now, look for the center of the sun. Try to go right for the center point in the sun and tell me what happens . . . (long pause) . . .
- S: There's an explosion. No, not quite an explosion, but a constant force of light from all around, brilliant, and emanating and humming.
- G: Can you let yourself go right in the middle of it? And tell me what happens . . .
- S: I just disappear.
- G: Good . . . go with it . . .
- S: Now I'm light . . .
- G: Be aware of what is around you and tell me what's there.
- S: First there's only light and the sun which surrounds me. And then there's a whole earth and a whole universe and the stars.
- G: Can you still hear the hum?

S: Yes.

G: Tune in to it. That hum ties everything together. Really tune in to it. Listen to it all around you and let it emerge from within you also. . . . Try to get the inner and the outer hum to be in tune . . . they are really the same one . . .

S: Everything's humming and the hum is going through me and all around me.

G: Good. Remain in touch with that hum and look at Earth . . . very gradually, follow that hum as it goes toward Earth, keeping a connection between the sun and the top of your head. Stay in touch with the hum, with the energy. . . . Gradually go toward earth, toward the top of the mountain . . . and let yourself land on the mountain. Again practice letting the energy and the hum flow to you and out, this time in all directions. You'll see that on the mountain there are other beings, and animals, and other parts of you which you haven't seen yet. Now, send the energy and the hum to all of them to help them get close to each other. Send it down the slopes of the mountain all around. . . . Then, whenever you feel like it, you can open your eyes . . . (long pause) . . .

S: (laughing and crying at the same time) I feel so good . . . so solid . . .

G: I'm very glad . . . it was a good piece of work . . . shall we talk together now about what happened?

* * *

After the daydream, we spent a brief time talking. We wanted to help Sharon explore the meaning that the symbolic process had to her and what she had learned from it. To avoid imposing our own interpretation on what happened, we

asked her to write down her insights for our next session.

In her paper, Sharon said:

I see now for the first time what the Hag has always been trying to say to me . . . what she would have said to me if I had listened. She says: "I'm the one in whom you've buried all the feelings you don't like to admit you have . . . your angry feelings, your impatience, your envy. The Idealist wanted you to be so pure that you'd never have bad feelings, and you pretended you didn't have them. But that left me alone and twisted, without any way of changing.

I'm truly a part of you; you can't reject me. I need your understanding and help. And I know the world. I'm useful in the world. There are times when it's appropriate to be angry . . . times when impatience can be transformed into action. You need to help untwist what I have and then use my good, practical side.

I resent what the Idealist made you do to me. But I see and appreciate your ideals. I can help you realize them. But I want them to be useful, to be connected to the real world. You can't make any of your ideals come true, you're not ready to, unless you can deal with the here and now, as it is, and accept your own negative feelings. You must go one step at a time.

Sharon went on to write:

I see now that if I let the Idealist take over and reject the Hag, none of my ideals can be made real. They are useless unless I can first accept, and learn to deal with the negative side of myself and of other people.

I see the value of the Doubter. She just wants to understand where I'm going. She can help me from doing crazy, impractical things, too, with her questions and her thinking things through. I need that.

Sharon was beginning to have a good intellectual understanding of how her sub-

personalities could begin to work together. As we went on, she realized more and more how badly she had been blocked by her unrealistic ideals, feeling overwhelmed by them and beaten before she had begun.

Later, in a second daydream, besides delving further into the Doubter, she took another look at the Idealist. She discovered that the Idealist had a great deal of hidden ambition, and that it was this ambition that was exaggerating and inflating her ideals, making them impractical. And, as we had seen, the Idealist had convinced her that the only way she could ever achieve them was to repress and deny her limitations.

It became clear, as well, that the anger she had experienced in the early part of her daydream was a central element—an integral, though repressed, part of the Hag, and that it too would have to be dealt with.

The next phase of her work—and a most important one—was to begin to anchor her new understanding in her everyday life—to begin to change the way she had been living. It was crucial for her to begin to get in touch with her anger and ambition, in which her much needed energy had been bottled up. For several weeks, she did an Evening Review (see “The Work” section) looking back over each day for feelings of anger and frustration and for ways in which her ambition had affected her choices and actions. Gradually, she learned to be aware of these feelings in the moment, and was surprised to discover how much of her energy was locked into them. As she let herself tentatively experience this energy, she realized

it could be used to help overcome her feelings of inadequacy and to achieve realistic goals. She began to consciously channel some of this increased energy toward overcoming obstacles that had seemed insurmountable before—for example, to work at writing a story for six consecutive days until she had finished it!

Through this phase of her work, she came to appreciate the ambition of the Idealist, and to see that provided it was under her control, ambition could help her to be creative and innovative, and was a powerful motivating force for dealing with working through, rather than avoiding, her personality limitations.

Sharon was now willing also to come to grips with her anger and frustration. First of all, it was important for her to learn ways of releasing these feelings harmlessly. This was done through various catharsis techniques.¹⁹ For example, we suggested that when she felt anger she pound her bed with a tennis racket until she felt better, or that she vigorously scrub the floor or chop firewood. This cathartic release was an important step, for it was during this period that her long lasting and deep depression gradually lessened and then disappeared.

Eventually, she understood that the anger and frustration that had been bottled up in the Hag also represented valuable energy that, like ambition, could be turned to useful purposes. So with Sharon’s help and understanding the Hag could turn this energy toward becoming “untwisted” and putting her practicality and honesty to work.

Over the course of this later work, the *Hag* became transformed into an earthy,

practical, realistic voice which Sharon came to trust more and more. The “living in the real world” quality of the Hag and the discrimination and careful judgment of the *Doubter* eventually became two trusted voices which helped her “ground” the vision of the *Idealist*, making it realistic by helping her see the steps needed to make her goals attainable. She was then well on her way to integrating these three important subpersonalities into the new, more inclusive and joyful subpersonality – the one she had been, momentarily, when standing on the mountain top at the beginning of her work.

THE PHASES OF HARMONIZATION

Now let us look at Sharon’s daydream in terms of the five phases of subpersonality harmonization.

The subpersonality that was causing Sharon’s feelings of disgust and anger was recognized with only little difficulty, and turned out to be “one I’ve seen before” ([1] page 22). This sense of familiarity is often the case, and confirms the notion that subpersonalities are not arbitrary constructs, but natural formations that have spontaneously developed in the psyche. It is not unusual for the recognition of a repressed subpersonality to be accompanied, at first, by reciprocal negative feelings (“I hate her, and I’m disgusted . . . and I disgust her” [2]). These will be often the same feelings that caused its original rejection and repression. Full recognition and acceptance of a subpersonality requires experiencing and owning those feelings, which can then be transformed into more positive ones (“I feel sorry for her” [5]).

This in turn opens the way for the coordination phase.

Coordination is a central aspect of the work with subpersonalities. It consists in reaching from the external aspects of a subpersonality to its core; from its actions to the meaning of those actions and the causes behind them; from what it says it *wants* to what it truly *needs*. In practically every situation, even if a subpersonality initially appears ugly, mean, in deep pain, hostile, and a complete hindrance, once we reach its core we find that its basic quality is good. We see that it is not only acceptable but useful, and at times badly needed; that it can be harmonized with the other qualities, and that distortions and conflicts were produced largely in the frustrated efforts to express and actualize that fundamentally good quality.

So the first step is to establish clear and open communication. One can then focus on what the two sides want from each other (always keeping in touch with the feelings involved), and from the expressed wants, trace the reasons, the “whys” for those wants, and then the needs behind those reasons. In Sharon’s case, the Hag initially wanted her to “stop being phony” because, it turned out, by being phony, Sharon was rejecting her. But what the Hag actually *needed* was first to be accepted, then helped, so as to move out of her twistedness and to grow [4,8].

A fundamental point is that the twistedness of the subpersonality was caused by Sharon’s lack of acceptance of her, and not in any way by any quality intrinsic in the Hag. And the Hag was disgusted by her twistedness (“I don’t want to be this way”) just as much as Sharon was, and

wanted to change, but was powerless to do so without Sharon's help. So Sharon needed to accept responsibility for the distortions in the Hag, and offer her help ("I'm sorry, I didn't realize, I'll help you" [9]). After that, the Hag was willing in turn to take responsibility for her remaining feelings ("I still feel a little bit hurt . . . but it's okay" [10]).

The technique that led to this acceptance is an important one, very helpful during the phases of acceptance and of coordination. It consists of identifying *temporarily* with the subpersonality one is in conflict with—in "becoming" it [7]. This technique is discussed in detail further on.

After the reconciliation between Sharon and the Hag, one might have been tempted to end the daydream. There had been a good catharsis of the central feelings. The vicious circle — of rejection leading to distortion leading to more rejection — was broken, and Sharon and the subpersonality were on good terms, eager to help each other. Yet, if we had stopped here, after some time Sharon most probably would have reverted to her previous attitude of rejection and condemnation. What was missing to produce a permanent change in attitude was the understanding of the initial causes that led Sharon to reject that subpersonality, *before* the rejection twisted her into the Hag.* The cause emerged quite easily ("she wanted to be pure" [11],

and "she was trying to be something she wasn't ready to be" [12]). In this respect, the daydream is unusual. More often, a considerable amount of work is needed to reach this point. Finding the causes of Sharon's rejection of the Hag led to the most concrete statement yet for mutual help and cooperation [13], and to the first suggestion of integration ("we have to come together").

Again one might have been tempted to stop here. But in mental imagery work it is worthwhile to *act out* the giving of help ("Why don't you try that now" [14]), or whatever else might be suggested as desirable. By doing so, if there are any remaining obstacles, they are likely to be brought to light. This was the case here, and the block that emerged [15] turned out, quite unpredictably, to be a major one, to the extent of involving a new subpersonality ("I am the one who has real doubts—the Doubter" [16]). At this point, it would have been possible to work on the acceptance and coordination of the Doubter, just as we had done for the Hag. But, I felt that the material and insights related to the Hag was about all that Sharon could handle effectively for the time be-

*Clearly, the underlying assumption here — as in all attempts at coordination — is that, as I have stressed earlier, the subpersonality is basically

good, desires to grow and improve, and has a certain amount of good will which can be brought into play. This assumption has been found to be valid in a very large majority of practical cases by the therapists who tested it. It is important to remember, however, that *it must always be treated as a probable assumption*, a hypothesis to be verified again and again by reaching the core of each new situation, not a belief to be accepted blindly and superficially.

ing, and, as it was more closely related to her immediate life needs, she would be more highly motivated to follow it through.

But I decided that it would be useful to her long-term growth for Sharon to have an experience of her transpersonal nature. This would add to her overall motivation, and help her gain a more realistic perception of the possibilities and the long-term goals toward which the work with the Hag made her free to reach. So in dealing with the Doubter, the emphasis, as may be apparent, was primarily on overcoming its immediate resistance, rather than on resolving its difficulties — on *going around* the obstacle, rather than removing it — and at times on gathering data for later use.

These data complemented the picture that had already emerged of a basic conflict. On one side we have the subpersonality with which Sharon was normally identified — the one she referred to initially as Sharon, and later on as the “Idealist”—who “knows where she is going” but wants to proceed prematurely, out of impatience and over-eagerness, avoiding to deal with her limitations. On the other side we have the Doubter and the Hag, which react with mistrust, doubt, and hostility. The result of this conflict is to block progress and cut off the energy they need to grow effectively and in reciprocal harmony.

After the substantial work of *coordination* of the Hag, it seemed feasible to attempt an *integration* of the subpersonalities present. The first step was to help Sharon take the position of the *objective observer* [17]. She was able to do this without difficulty, and it produced two

important results. The first was the *disidentification* from, and the recognition of the subpersonality Sharon was normally identified with (“She’s not Sharon, she’s . . . the Idealist! I’m not her!” [18]). This was a major step forward, accompanied by strong emotion, which freed Sharon from the specific desires and limitations of the Idealist. Next came a spontaneous influx from the superconscious, in the form of a subpersonality-like formation of a transpersonal nature (the “High Sharon” [19]). This is somewhat typical, as for many people it is easiest to get in touch with the superconscious from the position of the “disidentified observer.”*

Such a superconscious element is of great assistance to the process of integration, and is essential for the synthesis phase. Often, its first effect is to throw light on whatever is in the way of the integration. This was the case here when Sharon said that the connection kept getting broken by the various subpersonalities [20]. Again, it seemed better not to explore the difficulty in order to avoid bringing up too much new material at once, but instead to go around the obstacle. So rather than having some interaction between the subpersonalities, I suggested the ascent of a mountain, as a symbol of integration [21]. At the top, the “High Sharon” was used as an inner source of guidance.** She spontaneously suggested that integration was appropriate [22],

*See footnotes, pp. 61, 80.

**This approach will be presented in detail in “Dialogue with the Higher Self,” to be published in the next issue of *SYNTHESIS*.

and helped to make it happen. This integration led Sharon to identify with the new subpersonality (“I *became* her”), and produced a positive experience (“It’s beautiful” [24]) and a stronger connection with the superconscious (“The feeling is of being in touch again” [23]).

The successful integration does not mean, of course, that Sharon actually achieved then the full integration of her personality. Only three subpersonalities were involved. Furthermore, as was said previously, the greatest value of mental imagery work is often as a “roadmap,” an “Ideal Model,” a pattern of the work that needs to be done. It is not at the same level as everyday life, so it must be “grounded,” or made real in one’s normal life through practice, appropriate exercises, and the gradual changing of one’s habits and behavior.

As Sharon proceeded toward the sun (a symbol of the superconscious and the Transpersonal Self*), laying the foundation for the synthesis phase, another block—the concern with being selfish—appeared [25]. Its nature, however, was completely different from the previous ones. It was not a conflict or incompatibility between subpersonalities, but an obstacle between the personality and the superconscious dimension *set up by the personality to stop its own progress*. This is a typical case of “repression of the sublime,”** which frequently appears at

some point as one proceeds into the superconscious realm.

It is interesting to note that this block *was approached and solved completely at the mental level*, through reasoning and insight. Although it had a definite emotional aspect—feelings of guilt, selfishness, etc.—its core was a *conceptual* distortion, or limitation, in Sharon’s world view. The conceptual understanding (“It’s not selfish to take things. It’s selfish to hold on to them after you have them” [26]) was all that was needed for Sharon to go beyond her resistance. Going on led her to a firm superconscious connection [28] which experientially validated the conceptual insight, and allowed her from then on not to be held back by her feeling that taking was selfish.

An attempt to work on the issue of selfishness at the feeling level, on the other hand, would have brought the whole interaction down again to the level of subpersonalities (probably a “selfish one” and “one who does not want to be selfish”). Sharon might eventually have reached the same insight, but it would have been considerably harder and slower, entailing unnecessary pain and expenditure of effort.

We can see here a first intimation of the interpersonal and transpersonal nature of the synthesis stage: “I want to draw in the light and then share it and give it out and help” [27], which was then reinforced with the suggestion of acting it out [29, 30].

Let us now look at each stage of subpersonality harmonization in some detail.

*For a description of the Superconscious and the Transpersonal Self, see “What Is Psychosynthesis,” p. 112.

**See article, p. 125.

RECOGNITION

Minimizing
conflict

The early development of a new subpersonality and its initial struggle to express itself often occur outside of one's conscious awareness. One becomes aware of the situation after a certain amount of development has taken place, and, in many cases, only when the struggle has reached an acute stage. Such a belated recognition makes the process of harmonization more difficult than it needs to be. If we can recognize new emerging subpersonalities sooner, and understand their behavior and their needs, we can minimize conflict and foster their growth in harmony with the other subpersonalities, preparing the ground for their later integration within the personality. We can then avoid much unnecessary pain and the loss of many opportunities, and help our lives proceed in an increasingly harmonious and fulfilling way.

It is usually quite easy to recognize many of our subpersonalities. For most of us, they correspond to our inner experience, and in such cases all that is needed to identify them is simply to look for them. A few basic exercises, such as those described in the "Practice" section of this *WORKBOOK*, are also quite effective as means of recognition. The Door exercise and the Evening Review, in particular, are valuable not only to recognize subpersonalities, but also to understand their patterns of behavior and interaction, and to work toward their harmonization.

The subpersonalities that are more hidden often appear in the course of therapy, or can be recognized indirectly from the material that emerges in a therapy situation. Mental imagery techniques are especially effective, and many guided daydreams deal primarily with subpersonalities and their interactions.

Attention as a
source of energy

So recognizing most subpersonalities is hardly ever a problem. In fact it often takes less work to find new ones than to deal effectively with the ones we already have recognized. When people are first acquainted with the idea of working with subpersonalities, they often tend to do just that, becoming so fascinated with uncovering a teeming cast of thousands that the more fruitful work of understanding and integrating the central ones, is neglected. So the reader is cautioned against such an attitude, which is a waste of energy at best, and can actually be harmful. In fact, focusing *needless* attention on our subpersonalities, either by looking for too many at once, or by brooding without purpose on the ones we've chosen to work with, *feeds them energy* — as it would in the case of

Avoiding crystallization

any other psychological formation. If this is done for an extended period of time, say several months, with the emphasis on the existing state of things rather than on the changes we want to see happen, the result is merely to *increase the size of the difficulty* without improving the situation. In extreme cases, this can lead to a crystallization of the status quo.

Even naming a subpersonality can eventually contribute to maintaining the status quo, although naming can be useful to distinguish the various subpersonalities and to make a more direct contact with their essential quality. Thus, “the seeker” will find it very hard to end its search, “the ape” will be encouraged by its name to remain an animal, and “the bitch” will feel most alive when it is most bitchy. So it is good to be ready to change the name of a subpersonality when that name is found to be an obstacle to its growth.

As I have said, it is not advisable to work with too many subpersonalities at one time. Experienced people who have much practice in dealing with their subpersonalities might “keep track” of perhaps half a dozen of them during any period of time, and some of them only in a peripheral way.

Flexibility and common sense

While it is impossible to set general rules, often the existential situation itself indicates which subpersonalities need attention at any one time. When this is not clear, I suggest that after having recognized a few subpersonalities one concentrate initially on one or two of them—perhaps those that seem to have the greatest energy, new emerging qualities that one wants to develop, or the most acute need: those that, in other words, seem more central or more important at the moment. Of course this choice should not be made in a rigid way, and it is wise always to be open to a new subpersonality that wants to be heard for a good reason. In general while one is building up experience, common sense and a good sense of humor often supply the best guidelines. A light touch is of real value in subpersonality work.

ACCEPTANCE

The acceptance of a subpersonality and its coordination occur *gradually*, and proceed hand in hand. Through the process of coordination, positive aspects of a subpersonality increasingly replace the negative ones, thus making it more acceptable. But acceptance is involved in another way: one must first *accept* that the negative aspects are there in order to be able to change them. So acceptance

and coordination often turn out in practice to be complementary processes which help each other proceed with increasing momentum, and lead to the integration of the subpersonality within the personality as a whole.

Acceptance
facilitates change

Often we reject a subpersonality — or any other part of ourself — that we dislike because we unconsciously believe that once we accept it, it will remain there, as it is, forever. In reality, exactly the opposite is true. As we have seen in Sharon's guided daydream, if we reject a subpersonality we cut it off from the direct line to the energy it needs. This creates a block which stunts its growth, and causes it to seek energy indirectly, by manipulating and generating conflict. It then develops in a one-sided, distorted fashion, increasingly at odds with the rest of the personality. And we cannot avail ourselves of its useful qualities, its skills, its strengths. But once we accept it, we can discover its real needs and fulfill them in ways that are acceptable to us, and that will enhance its positive qualities while transmuting its negative qualities into others more suitable. The appropriate fulfilling of the subpersonality's needs is a function of coordination, and makes it possible for the subpersonality to evolve and to interact harmoniously with the other subpersonalities.

Values and
self-image

When we first recognize new subpersonalities, our *attitude* toward each of them — as toward people — can vary. In each case, it is determined by many factors, two major ones being our *values* and our *self-image*. In general, we tend to accept a subpersonality that according to our value system, we consider good, useful, etc., and to reject one that we see as bad, harmful, or useless. But a person who has pronounced feelings of inferiority, or an inferiority complex, and who is identified with those feelings, may more easily accept a "bad" subpersonality, and have considerable difficulty accepting a "good" one. And many of us without strong inferiority feelings, often have a marked resistance to accepting subpersonalities having "higher" qualities, or a distinctly transpersonal orientation.* In general, the subpersonalities that are consistent with our self-image are easily accepted. Those that do not fit it are usually rejected.

Often one can handle the resistance to accept a subpersonality on his own. Just becoming aware of it may be sufficient, in many cases. When that resistance turns out to be a major difficulty, it

*The reasons for this, and the dynamics involved, are dealt with most adequately in "The Repression of the Sublime," p. 125.

can be dealt with, just as in the case of any other psychological resistance, through any one of the many good approaches to psychotherapy or personal growth available today.

Disidentification
leads to freedom

A powerful technique, particularly effective for this purpose and for coordination as well, is to attempt to become aware (or in a therapy situation, help the client become aware) of “which part of oneself” is resisting that subpersonality. Invariably, *the one who is resisting is another subpersonality*, often in opposition to the first. And since one is identified with it, even if unconsciously, it is necessary to “step away” from the resisting subpersonality, or more precisely, to *disidentify* from it. One is then freed from its influence, and is able to take the attitude of an unbiased, *objective* observer.* As the objective observer, one is easily able to accept both the first subpersonality and the one that was resisting it, and proceed to their coordination. This is done by understanding their needs and their mode of interaction, and finding acceptable ways in which those needs can be satisfied, and the interaction harmonized and made more constructive.

Compassionate
understanding

As I have already mentioned, there is an opposite – and complementary – technique: that of “becoming” the subpersonality one had rejected. This *temporary identification* brings an immediate experiential awareness of that subpersonality’s existence, which in turn can lead to a compassionate understanding of its needs and the reasons for its attitude, and then to its acceptance. I must emphasize again that this is not submitting to the status quo, but rather accepting the reality of the situation. And it is precisely because the situation has been accepted that it can then be modified and improved.

With this technique, one can deal with a conflict between two subpersonalities by alternately identifying first with one, then with the other, creating a dialogue between the two, and expressing each one’s position and each one’s needs. This is often done in Gestalt Therapy, for example, when dealing with the typical Top Dog-Under Dog conflict. This alternating identification, by itself, often leads the conflicting parts to a cooperative understanding, and at times even to a fusion into a higher formation.

Combining this technique of alternating identification with the technique of the objective observer has been found to be most

*An “exercise in disidentification” and the “technique of the observer” will be presented in the next issue of *SYNTHESIS*. See also the footnote on p. 61.

effective. The latter is essential in bringing about a resolution when the alternating identification is not sufficient to overcome the impasse, and quite helpful when the impasse is very painful or very prolonged.*

With this combined approach, after a number of alternations have given an adequate understanding of what is going on on each side, one “steps back” from the two subpersonalities and, as the objective observer, looks at the situation, and at the possible strategies that could be used to bring about a solution of the conflict. Such a solution may be of a synthetic nature, where both sides will have more or less all they need, or it may be a *temporary* compromise, of a kind that will lead to a synthetic solution further on. Either way, the solutions given by the objective observer are, almost invariably, better, and more acceptable to both subpersonalities, than what either of them were able to suggest.

So while identification with the subpersonalities entails a strong emotional involvement and, at first, often a self-centered (although not necessarily selfish) attitude, later the objective observer acts as advisor, reconciliator and mediator in the conflict, keeping emotionally detached from what is going on, and avoiding to take sides or to inject specific needs of his own.

Dealing with situations from the position of the objective observer is common practice in psychosynthesis and in a number of other approaches to growth. For example, Stewart Shapiro's ego therapy uses the metaphor of “the board of stockholders” and the “chairman of the board” to indicate the many subpersonalities and the objective, unifying principle. In Transactional Analysis, the “Adult” can be used for a similar function. An increasing number of Gestalt therapists are also finding it very helpful to introduce the observer when working to resolve a conflict. The Top Dog, for example, may sit in one chair, the Under Dog in another. After the dialogue has gone back and forth for a sufficient time, a third chair is introduced with the suggestion that “this is the observer's chair – as the observer, see what you can discover about the other two – see if there is a way you can help.”

*For a description of the impasse, see “The Farther Reaches of Gestalt Therapy,” pp. 37-39.

COORDINATION

Essential goodness

Whenever we go deep enough toward the core of a subpersonality, we find that the core — which is some basic urge, or need — is good. For practical purposes, this can be considered an absolute. No matter how many layers of distortion may surround it, the basic need, the basic motivation, is a good one — and if it became twisted, it was because of not being able to express itself directly. The real core — not what the subpersonality wants, but what it needs — is good. A basic purpose of the coordination phase is to discover this central urge or need, to make it conscious, and to find acceptable ways in which it can be satisfied and fulfilled. And, provided we have sufficient understanding and skill, it can be satisfied — if not fully, at least enough to maintain the process of growth.

If you are faced with a demand by a subpersonality that you can't satisfy directly, you can say, "Well, I can't really give you this, but is there something else I can give you instead?" And often what the subpersonality will propose then will be appropriate and useful. Suppose you discover in you a four year old child that wants to be loved. "How do you want to be loved?," you ask. "I want to be held." "How often do you want to be held?" "Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." Well, you can't do that for him, but is there anything else you can do? You can say, "I understand that you want to be held all the time. Nobody has held you in a very long time. You are important to me, but I also have other things I want to do. So I would like to hold you half an hour a day. Let's try it for a week, and see how it works." So you make an agreement with that subpersonality — a compromise — in which, metaphorically, you "hold" the subpersonality and give it comfort.

Fostering growth

And a little bit of satisfaction goes a long way. When subpersonalities are repressed, they get nothing. When they get nothing, they want everything. But just a little is often all they *need*. And if they are childish, they soon develop beyond their childish needs. If there is a subpersonality in you that is four years old, it is because it has not really been "fed" since *you* were four years old. As you start feeding it, it will grow up. Soon, it will want to do more mature things, more in tune with the things *you* want to do. So gradually, you bring it in, and it becomes part of you. Before coordination, the subpersonalities work against you, and there is conflict. After coordination, they begin to work with you.

Discovering the basic needs

Suppose you are dealing with a “dictator” subpersonality. The dictator might want power. He may want to rule everyone in sight, to get them all under his thumb . . . beginning with you. And of course you don’t want to let him do that. But you do want to find out why he does what he does. At first he may say, “I want you to do what I ask all the time!” And you say, “Why do you want that?” By continuing to ask “Why?,” by trying to *understand the reason behind the request*, you go toward more and more basic needs, toward the core. There may be resistance, but eventually, in a case like this one, you may hear him say, “Because I’m always very hungry, I need you to feed me all the time, I’m very weak, I can’t take care of myself.” This can lead to many solutions, of varying depth. You can agree to “feed” him, at reasonable times, if he agrees to stop trying to control you. Or you can help him realize that he can take care of himself more than he thinks – or can learn to do so – and offer your help in situations when he truly can’t. Finally, you can explore the basic nature of his hunger, which may well lead you to discover the central urge that “animates” him.

Sometimes, like some people, a subpersonality of this kind wants power because at some time he was not able to have love. He needed love, but he did not know how to ask for it directly. But he knew how to get power, so he turned to power, and, with power, tries to force others to do all sorts of things for him that, he hopes, will act as surrogates of love. If you recognize that *under the need for power there is often a need for love*, you can often straighten things up easily.²⁰ You can say, essentially, “I can’t let you run everybody, I can’t let you manipulate. But I see that your core is good, and I care for it, and I’d be very glad to help that.” So you give love to that. And as he receives love, he stops misusing power; that is the turning point. Again, you’re saying, “I can’t give you what you’re asking, but I’ll give you what you really need.” And he may say, “I never really wanted power anyway, I just wanted love.”

Understanding makes love possible

Of course, to be able to respond lovingly, we must *understand* the subpersonality in depth. It is very hard to love a controlling and unfeeling dictator. However, once you see that the dictator isn’t really a dictator, but at the core is just someone starved for love, then loving him becomes possible. You can love someone who has been starved for love, no matter what he’s been doing. You can understand the reason he has been acting that way is that he’s desperate for love and doesn’t know how else to go about getting it.

One sees this over and over. Whenever we are able to understand subpersonalities that seemed negative, we find that their core is positive. They will simply do what seems best to them at the moment, within the limitations of their awareness, their weaknesses, their needs. It is the same as with people. It relates to the old Socratic truth that no one chooses to do something bad if he sees clearly that he has a choice between something bad and something good. But sometimes we are just very blind.

INTEGRATION

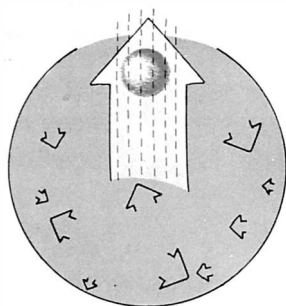
From competition
to cooperation

While coordination deals with the development and improvement within specific subpersonalities, integration is concerned with the relationship of each subpersonality with the other subpersonalities, and with each one's place and activity within the personality as a whole.* The process of integration leads from a general state of isolation, conflict, competition, and repression of the weaker elements by the stronger ones, to a state of harmonious cooperation in which the effectiveness of the personality is greatly enhanced, and its emerging aspects find the space and nourishment they need to develop fully.**

Subpersonalities are often found as pairs of opposites. As this is not only the most common but also the simplest pattern, we will deal with integration in terms of opposites. But the same approach can be easily adapted to other situations.

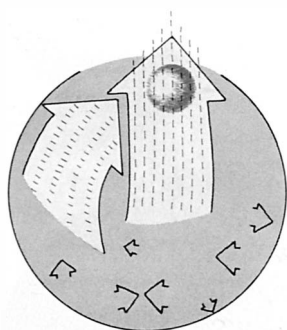
*The harmonization of the subpersonalities is only one out of several vantage points from which the integration of the personality, as a whole, can be considered. We can deal with the integration of the personality from another very important vantage point: that of the coordination and integration of the physical, emotional and mental nature of the human being. This will be considered in later issues of *SYNTHESIS*.

**It will be apparent that the various phases of harmonization of subpersonalities are *distinct but not separate*, and that although in general they follow each other in the order given, there is often, in practice, a great deal of overlap and interconnection. While the sequence is of definite conceptual value to understand what is going on, one should avoid, in practical work, any attempt to proceed rigidly from one phase to the next. Rather, looking at the complete picture, we need to be aware of how each of the five phases is progressing, and be ready to focus on the one that needs attention at the moment. In Sharon's daydream, for example, there were many shifts back and forth between acceptance, coordination and integration.



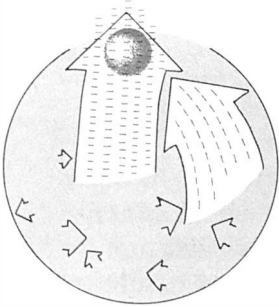
To best consider how opposite subpersonalities can be reconciled, it is useful first to understand how such opposites arise. At a certain point of development, an individual may be strongly identified with one major subpersonality, and, for all practical purposes, believe himself to *be* that subpersonality. Most of his energy, therefore, is centered in—and flows through—that subpersonality. The other subpersonalities develop more slowly, without being recognized or accepted, and are largely relegated to his unconscious. He is therefore relatively free from conflict, has well-defined goals and is capable of realizing them, and is likely to be normally well-adjusted and happy. But his aims are restricted to the particular aims of that subpersonality, and he is able to express only a small fraction of the qualities and gifts that are in him: those that the predominant subpersonality accepts as its own.

I said that most of the person's energy is focused, and flows, through that subpersonality. A subtle but important effect of this focalization of energy is that the *quality* of that energy will be limited to the qualities that that subpersonality accepts. In other words, the subpersonality acts as a *filter* for that energy. Energy having different qualities, *especially opposite qualities*, will not be able to go through—will not find an outlet through that subpersonality. It will seek, among the other subpersonalities, the one that is more akin to *its* quality—that presents to it the path of least resistance—one that is likely to be complementary, and often *opposite to the dominant subpersonality*.

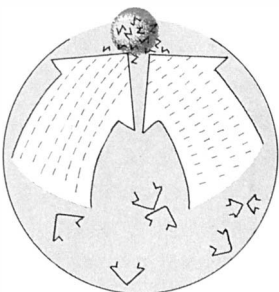


This is how opposites are often formed. As time goes by, this second subpersonality, “fed” by the new stream of energy, develops, becomes stronger, and seeks expression. But it finds the way blocked by the first subpersonality, that does not want to give up its position of control. A situation of conflict now arises, most often beginning at the unconscious level. As long as the dominant subpersonality is much stronger than the emerging one, it will succeed in inhibiting the other and, at least for a certain period, prevent its direct expression. The emerging subpersonality will then try to express itself indirectly, perhaps through manipulation, or other devious maneuvering. As it becomes stronger, it will be able in unusual circumstances—such as moments of stress—to take the person by surprise, and bring about a temporary shift in his or her identification, from the dominant subpersonality to itself. Initially, a person will usually interpret this as his own behavior taking on increasingly undesirable aspects, which he is unable to stop. In the

earlier example of the businessman-mystic, suppose the businessman subpersonality was dominant, and the mystic emerging. While identified with the businessman, the person first becoming aware of the mystic would probably interpret its sensitivity and vision as weakness and delusion, to be ignored. But as these tendencies become stronger, manifesting perhaps through fantasies, or affecting his actual decision-making process, he eventually would become increasingly concerned. The inner conflict between the two opposites would have reached the conscious stage. He might, for a while, keep pushing away the new tendencies, postponing the issue but making it much harder to deal with. Or he might decide to understand what is really happening, either by himself, or perhaps with the help of a counselor or therapist. If he reaches an understanding of the mystic and its place, he would then make room for it to emerge in full consciousness, would see that it has many beautiful and valuable qualities, and, eventually, become identified with it. The mystic can now express itself directly, and much of the energy that was pent up can be released. This sudden release, and its corresponding increase in *energy flow*, is likely to be experienced as a peak of joy, or some other positive quality, which lasts until the stored energy is released.



But now the mystic wants to stay in control, and the businessman is cut off—the energy that was flowing through it is now, in turn, blocked, and pushes to be released. Soon, businessman and mystic begin to fight each other for freedom of expression. The conflict is now fully in the open, and raging. To the person, being identified with either subpersonality alone is now unrewarding, inhibiting, and a betrayal of a part of himself. He finds either identification increasingly difficult to maintain, and gradually becomes more *identified with the conflict* than with either subpersonality.



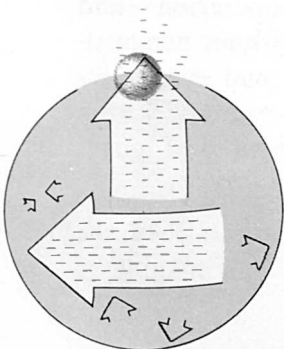
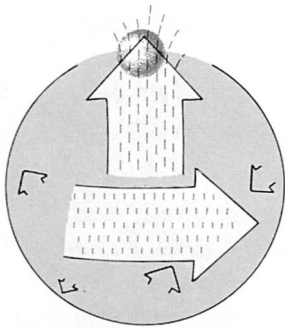
Superficially, this new situation may appear to him as a step back in his growth. He is now functioning less effectively, is less happy, and is under greater stress. But his existence, becoming increasingly uncomfortable, demands the resolution of the conflict, the reconciliation of the two opposite subpersonalities. So it is, in reality, a *transition* toward a higher level of integration, and represents a definite step forward in his development.

Depending on a number of factors, integration can be accomplished in a number of different ways. Some of the most common are:

Reciprocal inhibition

Time-Sharing: In many conflict situations each subpersonality, as we have seen, strives to have control all of the time, inhibiting the expression of the others. When this is the case, one can never be fully present in what one is doing, nor enjoy it or be fully effective in it. For example, we might have a subpersonality who wants to work all the time—the “Compulsive Worker”—at war with one who wants to play all the time—let’s call him “Goof-off.” When we are trying to work, Goof-off will intrude, making us feel tired, getting in the way of concentration, and enticing us with fantasies of lying in the sun. But when we finally have time and freedom for leisure, the Compulsive Worker, unwilling to have us do anything but work, will fight back, nagging at us with thought or worries about work, and making it impossible to relax and enjoy our leisure.

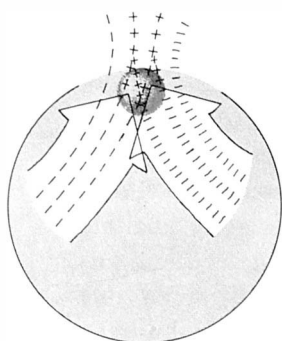
Compromise can be valuable



In such situations, once the subpersonalities involved are recognized and accepted, it is usually possible to start a dialogue with them, from the position of the objective observer, and have them recognize that their fighting one another for control has led to a dead end, a stalemate, in which *both are losing out*. One can then suggest a compromise, where each subpersonality agrees to let the other be in control, undisturbed, for a reasonable part of the time, provided it will also have its turn. Sometimes it is quite obvious how the time should be shared: the Compulsive Worker’s space clearly is on the job; Goof-off’s is leisure time. But in some cases, a change in the daily routine may be called for. For example, definite periods of leisure may have to be scheduled if one’s busy life does not provide room for it. And the increased quality and effectiveness of work is likely to more than make up for the decreased time.

Time-sharing is perhaps the simplest approach to integration, and may appear downright simplistic, but in practice it is surprisingly effective. As I said, rather than being a true synthesis, it is a *temporary* compromise that fosters further coordination of the subpersonalities involved, leading to a closer form of cooperation. The great value of this strategy is that it requires only a minimum of coordination. Therefore it fits a large number of situations, is easy to apply, and most subpersonalities accept it willingly—long before being ready to accept a more sophisticated solution.

Cooperation: Understanding the reasons for the conflict and the needs of the subpersonalities involved often shows that, through cooperation, both subpersonalities can achieve their goals,



Similar goals

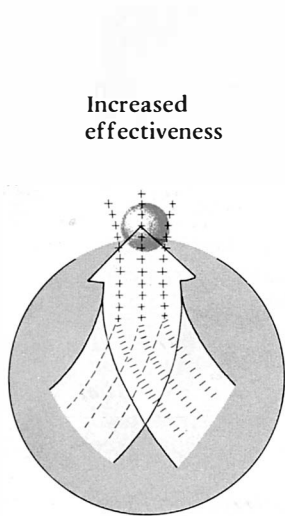
and each can do so more fully than if they were on their own. This was the case with the Idealist and the Doubter, in Sharon's example.

Often the desires and goals of one subpersonality appear quite different from those of the other. But on many occasions, when reaching the true causes of the conflict, one discovers that the *basic* needs and aims of both subpersonalities are the same or very similar, and that the conflict was about the *means* to fulfill those aims. A particularly close and fruitful cooperation is then possible, and in a relatively short time the *fusion* of the two subpersonalities can usually occur. In Sharon's daydream, we see that the Idealist is motivated by a strong urge to reach the transpersonal dimension, and because of this urge is impatient, unrealistic and unwilling to accept Sharon's limitations. The Doubter is doubtful, mistrusting, overly cautious and unwilling to go along with the Idealist. During later work it became clear – as the daydream had hinted – that the Doubter actually gave as much value to the transpersonal as the Idealist, and had just as strong an urge to move in that direction, although it did not have so clear a vision of how to get there. And it was because it considered this aim to be so important, that it felt the need to proceed with equally great caution – not to get lost on the way. As the subpersonalities realized that they both had the same goal, they were able to *trust*, *respect*, and *value* each other, and pool their strengths while helping each other overcome their limitations. By pooling the enthusiasm and the clear vision of one, and the discernment and prudence of the other, Sharon was able to proceed effectively.

The other polarity Sharon found was that between these two subpersonalities on the one hand, and the Hag on the other. The Idealist and the Doubter wanted to reach for the transpersonal, while the Hag's aim was down-to-earth personality development and effectiveness in everyday life. Here, the basis for cooperation – and then the fusion – came from Sharon's insight that without personality development the spiritual quest is dangerous, and eventually sterile, while everyday life ultimately finds its true meaning within the broader framework of transpersonal awareness and goals.

Absorption and Fusion: As two or more subpersonalities become closer together, through coordination and cooperation, they are drawn more and more toward each other. Eventually, a merging of the two occurs.

If the two are at about the same level of development, the merging is an actual *fusion* which results in a completely new sub-



Synergic effect

personality. If one is considerably more developed than the other, it will take the smaller one “inside itself,” or *absorb* it — preserving much of its own original identity but greatly increasing its coordination, effectiveness and range of expression. For example, as I said earlier, the integration of the businessman and the mystic could result in a compassionate businessman, or a practical mystic. Or it could be a completely new subpersonality with not only the positive qualities of both subpersonalities, but also some entirely new ones, not available before, which resulted from the synergic effect of the fusion. In other words, the new whole becomes more than the sum of its parts. And many of the negative qualities of the original subpersonalities disappear or are greatly diminished because, being opposite to each other, they are *balanced out* in the new synthesis that the fusion represents. The same was true in Sharon’s case. Her unrealistic enthusiasm on the one hand, and her mistrust on the other, having opposite effects, tended to balance out each other’s excesses, leaving an open avenue for a utilization of the available energy which was healthy and appropriate to each situation.

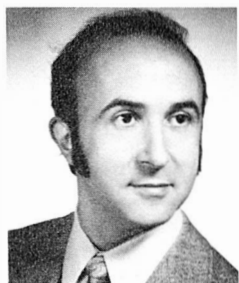
SYNTHESIS

This last phase of harmonization can be considered to be the culmination of individual growth. It facilitates the integration of the personality through the refinement and harmonization of the personality itself. But while personality integration is *intrapersonal*, synthesis is essentially *interpersonal* and *transpersonal*, and is the outcome of a growing interplay of the personality with the super-conscious and the Transpersonal Self.

As a result of this interplay, the life of the individual, and his interaction with other human beings, become increasingly characterized by a sense of responsibility, caring, harmonious cooperation, altruistic love and transpersonal objectives. It leads to the harmonious integration of the human being with others, with mankind, and with the world.

REFERENCES

1. G. C. TAYLOR: *The "Who Am I?" Techniques in Psychotherapy*, Psychosynthesis Institute, 3352 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California, 1968.
2. G. CIRINEI: *Psychosynthesis: A Way to Inner Freedom*, Psychosynthesis Institute, 3352 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California, 1970.
3. R. ASSAGIOLI: *Life as a Game and Stage Performance*, Psychosynthesis Institute, 3352 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California, 1973.
4. Quoted in T. A. HARRIS' *I'm O.K., You're O.K.*, Harper & Row, New York, 1969, p. 1.
5. H. A. MURRAY: "What Should Psychologists Do About Psychoanalysis?," *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology*, 35, 1940, pp. 160-161.
6. A. DAVID-NEIL: *Buddhism*, Lane Publishers, 1939.
7. Quoted in translation from R. ASSAGIOLI: *Per L'Armonia Della Vita, la Psicointesi*, Istituto di Psicointesi, Via San Domenico 16, Firenze, Italy, 1966, p. 5.
8. E. BERNE: *Transactional Analysis in Psychotherapy*, Grove Press, New York, 1961.
9. See, for example, F. PERLS, *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*, Bantam, New York, 1972.
10. S. B. SHAPIRO: "A Theory of Ego Pathology and Ego Therapy," *The Journal of Psychology*, 53, 1962, pp. 81-90.
11. B. CARTER: *The Integration of the Personality*, unpublished paper, 1973, p. 16.
12. S. VARGIU: *Psychosynthesis Case Studies*, Psychosynthesis Institute, 3352 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California, 1971, p. 4.
13. R. ASSAGIOLI: *Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques*, Viking Press, New York, 1971, pp. 166-177. See also *The Ideal Model Exercise*, Psychosynthesis Institute, 3352 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California.
14. R. DESOILLIE: *The Directed Daydream*, Psychosynthesis Institute, 3352 Sacramento St., San Francisco, California, 1966.
15. H. LEUNER: "Guided Affective Imagery," *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, 1969, pp. 4-22.
16. M. CRAMPTON: "The Use of Mental Imagery in Psychosynthesis," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Fall 1969, pp. 139-153.
17. S. VARGIU: *op. cit.*
18. B. FINNEY: *Say It Again: An Active Therapy Technique*, unpublished manuscript, 1969.
19. S. VARGIU: *op. cit.*, "Alex," p. 8.
20. ———: *op. cit.*, "Mark," p. 11.



James Vargiu was born in Italy and educated in the United States, first in physics and mathematics, and then psychology. He was trained at the Istituto di Psicointesi, Florence, Italy, with Roberto Assagioli and has worked with him over the past ten years. He founded the Psychosynthesis Institute, San Francisco, California in 1969. He has lectured both in America and in Europe and is currently Executive Editor of *SYNTHESIS* and a Director of the Psychosynthesis Institute.

Practice:

The following exercises provide the practical means for working with our subpersonalities. There are several ways you can do them. Some exercises, like the Pie or the Door, have a series of steps to complete. One way you can work with these is to read one step at a time, complete that step, and then proceed to the next until you have finished. Or you may read the exercise through and then do the whole thing from memory. Another way is to have some other person read it to you, step by step, slowly, as you do it. Or you might want to tape record yourself reading the exercise, and then play it back. In this case, be sure to leave long enough pauses for you to actually do what is called for.

The Evening Review has only a short series of steps which you may want to read the first few times you do it, but which you will easily memorize after that.

If at all possible, it is preferable to complete each exercise in one time period rather than doing it piecemeal. Stopping in the middle of an exercise usually interferes with the momentum, interrupts awareness, and blocks whatever insights might emerge.

Visualizing. Visualization is involved in most of the following exercises. It is interesting, enjoyable, and easy to do. Yet some people believe that they cannot visualize, or find it difficult because of a mistaken idea of what visualization is. If this is the case for you, try this experiment:

After closing your eyes, recall your car to mind. What color is it? What side of it are you looking at? What is its shape like?

You were probably able to imagine your car. You do not have to “see” it as you

see an image on a movie screen. You can “think about it,” remember it, imagine it.

Try to imagine your car again. In your imagination, walk around it, so you can see both sides and its front and back.

If you can do this, even just barely, it is all you need to start, although with practice visualization becomes richer and easier. And seeing is not the only sense available. Hearing, touching, smelling and tasting all have their imaginative counterparts.

Visualize your car once more. Now touch it. What does it feel like? It may be smooth, or you may be able to feel an occasional dent or scratch. Is it cool, or warm from standing in the sun? Now imagine that you open the door, sit in the driver’s seat and start the engine. Listen for the sound of the engine. Can you feel its vibration? Are you aware of any characteristic odors . . . like gasoline or the special scent of its upholstery?

Several of the exercises in this section will ask you to visualize, to “let an image emerge.” If several of your imaginative “senses” are active, try to draw on them when you do this. It will enrich the experience and deepen your involvement with the imagery.

Grounding. Lasting psychological change and growth are often slow. So it may seem easier to find out new things about ourselves than to apply what we already

know. Increasing our self-awareness without applying it to our life can create a “psychological overload” which often leads to depression and pain. To prevent this from occurring, it is important to work patiently toward expressing and actualizing our insights before — or at least while — looking for new awareness.

Fundamentally, we need to “ground” any new awareness we have about ourselves. To ground an insight is to bring it down from the realm of ideas into the realm of daily life, to anchor it firmly in our everyday world, to create from it specific and practical changes in the way we live.

For example, the insight may come that there is an “Artist” subpersonality in us who is crying for expression. This insight can and should be grounded by actually supplying the necessary means: for example, buying paint and canvas, and taking the time to use them. Or we may realize that there is a “Dreamer” subpersonality in us who needs time to be quiet and alone. The insight by itself is fruitless; care and attention should be given to ground it, perhaps by setting aside some specific time each week to simply sit under a tree and dream.

Rather than merely searching for new awareness in an endless self-exploration, we can take the time and care to ground what we learn, *as we go*.

The Door

A PSYCHOSYNTHESIS EXERCISE

Your answers to the Who Am I exercise have probably given you a feeling for some of your subpersonalities. But now, what can you do to learn more about them? To discover new ones? How can you increase your awareness of your subpersonalities so that their unconscious processes can become more conscious?

Your future subpersonality work is based on your awareness and knowledge of their needs, their wants, their special qualities, their behavior patterns. Of course these are *your* wants, needs, qualities and

behavior which are locked into the inner psychological configurations we call subpersonalities. The goal of the work with subpersonalities is to release the energy which is caught in them and to integrate it into the whole personality, so that the energy can flow more smoothly and harmoniously.

The following exercise will aid the recognition, acceptance, and coordination of your subpersonalities. These phases of subpersonality harmonization are described in detail in the “Principles” section of this *WORKBOOK*.

1) Sit comfortably and relax. After closing your eyes, take a few deep breaths. Imagine a big wooden door in front of you. Make it as real as you can—note the texture and the color, and any details such as the hinges, handle or knob. On the door there is a sign that says SUBPERSONALITIES. Imagine that they all live behind the door.

Prepared by Betsie Carter-Haar. Betsie Carter-Haar is a former Senior Associate of the Psychosynthesis Institute and has been an Editor of *SYNTHESIS*.

2) Now open the door and let some of your main subpersonalities come out. Just observe them. Don't get involved. Be aware of them.

3) Gradually focus on some of the most important or interesting ones. And of these, choose one which seems most central, or which interests you most. If the one you have chosen is part of a pair, take them both and change the following directions accordingly.

4) Approach the subpersonality and begin to relate to it. Talk to it and listen to what it says to you. See what you have to say to each other.

5) Ask it what it wants. Then ask it *why*. Ask it what it *needs*, and why. These are different questions and they are very important. Make a mental note of the answers.

6) Now let yourself *become* the subpersonality. Identify with it and experience what it's like to be it. As this subpersonality, how do you feel? What is the world like to you? Ask yourself: "What do I want? What would I like to do? What do I need?"

7) Now be yourself again. See the subpersonality in front of you. And ask yourself: "What would my life be like if that subpersonality fully had its own way, if I *were* the subpersonality all the time?"

8) Now take another look at the subpersonality and examine carefully what you like and what you dislike about it.

9) See yourself outside in the sunshine with the subpersonality. Imagine that it is a beautiful, sparkling day and that the sun is shining brightly. Now imagine that a special warm beam of sunlight slowly radiates from the sun towards you, and envelops you and the subpersonality in light and warmth. The energy of the sun will make something happen.

10) Is the subpersonality different in any way now? If it is still there, turn toward it, and again begin to relate to it. See if you can improve things, if you can arrive at some better relationship with it. Take all the time you need to do this.

11) Now write about what happened. What did you like and dislike about the subpersonality? What does it need? Were you able to reach an understanding with it? You may find it helpful to make a small drawing of the subpersonality.

This exercise can be repeated as needed, focusing on the same subpersonality or on different ones. Be sure to spend plenty of time in the write-up afterwards.

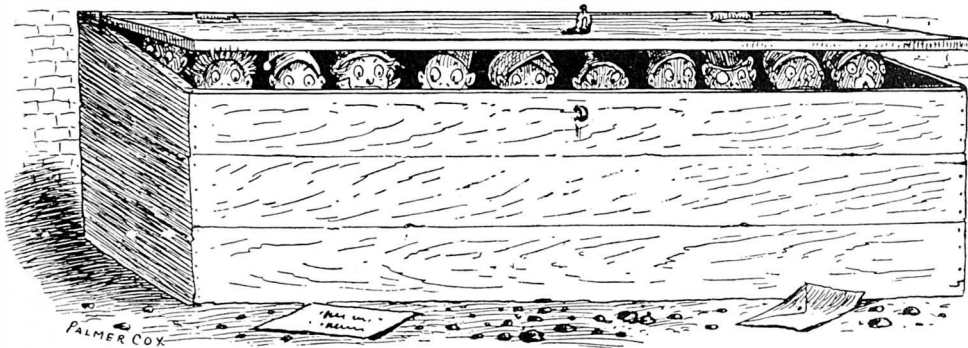
Variation

The first three steps of the Door exercise are designed to generate new awareness, to discover new material that must then be

When you do step 1, imagine that the sign on the door has the name of the subpersonality you want to work with. Then open the door and let that subpersonality come out. Then proceed to step 4.

Patterns to Watch For

A pattern to watch out for is self-criticism. As an example of this, let us



dealt with and integrated. This is the stage of recognition.

On the other hand, you may already be in touch with the subpersonalities that seem to be important at the moment and not feel a need for fresh input or new material. In this case, harmonizing them may be more appropriate than looking for new ones. The exercise can then be modified as follows:

look at the experience of a writer in his early forties with a tendency to extreme self-criticism. He demanded perfection of himself, which made it nearly impossible for him to work creatively. Nothing he wrote was ever good enough. When he first did the Door exercise, he dialogued with "Hemingway," his creative writer subpersonality. He learned some important things about how to relate to "Hemingway," but

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK

after a few weeks he began to feel depressed. Later, he wrote that, “I wasn’t remembering to relate to Hemingway one hundred percent of the time, as he needed. I saw nothing happening. I wasn’t doing it right. Where was the perfect harmony and creative productiveness that should have ensued? Not only couldn’t I write — now I had the added awareness that I couldn’t even grow! I couldn’t do anything good enough. Then I realized with a shock that the ‘not good enough’ feeling *was coming*

from another subpersonality. I did the Door exercise again, and out came “The Perfectionist.” That was where I really need to work, of course.”

Many of us have inner critics and perfectionists, although they may not be as extreme as the writer’s “Perfectionist.” If you find yourself entering into such a vicious circle of criticism, try and step back and find your critic or perfectionist subpersonality.

The Pie

A PSYCHOSYNTHESIS EXERCISE

How do your subpersonalities get along with each other? By learning more about how subpersonalities relate, we further increase our understanding of why and how we feel and do what we do. Inner conflict, a sense of fragmentation, depression, boredom, anxiety, indecisiveness and the like often have their roots in the activity of our subpersonalities and their

interactions with one another. Sometimes these interactions are complex, and we must work over an extended period of time to resolve them. But the first important step is awareness. The following two exercises were designed to help you look more closely at some of your subpersonalities and examine how they relate to one another.

* * *

1) Take crayons or colored markers and turn to the Pie drawing at the end of this exercise. Sit quietly with the Pie in front of you, and reflect for a moment on the various subpersonalities you are aware of. (This awareness may result from other exercises such as the Who Am I or the Door, from general reflection on your life, or any other sources which are available to you.)

2) After closing your eyes, in your imagination *summon* each of these subpersonalities in turn. As the first one emerges, tune in to it and let a visual image appear that expresses the essence and quality of this subpersonality. Look at the image in your mind's eye for a

minute, then draw it into one of the Pie segments. Do this for each subpersonality until all but one of the slices contains an image. One piece is left blank to symbolize the incompleteness and potential of our growth process at any one particular moment. Leave the small circle in the middle blank, too, for this symbolizes the center of your awareness.

3) If you have difficulty letting an image emerge (and you do not have to “see” it; it can be perceived as a feeling or an idea) simply begin by choosing a color and let the image form as you draw.

4) Now, spend some time “eavesdropping” on your drawing. Imagine that the images are speaking to each other and interacting with each other. Listen and observe. Which are in conflict? Do any form alliances against others? Which cooperate? Are any dominating or bossy? Trying to please? Withdrawing? How do they relate to each other?

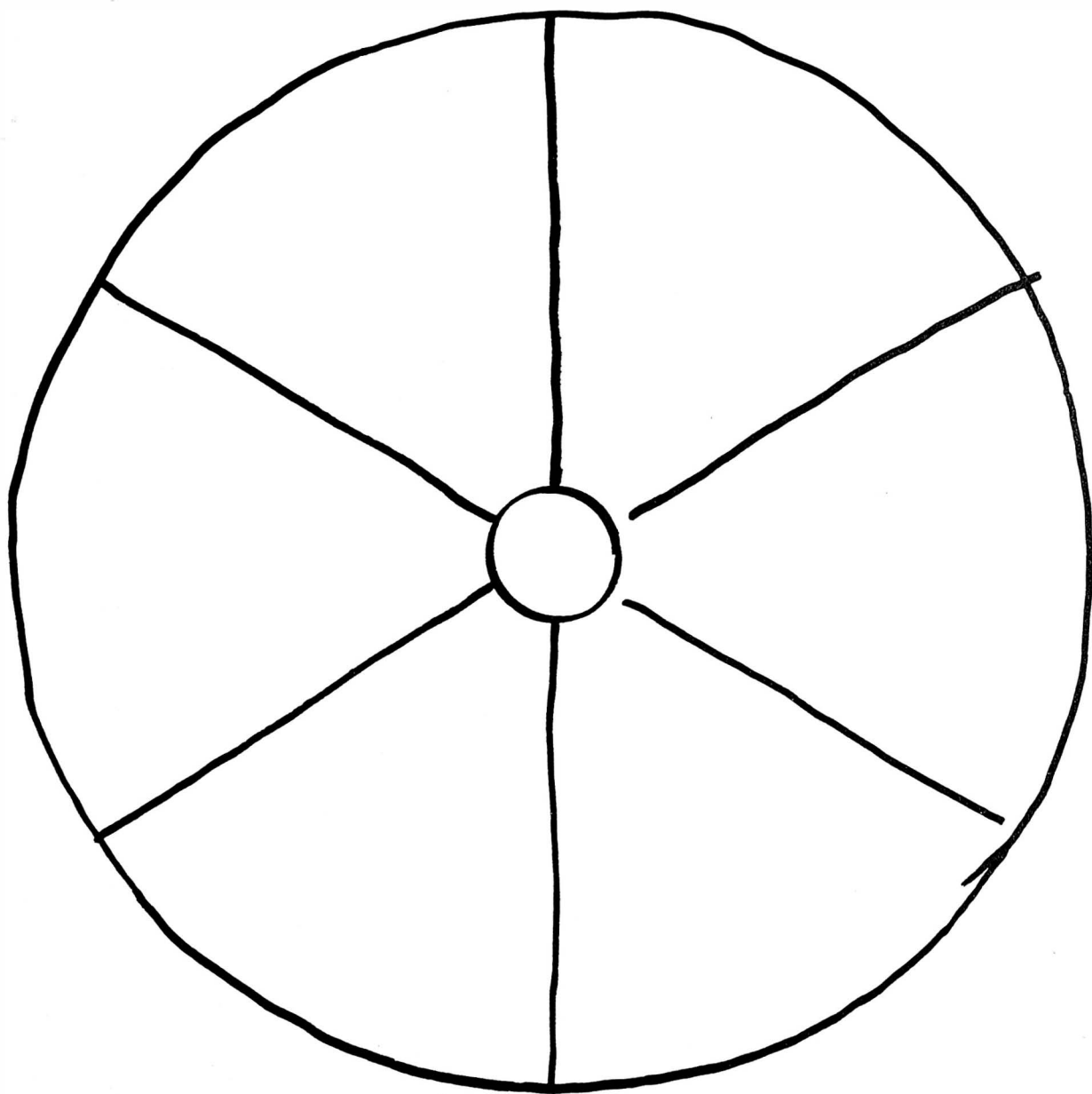
5) Write down the important aspects, and the meaning of what you observed. Most importantly, do you recognize any patterns which occur in your daily life?

6) Now, talk with the images and enter into their dialogue. Can you help them to meet their needs more satisfactorily, to better appreciate each other, to work out more harmonious relationships? Do they meet *your* needs? If not, can you work things out with them?

7) Finally, note any other important aspects of the way your subpersonalities relate to each other and to you—and how you can help.

It will be useful to keep your drawing and study it over a period of time. You might even put it up on a wall in your home for a while, for the images will make more sense as time goes on, and will also serve as reminders of the subpersonalities’ existence. The dialogue between you and your subpersonalities can be carried

on repeatedly, with a gradually integrative effect. After a period of time (a few weeks, a month), as the integration proceeds and the constellation of subpersonalities has developed, you may want to do the exercise again from the beginning, drawing a new Pie—and compare it with the previous one.



The Dance of the Many Selves

Another way to carry on the dialogue between you and your subpersonalities is presented in the following exercise, The Dance. This exercise enhances awareness

of the subpersonalities in the Pie, and brings in the body as a means of communication.

* * *

1) Stand in a place where you have room to move around. Become aware of your breathing, without trying to change it. Let the rhythm of your breath gradually quiet and relax you. Now imagine that you are standing in the middle of the Pie, and your subpersonalities are standing around you. Explore each in turn in the following way:

2) Move into a subpersonality's space and take on the body posture that expresses its particular state of being. For example, if it was a frightened child, you might crouch down, hands over face; if it was a haughty queen or king, you might stand imperiously and straight.

3) Now exaggerate the posture and feel its quality and being in your body and feelings.

4) Let a sound emerge that seems to go with this posture. The sound need not be a word, but it can be.

5) Make the sound several times, loudly. Experience its resonance in your body and feelings.

6) Now slowly leave the subpersonality and step back into the center. Become aware of your breathing again. Take on a posture of balance, calm, quiet. Then move into another subpersonality's space.

7) Follow this procedure with each subpersonality. When you have returned to center for the last time, reflect quietly for a moment on each subpersonality. Now move, in your own time and rhythm, from the center into a subpersonality and back, creating a "dance" between the many selves and the center. Both movement and sounds will choreograph the dance of the subpersonalities, around and in relation to the center of awareness. This is a powerful and integrative experience. Now let the dance subside. Return to the center.

8) Write about the experience. Was it easy or difficult to move in and out of the subpersonality spaces? What did you learn that was new? How do these same patterns occur in your daily life? Do any of them need to be changed? How?

Patterns to Watch For

The true observer within us, our “center,” is not critical. It is objective and wise, and understands that the *needs* of our subpersonalities (although not necessarily their wants) are valid and legitimate. If you are finding that you are annoyed or judgmental when you act as the observer in the Pie, or as the center in the Dance, step back and consider this critical part of yourself as another subpersonality. If you continue to have difficulty stepping back from being critical, discontinue the exercise for the time being and try again after you have done some work on the Critic in you. (See the Door and the Evening Review.)

Questions Frequently Asked

All my subpersonalities related nicely and politely from the beginning. What should I do?

Being nice and polite is not the same as being integrated and harmonious. Many of us have been taught that we should never show feelings of anger, hurt or frustration. While there is an appropriateness, and a social value in being polite, it is not a healthy way to deal with *ourselves* all the time. If we are consistently “nice and polite” inside ourselves, many of our feelings will be repressed, ignored, or at least discounted. Although you may choose to be polite socially if a part of you feels hurt or angry, it’s important that *you*

recognize those inner feelings. So, as an experiment, assume that you have a *subpersonality* who feels that you should *always* be nice and polite. Work with this subpersonality using any or all of the exercises in the *Workbook*.

I can’t get a spontaneous image. Is there something wrong?

Although a spontaneous image has great value, a deliberate or thought-up image can have just as much value and meaning. Of the infinite number of images available to us, we choose only one. This choice in itself has meaning: Why did we choose this image rather than another? And much can be learned from in-depth work with even the most obvious of images. So, if you experience difficulty getting a spontaneous image, just pick a known or obvious one which comes to your mind and use it.

Isn’t this just a game? What good will it do in the world of real problems?

Symbols and images are a “language” of the unconscious. Using images, we can carry on a two-way communication with our unconscious, shedding much light on our real problems. Adults’ games and children’s play are recognized to be ways of dealing in a symbolic way with very real problems. We encourage you to use the scientific method of experimentation to find out for yourself how this can work for you.

The Evening Review

— A PSYCHOSYNTHESIS EXERCISE —

What is happening in your life? Do you allow yourself the time to really look? Many of us keep a close watch over how we spend our money, but have only a vague awareness of how we are using our time. Modern psychology has demonstrated that we live our lives more *unconsciously* than we think. Yet consciousness can be increased. As we become more aware of how we are living our lives, we can also become more aware of other possibilities and options. Through increased aware-

ness, we increase our ability to live our lives the way we choose, unhindered by our habits, by our fears, by our past.

The Evening Review is a technique for increasing this awareness. It is deceptively simple, and even obvious—yet it is very powerful. It cuts through all kinds of vague impressions about how your life is going so that you can encounter and understand more fully what is actually happening.

The basic technique is as follows:

* * *

- 1) At the end of the day, preferably just before going to sleep, find a quiet place free from outer distractions.
- 2) Close your eyes, give attention to relaxing your body, quieting your feelings, and as much as possible stilling the activity of your thoughts. Your mind should be quiet and receptive, but *remain alert*.
- 3) Now review your day in your mind, playing it back like a movie, but backwards, beginning with where you are right now, then

Prepared by Steven Kull. Steven Kull is a Senior Associate of the Psychosynthesis Institute, San Francisco, California.

the time of late evening, then early evening, then the dinner hour, and the late afternoon and so on until morning when you awakened.

4) Throughout the experience it is important to maintain as much as possible the attitude of an objective, detached, non-critical observer, calmly and clearly registering the events of the day, neither becoming elated at a success, nor depressed and unhappy about a failure. The aim is *not* to relive the experience, but to non-critically register in consciousness the *patterns* and *meaning* of the day.

5) Finally, write down your general impressions of what happened and anything particular that you have learned.

Variations

There are many variations of the Evening Review. In the form just described, it is very effective for gaining a greater sense of the whole of our lives. It can also be modified to focus on a particular aspect that is currently in need of special attention. Some of these are:

Subpersonalities. An important application of the Evening Review is in the work with subpersonalities. During the review, you can focus on such questions as:

- Which subpersonalities were dominant during the day?
- What circumstances (inner or outer) made them emerge or withdraw?
- Did any of your subpersonalities come into conflict with each other?
- How much did the subpersonalities help or hinder what *you* wanted to do? Who was in the driver's seat?

The Evening Review can be used for getting in touch with a multitude of subpersonalities, or it can be used for focusing

on one or two that are in need of special attention.

Often, as we begin to work with subpersonalities, we have an inaccurate impression of which ones are truly the most dominant. One client, a middle-aged businessman, discovered (in a guided daydream) a subpersonality which he called "The Spiritual Seeker." The Seeker was very upset because, he claimed, another subpersonality, "The Materialist," was dominant and in control, and was not allowing him any space. During the discussion afterwards, the client said he could not understand why the Seeker was so upset. Perhaps the Seeker was too critical or demanding. The client did not feel that the Materialist was excessively dominant at all, so the counselor suggested that he do an Evening Review, focusing on which subpersonalities were the most active during his day. Two weeks later he returned, overwhelmed with the discovery that the Materialist was indeed his most dominant subpersonality, taking tremendous amounts of his time and energy and gen-

erally interfering with any activity the Materialist did not approve of. Having recognized the amount of control which the Materialist exerted, the client was motivated to do what was needed to change the situation, and was then able to allow time and space in his life for the Spiritual Seeker.*

Managing Your Time. An area that frequently needs attention is that of time management. How many people feel their lives are not what they could be, simply because “there isn’t enough time.” Certainly much of our time is spent in activities that are important or necessary – that we can’t, or don’t want to eliminate – working, caring for home and family, sleeping and eating. But many minutes and even hours of our day are spent, without our quite being aware of it, in less important or outright trivial activities that we would not consciously *choose* to do, but that we allow to slip in almost automatically, due to external pressure or routine habits. It is useful to realize that beginning from this moment, we always have an unlimited amount of time before us. The question – and the source of the difficulty – is how we choose to use it. The Evening Review is an ideal technique

for becoming more aware of how you are choosing to use your time.

A young woman who was in a great deal of conflict around the fact that she “did not have enough time,” felt that she had to exclude one of the two major activities in her life, and was in considerable conflict over which it should be. She tried the Evening Review, focusing on precisely how much time she devoted to each area of activity. It was not long before she discovered, to her genuine surprise, that activities which were of very little importance to her were consuming vast amounts of her time. She found she did not have to exclude either one of her favorite activities. She simply had to become more aware of herself, so she would no longer be distracted by unimportant activities.

Other Applications

The Evening Review can be used to expand our awareness of nearly any issue that is at the forefront of our growth. Someone who tends to ignore or repress feelings can review the day looking for emotional experiences and thereby bring them into greater awareness. Someone who excessively withholds his energy can watch for times he was withholding, and what feelings caused him to do it – *when* does he withhold, *what* does he withhold? By increasing awareness he increases the number of his alternatives, his options to try out new behavior.

The Evening Review can also be helpful for developing desired qualities, such as serenity, openness, or courage. Reviewing the times during the day when we were able to express these qualities will help us

*Note to professionals – As can be seen by this client’s discovery, the Evening Review is of real usefulness to help a client recognize, on his own, some pattern in his behavior he may be ignoring or resisting. A client may show resistance to a therapist’s suggestion that a problem area may exist and is worth exploring. But frequently, by means of an Evening Review, the client will discover the problem by himself, and will thus become motivated to work on it.

understand and appreciate them more, and will help us also discover which circumstances and situations make it difficult for us to express them.

Patterns to Watch For

The most common pattern to guard against in using the Evening Review is the tendency we all have to react emotionally to a review of our day. As was said, during this exercise we need to avoid becoming elated at a success, or depressed and unhappy at what we see as failure. Such an emotional involvement in the exercise gets in the way of its purpose – the calm and objective registering in consciousness of the day's pattern and meaning. When these feelings emerge, we can remind ourselves to once again shift our focus, gently, to the position of the objective observer.

If maintaining the position of the observer is very hard or impossible for you, it is best to postpone using this exercise and to practice instead taking the position of the observer at various times during the day. After you gain facility in doing so, you can try the exercise again.

Some people have such a strong inner critic that they find it impossible to review their day without constantly judging and evaluating their actions. In this case it may be best to suspend the Evening Review and work with their critical subpersonality. After a while, the Evening Review may be useful in this work. For example, when working with a critical subpersonality who only sees failure, one can do an Evening Review, in writing, to look for successes. In this way, the Evening Review

can be used to break down the perceptual distortions created by subpersonalities.

People who are excessively introverted, who spend much of their time in their own inner world, would do well not to give further attention to subjective experiences. For this reason, the Evening Review in general may not be as desirable for them. At times, however, it may be helpful if a strong emphasis is placed on recording the external activities of the day. In this way, the person can increase his awareness of and interest in the “outer” world.

Questions Frequently Asked

How often should I do the Evening Review?

Once a day, in the evening, preferably for at least one week. When you do the Evening Review over a number of weeks you will create a continuity so that you can observe larger patterns and long-term trends not otherwise apparent.

How long does it normally take?

This depends on how deeply you want to explore. The basic review – quickly rerunning the day's events to increase your general awareness – usually takes less than five minutes. You may also use it as a daily “workshop,” where you can do some in-depth exploration of a particular pattern or subpersonality, in which case it may take longer.

What shall I write down in my workbook afterwards?

Besides taking notes on the area you are currently exploring, you may want to write down general impressions and especially

anything which came into your awareness that was new or surprising, that you hadn't clearly seen during the day. The purpose of the exercise is to increase your awareness. And as you gain new awareness, it is helpful to strengthen and solidify it through writing.

Why is the day run backwards rather than forwards?

Experience has shown that reviewing the day from evening to morning, although not essential, is more effective. It also

seems that this is how the mind more easily plays back stored experience and is therefore the most natural route for us to follow. People who come close to dying have reported that they saw their whole life "pass before their eyes," moving backwards through the years. This movement backwards as a means of exploration is also a major element in psychotherapy. We begin with our present condition and, as we explore the underlying dynamics, move backwards to earlier time periods.



Questions and Answers

Q.

What is the difference between subpersonalities and simple personality traits?

A. Subpersonalities are psychological formations of a relatively high level of organization – just below that of the personality itself. Subpersonalities are made up in their turn of a number of psychological elements, among which are traits. Traits can be seen as one level below subpersonalities in the organizational hierarchy of the psyche.

Q.

What are some examples of traits?

A. Shyness, courage, sense of responsibility, modesty and so on. Also, at the same level of organization as traits, are what we call *habit patterns*. We can also talk about complexes, in the clinical sense, as being more or less at this same level of organization. And all these traits and patterns are grouped and integrated into the various subpersonalities.

Q.

How many subpersonalities do we have?

A. That's like asking how many roots a tree has! We could say that there is a very large number of minute, distinct psychological elements – experiences, feelings, thoughts and so on – which make up small rootlets of the tree. Those, in turn, are organized into larger roots, complexes and traits. Subpersonalities make up the main roots, which go to the central trunk of the tree – the personality.

We are really talking about a continuous system which goes from experiences to patterns of behavior, to subpersonalities, to the integrated personality as a whole.

Q. *What is the difference between subpersonalities and the roles that we take, like teacher, mother, child?*

A. A role is a way I express myself in the world. When I play a role I'm doing something. When I'm not doing anything the role isn't there. But the subpersonality is there whether I'm playing it out or not. For most people, roles are the expression of subpersonalities. But there can be subpersonalities without roles. I usually play only one role at a time, but all the subpersonalities are in me all the time. There are some that can be very active inside that I don't express—they never get to play a role. They are waiting their turn, off stage, and can be helped towards useful expression.

Q. *Why are we splitting ourselves into subpersonalities? I'm trying to put myself together.*

A. Thinking in terms of subpersonalities is not really "splitting ourselves up," even though when we first look for them, it may seem so. Diversification is a natural tendency in the universe. We see it in the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom—in the evolution of anything alive. But subpersonalities are the result of the *opposite* tendency—the natural tendency

of discrete elements to group together, into coherent and harmonious wholes, according to the principle of synthesis. So subpersonalities are the effect of the tendency within the psyche to form one whole out of diverse psychological elements.

As elements emerge in our psyche, they tend, spontaneously, to group together. But they are so many and diverse that for a long time they can't group into a *single* coherent formation. They combine in a number of different formations, and these are what we call subpersonalities. They are an intermediate step towards the formation of one whole personality. Just as the organs in our bodies have their own balance and qualities, so each subpersonality has its own inner ecology—its own equilibrium, its own interaction, its own direction. And just as the many organs in our body at some point in evolution formed one harmonious organism, the subpersonalities can form what we call the "integrated personality." The difference is that our body has accomplished this integration ages ago, while for most of us the integration of the subpersonalities into a harmonious personality is still something we are working toward.

The thing to remember is that this tendency toward synthesis already exists in nature, and underlies the process of evolution itself. So dealing with subpersonalities does not increase the fragmentation—rather, it leads us to recognize a situation which is already there. And once we have accepted it, we can do something about it; we can consciously cooperate with the natural tendency towards greater harmony and integration.

Q.

Subpersonalities seem to emphasize the splits in us. I feel more “broken down” now than before I knew about subpersonalities. All I see are the pieces. Isn’t this bad?

A. We need to distinguish between an actual psychological state and *our awareness of it*. For example, a conflict between subpersonalities often goes on for quite a while in our subconscious; and only when it becomes relatively acute do we finally become aware of it. By then it’s much harder to deal with than if we had taken steps earlier to become aware of it. At first, when you look at subpersonalities you may become aware of more conflict than before—but a little effort now will save you a lot of trouble later.

So, when a person begins to deal with subpersonalities, he may, for a while, *feel* more fragmented than before. But that does not mean that the conflict has increased. It is just that he feels it more. And the actual conflict, both within himself and with his environment, will decrease at the rate at which he recognizes his subpersonalities and deals with them.

Q.

Why not just transcend subpersonalities? I don’t like some of them anyway.

A. There are many misunderstandings about what transcendence is. There is no such thing as “transcending” anything in the sense of avoiding it. It is a psychological, practical, material impossibility. We can delude ourselves into believing that we

are transcending something when all we are doing is avoiding or repressing it. Eventually we’ll find it in front of us, bigger than before and more difficult to deal with.

The best way to move beyond something that holds us back is to transcend its *limitations*. With subpersonalities this means, first, to accept, recognize and own them; then learn to regulate and modify them as we wish. By doing so we can transcend the limitations of each and all of them. But transcendence doesn’t come from avoidance, or from disowning. It is the result of recognition, understanding and mastery.

Q.

Are some subpersonalities good and some bad?

A. Each of our subpersonalities does some things we consider good and some we consider bad. And there are some subpersonalities we consider “good” as a whole: these are often the ones we have allowed ourselves to accept. They’ve been included in what we call our “core personality.” Then there are subpersonalities that we see as “bad,” that we usually reject—that we have either recognized and not accepted, or completely repressed in our subconscious. But once we bring them out and try to understand them, we see that even if what they do appears as “bad,” their actual motives—the core from which they operate—is a good one, or at least a natural and understandable one, easy to accept. If it appears to us as “bad,” it means we don’t understand it sufficiently.

When a subpersonality develops and first tries to express itself, it tends to do so in a fairly direct way. But often, because of conflicts with other subpersonalities, or a situation in the environment, it is not allowed to express its needs in this direct and natural way. Then it tries to do so indirectly.

The core of the subpersonality—that which corresponds to the “I,” or center, of the whole personality—is a basic urge or drive. Metaphorically, we could consider this urge as energy, as a beam of light that tries to radiate. If it finds a clear path, the light radiates in its direct and original form. But if it hits an obstacle, it becomes scattered, taking a form which is different from the quality of the source that emanated it.

Similarly, if they cannot express their needs directly, certain subpersonalities express themselves in very distorted, twisted, rigid ways because of the many obstacles they have to deal with. These distortions are what we consider “bad.” But if we trace the energy back to its source, we find that there it is clean, clear, and able to be harmonized with other energies.

Q.

Do we ever get free of our subpersonalities, or fully integrate all of them?

A. We get free of them by transcending their limitations. Once we learn experientially that we are not our subpersonalities—once we are capable of *disidentifying* ourselves from any or all of them at will—then we will begin this transcendence. When we understand that they contain useful and valuable qualities, the

idea of getting rid of them makes no sense.

As far as integrating all of them, this is a process—and like all processes, it is never complete. When we first become aware of subpersonalities we tune into the many conflicts that have been going on for a long period of time. Then as we intervene actively, and literally create order out of chaos, we begin to help the many subpersonalities integrate with each other, gradually forming the integrated personality. And, at the periphery, new subpersonalities will be emerging which, in turn, will be gradually accepted, coordinated and integrated.

There is a higher aspect to this process. As we gain in our skill and power in disidentifying from, and integrating, our subpersonalities, we no longer deal with *rigid formations*. We no longer have a situation where we are only able to choose among a specific range of relatively rigid subpersonalities. We have a more flexible, dynamic situation where the qualities and energies that were formerly locked into a specific subpersonality configuration become freely available to us. For example, let us say that previously we were only able to reach our courage through the “Crusader” subpersonality, and only able to feel compassion when in touch with the “Mystic” subpersonality. Now we are able to take the courage of the Crusader and the compassion of the Mystic, and express them together in a new combination. We can, in this way, arrange and rearrange various qualities at will, forming new combinations to fit each new situation. This is a high level of functioning and it is a major goal of subpersonality work.

What is Psychosynthesis?

In its most basic sense, psychosynthesis is simply a name for the process of personal growth: the *natural* tendency in each of us to harmonize or synthesize our various aspects at ever higher levels of organization. One wants a word for this natural process, and “psychosynthesis” is a good word. Psychosynthesis as a process is nothing unusual, nothing new – like Moliere’s *bourgeois gentilhomme* who realized, after a session with his elocution teacher, that, “He had been speaking *prose* all his life but hadn’t known it.”

In its more specific sense, psychosynthesis is a name for the conscious attempt to *cooperate* with the natural process of personal development. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi in his article in this issue, describes the “drive in living matter to perfect itself.” In human beings, this drive becomes conscious – we feel it as an urge and try to

implement it, try to make its natural progress easier.

But cooperating with evolution in this purposeful way requires conceptual understanding, a framework, and a range of practical techniques. Psychosynthesis, therefore, integrates the best available concepts and methods into an inclusive but growing framework, so as to facilitate the natural human drive toward development.

As an inclusive approach to human growth, psychosynthesis dates from 1911 and the early work of the Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli. Though one of the pioneers of psychoanalysis in Italy, Assagioli maintained that Freud had not given sufficient weight to the higher aspects of the human personality, and recognized the need for a more inclusive concept of man. From this beginning, Assagioli and an increasing

number of psychotherapists, educators, physicians, social workers, clergymen and others have worked to develop and refine this synthetic view of human growth. This task is considered to be an open one, one that will never be ended. Each year, new discoveries in psychology, new developments in the fields of education, religion, anthropology and many other disciplines add to the principles and to the techniques of psychosynthesis. By its very nature, psychosynthesis is always open to other approaches or to new approaches to human development.

Over the last sixty years, a number of conceptual points and a number of methods have proven themselves to be fundamental. These provide a working structure for psychosynthesis.

A SYNTHESIS OF MANY TRADITIONS

Any comprehensive psychological and educational approach to the development of the whole person must draw from many traditions. Eastern disciplines often have tended to emphasize the spiritual levels of being, while Western approaches usually have focused on the personality side. But Man must be viewed as a whole and each aspect accorded its due importance. Psychosynthesis recognizes that man has a transpersonal essence, and at the same time holds that man's purpose in life is to manifest this essence, or Self, as fully as possible in the world of everyday personal and social existence.

THE SUPERCONSCIOUS

Traditional psychoanalysis recognizes a primitive, or "lower" unconscious — the source of our atavistic and biological drives. But there is also a higher unconscious, a *superconscious* in man — an autonomous realm from which originate our more highly

evolved impulses: altruistic love and will, humanitarian action, artistic and scientific inspiration, philosophic and spiritual insight, and the drive for purpose and meaning in life. Man can suffer not merely from repression of his basic biological drives, as Freud pointed out, but he can be equally crippled by "repression of the sublime" — the failure to accept his highest nature. Thus true psychosynthesis must be concerned both with integrating material from the lower unconscious and with realizing and actualizing the content of the superconscious. To this end, we need to use a wide range of techniques for contacting the superconscious and establishing a bridge with that part of our being where true wisdom is to be found. The superconscious is thereby accessible, in varying degrees, to each one of us, and can provide a great source of energy, inspiration, and direction.

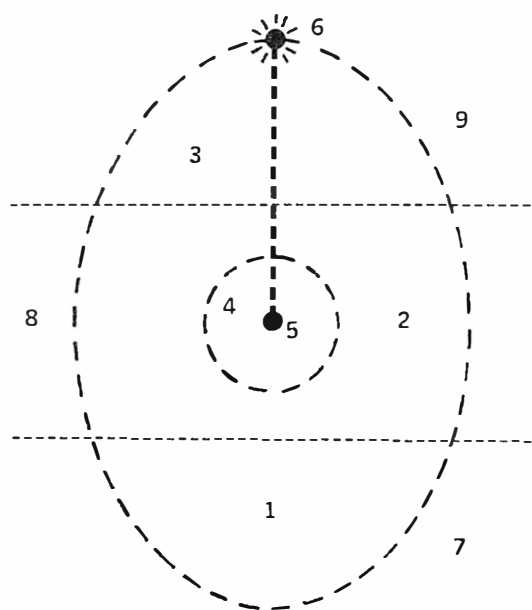
THE SELF

The concept of the self as an entity supraordinate to the various aspects of the personality, such as body, feelings and mind, is to be found in the major world religions and in more and more branches of Western psychology and philosophy. Taking the concept out of any doctrinal background and examining it empirically, we find first of all a center of awareness and purpose, around which integration of the personality takes place. This is the "personal self," the "I," or center of personal identity. An important distinction needs to be made between the personal self and the "Transpersonal Self." The Transpersonal Self is the focal point of the superconscious realm. It is a deeper and all-inclusive center of identity and of being, where individuality and universality blend.

The two central functions of the personal self are *consciousness* and *will*. With the

consciousness of the self one can be clearly aware of what is going on within and around him, and perceive without distortion or defensiveness. This has been called the inner “attitude of observer.” To the extent that one is able to achieve this vantage point, the claims of the personality and its tendency to self-justification no longer stand in the way of clear vision. There are a variety of techniques to help gain access to this vantage point, from which the most effective work on oneself can be done.

The following diagram is a graphic representation of some of what we have been describing.



1. The Lower Unconscious
2. The Middle Unconscious
3. The Higher Unconscious or Superconscious
4. The Field of Consciousness
5. The Conscious Self or “I”
6. The Transpersonal Self
7. The Lower Collective Unconscious
8. The Middle Collective Unconscious
9. The Higher Collective Unconscious

FALSE IDENTIFICATIONS

To act from our center can be difficult, as we have all experienced. One major difficulty in learning to act “from center” is the large number of *false identifications* we make with specific elements within ourselves. We may identify, for example, with a temporary feeling such as fear or anger, and lose or distort our true perspective. Or we may become identified with one of our “sub-personalities”—those semi-autonomous and often contradictory aspects of ourselves that follow a predictable, pre-programmed routine when evoked by a certain set of circumstances. Much of the basic work of psychosynthesis must be aimed at recognizing and harmonizing subpersonalities. We are then no longer helplessly controlled by them, but can learn to bring them increasingly under our conscious direction. Doing this involves learning the central process of “*disidentification*” from all that is not the self, and “*self-identification*,” or the realization of our true identity as a center of awareness and will.

STAGES IN PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

Every person is an individual, and the psychosynthesis of each person follows a unique path. This is obvious, and we forget it at our peril. But in the overall process of psychosynthesis we can distinguish two consecutive stages—*personal* and *transpersonal* psychosynthesis. In personal psychosynthesis, the integration of the personality takes place around the personal self, and the individual attains a level of functioning in terms of his work and his relationships that would be considered optimally healthy by current standards of mental health.

In the transpersonal stage of psychosynthesis, the person learns to achieve alignment with, and to express the energies of

the Transpersonal Self, thus manifesting such qualities as social responsibility, a spirit of cooperation, a global perspective, altruistic love, and transpersonal purpose.

Often the two stages overlap, and there can be a considerable amount of transpersonal activity long before the stage of personal psychosynthesis is complete.

METHODS EMPLOYED IN PSYCHOSYNTHESIS

Any method that is effective in the personal evolution of human beings is a psychosynthetic method, when it is employed with a clear understanding of its purpose, its effects, and of the needs it is meant to fulfill. So to be maximally effective in our own psychosynthesis or in helping others, we need to have at our disposal a broad range of methods to meet the needs presented by different situations and different people. And as each person must be treated as an individual, an effort must be made to choose, out of the range of methods available, the ones that are best suited to each person's existential situation, psychological type, unique goals, desires and path of development. Some of the specific techniques commonly used include guided imagery, movement, gestalt, self-identification, medi-

tation, development of the will, symbolic art work, journal-keeping, ideal models and development of intuition, though a complete list would be much larger. The emphasis is on fostering an ongoing process of growth that can gain increasing momentum and bring a more joyful, balanced actualization of one's life.

As this process goes forward, one gains the freedom of choice, the power of decision over his or her actions, and the ability to actively regulate and direct the many personality functions. This entails developing one's personal will—the will of the personal self. Through this development we free ourselves from helpless reaction to unwanted inner impulses, and to the expectations of others. We become truly “centered,” and gradually become able to follow a path in accordance with what is best within each of us.

And as we reach toward the Transpersonal Self, we liberate the synthesizing energies that organize and integrate our personality. We can make increasing contact with the Will of our Transpersonal Self, which provides ever clearer meaning and purpose in our personal lives and our social tasks. We become able to function in the world more serenely and effectively, in a spirit of cooperation and good will.

*For spirits when they please
can either sex assume, or both; so soft
and uncompound'd is their essence pure.*

John Milton: Paradise-Lost: Book ONE: lines 425-5

A HIGHER VIEW OF THE MAN-WOMAN PROBLEM

Roberto Assagioli and Claude Servan-Schreiber



HE FIRST TIME THAT I SAW ROBERTO ASSAGIOLI, was about two years ago, at his home, in Florence, in the old house where a large part of his life has unfolded. He showed us into his office, cluttered with books and papers to such a point that he had to move a pile over so that my husband and I could be seated.

For a long moment we looked at each other, all three of us, without speaking. Assagioli smiling, his eyes, astonishingly vital within a face lined by great age, moving over us, going from one to the other. Was he submitting us to an examination? It was instead the opposite. He was allowing us to discover him leisurely, to establish a connection with him, without us even realizing this was happening. It was a climate of communication where words find their place later, while something like a current was developing between us. His face was shining with an extraordinary, radiant inner joy, such as I have never encountered in an octogenarian, and rarely in men much younger. This message of joy, perceived immediately, communicated immediately, is the finest memory which I keep of the numerous meetings which we later had with him. "All is possible and accessible *to you*: joy, serenity, I offer them to you as a gift."

A message of joy

I did not expect to find in Roberto Assagioli the echo of my own concern in a particular, specific area: the psychology of women within a world in which their roles, their functions, lead them to undergo first a conditioning, then an oppression which often they

Will to understand

do not yet recognize. In the eyes of the feminist that I am, the father of psychosynthesis has therefore an additional merit: an amazing capacity to adapt to changing attitudes, which comes to him from his will to understand others and from his love of scientific truth, even if different from past beliefs. On the subject of women, he had in the past been limited; and he knows it and frankly admits it. He had been influenced by cultural prejudices denoting as “feminine nature” that which is largely the product of a social system. But later he freed himself, in this respect, from the weight of his upbringing, his environment, his age. He quickly became interested in the new existential research into the nature of women which is our liberation movement. At his age, and for an Italian, this is a double achievement! Especially if one judges according to his conclusions.

Each individual
on a unique
journey

There is not, and there cannot be a general psychosynthesis of women or, for that matter, of men. There is only, for each individual, of either sex, a personal, unique journey, toward the development of all his emotional, mental and spiritual faculties. “The human being,” he said, “today is no longer defined by any of his roles. I believe in the primacy of the human being not conditioned by his sex.” Can there be a more beautiful message? Here, more fully, is what he said to me on the subject:

Assagioli:

More than our roles

“We cannot accurately speak of women and men *in general*. Each one of us is a human being before being ‘man’ or ‘woman.’ And each one of us, man or woman, has roles and functions to fulfill, individually, inter-individually and socially. Here is where the differences begin. These are most emphatically not *differences in value*, only *differences in function*. The human being is never defined by any of these roles. Women, as human beings, can accept or not accept traditional feminine roles. It is not necessary that a woman accept the role of wife or of mother. She can choose another vocation. It is not a ‘must,’ a necessity. It is a free choice.

“Woman therefore is right in demanding that she be treated as a human being and not as a ‘mere woman,’ as simply a woman and only that. She is right for refusing to be identified with a certain image of woman. She is a living being, with all the dignity and the potential of a whole human being. All attitudes which limit the possibilities of woman are mistaken. Women have the right to demand respect and parity with men. And the same, of course, is true for men.

Not conditioned
by sex

“Each of us can equally choose to play different roles. For instance, a woman can decide to play the role of spouse or of mother, or both. She can carry on a creative, social or business activity. She can choose one role, or she can alternate several of them, perhaps during the same day, perhaps over longer periods of time. This is the free choice of a human being. I believe in the primacy of the human being unconditioned by his or her sex.

“The differences between men and women are clearly found reflected in our environment – in the family and in society – and it is here that we must work to eliminate their unfair and harmful crystallization into rigid stereotypes and prejudices.

Masculine and
feminine principles
in the universe

“But it is important to realize that these differences exist also *within* our psyche, in the depths of our unconscious, and, just as much, in the collective unconscious of humanity, where they appear through some of the most powerful archetypes. So there are univer-



Distinguish
masculine and
feminine from
man and woman

sal masculine and feminine principles, which manifest themselves in quite diverse ways through different individuals. In other words, while masculine and feminine principles do exist in the universe, different people experience them and describe them in different ways — as is equally the case with beauty, truth, harmony, goodness, justice or any of the other universal principles.

“The point is not to try to define what these principles are, but to distinguish, in our consciousness and in our relations with others, ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ from ‘man’ and ‘woman.’ We need to recognize that *both* the masculine and feminine principles exist in their own rights, and that they are present — although in unique forms and different proportions — in *every* man and in *every* woman.

“Within each human being is a percentage of psychological masculinity and a percentage of psychological femininity, completely independent of the sex of the individual. Each person is a unique combination of these energies. When we look at women *on the whole*, we find that they are more attuned to the feminine principle, have greater access to it and have a higher percentage of it in their psychological make-up. And similarly, men are more attuned to the masculine principle. Of course this is a generality. People are unique. Some men are psychologically more feminine than many women, for instance.

“Take the example of the French novelist George Sand (the pen name of Madame DuDevant) and Chopin. They were lovers, and he, physically, had the ‘man’ role and she the ‘woman’ role. But psychologically he was feminine and she was masculine. She dressed like a man, wrote in a vigorous style — and smoked cigars! In her personality, masculinity predominated, while Chopin was imaginative, sensitive.

“There is therefore a difference between physical sex and psychological characteristics. Over the years, I have met many who feared — or even believed — themselves to be homosexuals just because they did not recognize this distinction.

Conditioning
of roles trans-
cended through
personal synthesis
of masculine
and feminine
principles

“Only by accepting both the masculine and feminine principles, bringing them together, and harmonizing them within ourselves, will we be able to transcend the conditioning of our roles, and to express the whole range of our latent potential.

“As this is true for the individual, so is it true for society. From the social standpoint, there is a great need in present society for the

expression of the feminine principle. Society needs women to contribute the higher aspects of their femininity—altruistic love, compassion, the sense of and respect for life—with which they are usually more familiar and which they can often express with greater facility than men. It is therefore desirable for women to be involved in social and political life. If they so choose, they can do this while they continue to play traditional feminine roles in the family, or they can give themselves completely over to activities such as social service, renouncing the traditional family roles. They have the full right to do it. Society must respect and appreciate their valuable contribution.

“The fact that a woman may dedicate herself much of the time to certain roles must not prevent her from considering herself equal to men. It is not at all a question of superiority or inferiority. Masculine and feminine psychological characteristics, even though dissimilar, are of the same value. This is a statement of fact.

“Women are right to protest and to rise against the long-standing prejudicial attitudes of society. But in the protest one can lose perspective. One can be destructive and not constructive. Psychologically and historically, conflicts and exaggerations can be understood. The ideal would be for them to remain within boundaries that are constructive as well as just.

“For example, some women go to the opposite extreme of current social stereotypes. Rather than balancing and integrating their feminine energies with their masculine energies, they may virtually deny the feminine in themselves. A woman may reject traditional feminine roles in order to prove to men that she can play masculine roles. Here exists the danger of the masculinization of women. Ironically, this attitude can proceed from the unconscious evaluation of the masculine principle and masculine roles as inherently superior to the feminine. But there is no such inherent superiority. What is needed is an honoring and valuing of the feminine principle, and the ways and roles through which this energy can be expressed by both men and women. Masculine roles are neither better nor worse than feminine roles. They are both needed and are of equal value.

“A controversial question is whether the fact that women frequently have certain functions better developed and men others is the product of nature, or of education, or of social pressure. In my opinion all three factors are present, in different proportions, in each individual.

Conflicts with-
in constructive
boundaries

Causes of differ-
ence between
men and women

“While this is an important *social* problem, fortunately, from the *individual’s* standpoint it can be largely sidestepped. He or she need only consider how he or she is *right now*, and how he or she *can improve*.

“For example, if a woman has had fewer opportunities or incentives to express her ideas, her thoughts, it does not seem to me to be necessary to spend much time and energy to search to understand why, who is responsible for this, and so forth. Quite simply, if this function is insufficiently developed, *she can develop it*. And the same is true for a man who has not developed his feelings, or his intuition. (Needless to say, there are men who need to develop their intellect, and women who need to get in touch with their feelings and cultivate their intuition.) The point is to recognize the strong qualities and the deficiencies in each person — which are not ‘faults’ but qualitative, relative deficiencies — and to bring them into a condition of harmony and balance. This is what I call a psychologically and spiritually practical approach.

Personal harmony
and balance
by cultivating
underdeveloped
functions

“Let us come now to the couple. A couple founded on a basis of fundamental equality, respect, reciprocal appreciation as human beings, can work out the psychosynthesis of their particular couple together. Each one can work on his own psychosynthesis, and each one can also collaborate in the psychosynthesis of the other, helping the other to achieve his own psychosynthesis by helping him strengthen his less developed functions. Then once they have done this to a certain point, they can truly act as a couple by combining and complementing their qualities and functions in all situations: in their marriage, their role as parents, and in their social activities.

“For each function to be developed training is needed — often including specific exercises. The process is analogous to the training of muscles: if one wants to play a certain sport, he finds someone who is competent, gets trained and afterwards continues to train himself. If a man recognizes that his emotional and imaginative sides have been neglected, he can cultivate them. If a woman finds that her mind is not as active as she would like, she can train it. One has to ‘cultivate one’s garden’ by planting different flowers. A woman or a man can do it alone, but it is often more effective, much easier and more enjoyable to do it together as two people.

“When we come to particular problems, many difficulties may emerge, and in each specific case we can apply a therapy. I speak of ‘therapy’ here in the broadest sense of the word, because none of

us is one hundred per cent healthy in the higher psychosynthetic sense. In difficult situations a benevolent and wise therapist or counselor can be of great assistance: someone impartial, kindly, comprehensive, who helps the two members of the couple to become more aware, who explains the situation, who indicates possible solutions and helps to choose the means to attain them.

Unique existential problems of each situation

“For each couple the situation is different. Each human being is unique. Thus unique multiplied by unique gives unique squared; this is a fundamental principle of psychosynthesis. Each case is unique, each situation is unique. Each couple is unique. Each family is unique. We need to focus on the unique existential problem of a certain situation, rather than on generalities, and afterwards to choose techniques which are most adequate for resolving the problems of that particular case. This eliminates the fictitious, inauthentic problems. It may be called the psychoanalytical phase: the discovery of the obstacles to constructive work. And the obstacles are for the most part those which we spoke about before: erroneous attitudes of men and of women. I believe therefore in the equality of value, and in the differentiation of functions *up to a certain point*. Collaboration, integration on a base of equality.

Free to choose roles

“In education, the child needs a maternal environment and a paternal environment. Much harm is done in education when the paternal influence is missing. But if for some reason there is no father, the woman can take the paternal role also. It is difficult, but she can do it, if she wants to. And the same for the man: if the woman is not there, the father can take on the maternal role also. We can perform any role that life requires of us or that we decide to play. The same is true for work. In a large variety of situations, there is always in the human being the latent possibility to do anything within reasonable limits, to choose freely, to deliver himself from social pressures, prejudices, obstacles in order to reach his higher goals.

Synthesis of masculine and feminine in new civilization

“We are now in a period of crisis and profound changes. I believe that woman is evolving perhaps more rapidly than man. For him, the task is to discover the real human being beneath masculine limitations – to be not only a ‘masculine-man,’ but a *human being*, who plays masculine roles – and if he chooses, feminine ones. We know that historically there were matriarchal civilizations and patriarchal civilizations; the ideal would be a new synthetic civilization, that is neither patriarchal nor matriarchal, but one that is psycho-

A Higher View of the Man-Woman Problem

synthetic, that is to say, a civilization in which the highest and best qualities of each are manifested.

“This would be something new. In all historical civilizations and cultures there has been a preponderance of one or the other element. But in this new civilization and the emerging global culture, for the first time humanity is sufficiently developed to make a planetary, global pattern, incorporating the very best of all men and women. I think that this planetary psychosynthesis, this psychosynthesis of humanity is possible and needed. Each particular problem will then have its frame of reference in the greater whole, and conflict can be replaced by harmonious integration and cooperation. All of this is within our reach — for not only is it very beautiful — it is very *human*.

Global frame
of reference for
each particular
problem

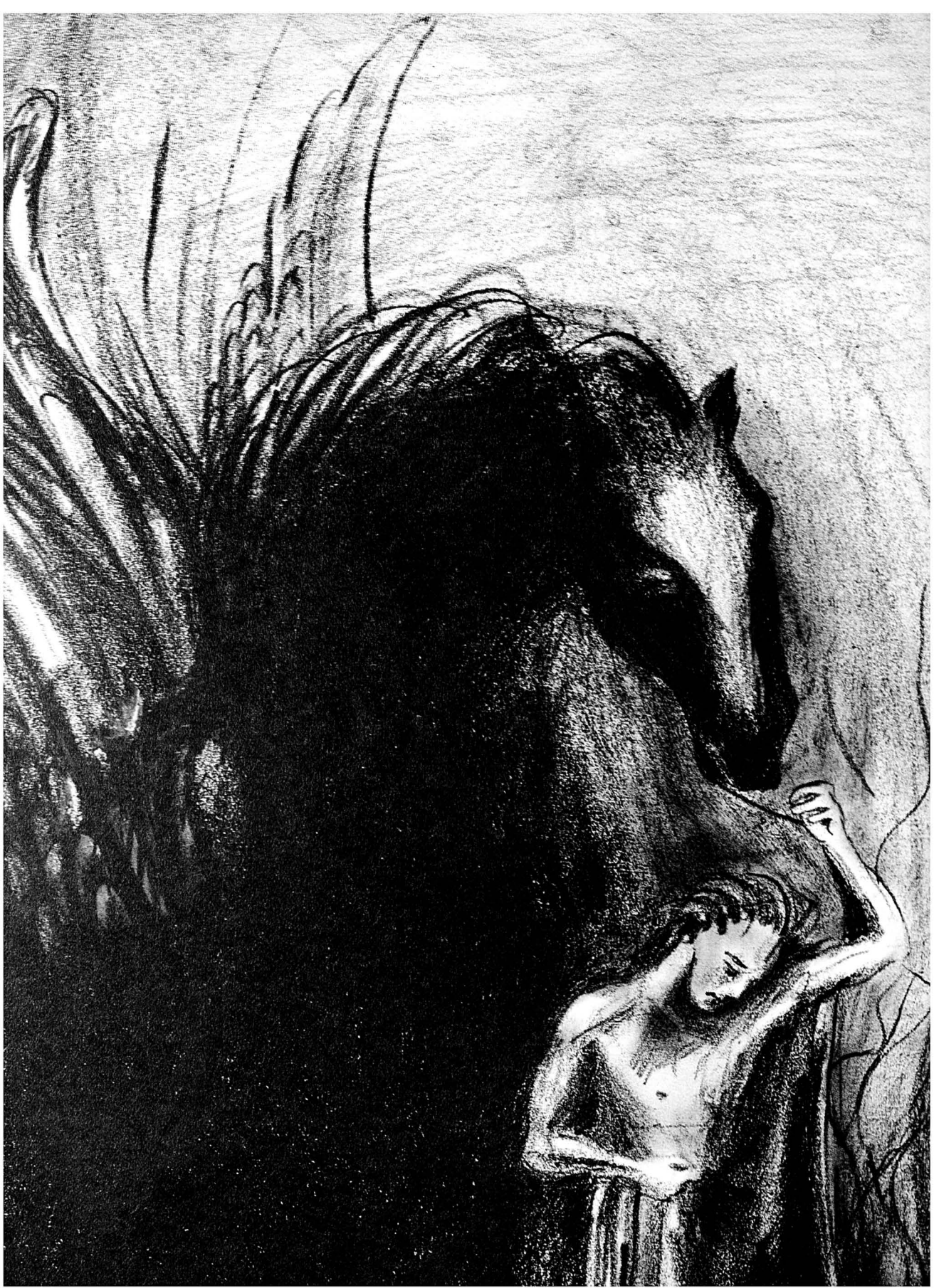


Roberto Assagioli

Roberto Assagioli, M. D., was born in Venice in 1888 and despite his formidable age continues active in a variety of professional activities. In recent years, Dr. Assagioli has curtailed his activities as a psychiatrist to devote himself to writing and training. One of the pioneers of psychoanalysis in Italy, he began to formulate the concept of psychosynthesis as early as 1910. He argued that psychoanalysis was not an incorrect approach but rather that it was a partial one. Since those early days, he has spent his professional life elaborating a comprehensive psychology of man that he has called “psychosynthesis.” He has written more than three hundred papers and several books including *Psychosynthesis* and *The Act of Will*. He is Chairman of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation in New York, and President of the Istituto di Psicosintesi, Florence, Italy.



Claude Servan-Schreiber is a distinguished French writer and journalist. She has written in France for *Le Monde*, *L'Express* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*, in the United States for *Ms.* and the *New York Times*. She is especially interested in woman's progress in society, and between assignments is writing a book on this subject.



THE REPRESSION OF THE SUBLIME

Frank Haronian



HE TITLE, "THE REPRESSION OF THE SUBLIME" comes from the writings of Robert Desoille.¹ In the course of this article I will try to bring together his ideas with those of a number of others in such a way as to make the concept, the repression of the sublime, so real and compelling to you that you will see it ever more clearly and inescapably in yourselves, your clients, and your associates.

I do not think it is necessary to define the concept of repression but I do want to go into the question of what is meant in this instance by the sublime. We could be orthodox-psychoanalytic about it and consider all higher artistic, social and spiritually oriented activities as sublimations of primitive, erotic and aggressive drives. These would be sublime activities, but as sublimations of lower drives. But we can also consider that these same higher impulses, desires or motives exist in their own right, and that they develop whether or not the sexual and aggressive drives are satisfied. In fact, one might go so far as to claim that the higher and more sublime needs of the person are more likely to be awakened and developed if the so-called lower, more carnal drives are satisfied rather than if these are frustrated and 'sublimated.' For it is often out of a sense of boredom and dissatisfaction with the gratification of the senses, that we begin to look for higher meanings to our life.

Sublime trends
exist in their
own right

Urge to be more

There are still other ways of looking at the term *sublime*. In its broadest sense it covers all of man's impulses, instincts, drives and urges to be something more, better, greater than he is.* Personal growth and differentiation is part of the picture, to be sure, but beyond that the concept of the sublime involves several other general areas. It refers to the true, the good, the beautiful. We orient ourselves towards the sublime when we disinterestedly seek to know things as they are; when we nurture others for the pleasure of seeing them grow; when we arrange physical events so that they are seen as beautiful or artistic.

Then there is the tendency towards community, brotherliness, and caring. It is based on the feeling, the belief, the conviction that we all share the same destiny, ultimately. According to Robert Desoille, in whose writings I first came across the idea of the repression of the sublime, the impulse towards the sublime demands that we be concerned with others, that we feel the need to communicate with others with the best of ourselves, and that we find our deepest satisfaction in service to others. He says: "There are many forms of service, and among them the disinterested efforts of the scientist and of the artist are among the highest."² The impulse to act in such ways is the expression of a profound urge to trust life, to give freely of oneself, and to forget one's selfish concerns. These are among the traits of the sublime.

Need to transcend ourselves

There is another aspect of the sublime which can be called spiritual, in the broadest sense of the word. This is the inescapable need of every person to answer the existential questions for himself and to dedicate himself to a purpose, a goal, an ideal that he sees as greater and more important, more durable than his own transient existence and powers. When we sense the sublime as the feeling of communion with, and dedication to something that is greater than ourselves, then we are experiencing this basic spiritual impulse. It may be religious, agnostic or atheistic; it does not require a belief in God, but it is consonant with such a belief. According to Desoille it is the therapist's job to help his client become fully aware of this basic and normal spiritual impulse, free his mind of any distorted

*As such, it may be considered as an extension—or a special case, as it applies to the human kingdom—of the "Drive in Living Matter to Perfect Itself" described by A. Szent-Gyorgyi (see p. 14, this issue). [ed.]

theological conceptions acquired in his childhood. And, equally important, the therapist helps the client to develop his emerging spiritual impulses to the level at which they are converted into reflective thought and later practical activity, rather than merely emotionally charged idealistic thinking.

Now to get back to the title of this paper, “The Repression of the Sublime,” I would like to demonstrate that to feel the pull of the sublime in the several ways that I have described is an essential part of being fully human. And it is typically neurotic for us to repress the urge of trying to answer this call. However, we often do repress it.

Fear of the
unknown

There are many ways in which we evade the call of the sublime. Why do we evade, for example, the challenge of personal growth? We fear growth because it means abandoning the familiar for the unknown. And that involves risks. I recently came across the same idea in the works of Andras Angyal where he says

Abandoning the familiar for the unknown always involves risks. When the changes are far-reaching or precipitous they are bound to arouse anxiety. The view that growth is inseparable from anxiety is shared by practically all thinkers who have substantially contributed to our understanding of anxiety. . . . The anxiety felt at the prospect of dissolution of one's current mode of being has been related by some to the fear of final dissolution . . . since growth requires the breaking of old patterns, willingness “to die” is a precondition of living. . . . Excessive fear of death is often a correlate of the neurotic fear of growth and change.³

Need for stable
sense of self

Why do we evade the expression of care and concern for others? Often it is because we fear that we won't know where to draw the line and that we will find ourselves used and exploited by others. In the popular parlance, if you give a person an inch, he'll take a mile. Somehow we lack the stable sense of self which would permit us to have our “yes” and our “no” in such situations. I think that this fear is also related to the fact that as a part of the pattern of modern life, we know too many people too superficially — and we experience too little responsibility for each other.

I suspect that the loss of a sense of community with others, of the sense of sharing a common destiny, has led us to a state in which we are no longer able to commit ourselves to an ideal whose value, in our eyes, transcends that of our personal existence. This is the opposite of the situation that normally exists in primitive tribes. Today, the old tribal claims for loyalty in return for status and security are weak. We too seldom experience a close relatedness to

others for whose lives we are responsible and on whom we, in turn, can call for aid when we are distressed or threatened. Because of this loss, the motive for commitment to something greater than oneself must nowadays attach itself to something more abstract than one's tribe, something harder to define and to hold in mind and heart as a goal.

Desoille's idea that we repress the sublime can be found in the writings of current American psychologists. For example, Angyal says that the defense mechanisms, such as repression, exercise their effects not only on neurotic feelings and trends, but on the healthy ones, too. To his way of thinking, two competing organizations, or sets of attitudes, or systems for attributing meaning to experiences are in competition with each other. One is healthy, the other is neurotic. Each system seeks to dominate, and to do this, it must repress the other competing system. So when the neurotic system is dominant, the healthy system is *ipso facto* subdued and submerged, i.e., excluded from consciousness, or *repressed*. Angyal then says,

This conception is borne out by numerous observations that one can and does repress feelings and wishes that are in no way socially tabooed and are often considered laudable.

Repression of
healthy feelings

He calls this "annexation" or "appropriation," and he gives the example of an analytic patient who misinterprets his own natural and healthy friendliness as a viciously motivated exploitativeness.⁴

There are a number of other current examples of the repression of the sublime. I would like to draw some from Abraham Maslow's writings. Recently he gave a lecture in which he included the notion of the Jonah Complex. To quote from Maslow:

I'd like to turn to one of the many reasons for what Angyal has called "the evasion of growth." Certainly everybody in this room would like to be better than he is. We have, all of us, an impulse to improve ourselves, an impulse towards actualizing more of our potentialities, towards self-actualization, or full humanness, or human fulfillment, or whatever term you like. Granted this for everybody here, then what holds us up? What blocks us?

One such defense against growth that I would like to speak about especially, because it has not been noticed much, I shall call the Jonah Complex.

In my own notes I had at first labelled this defense "the fear of one's own greatness" or "the evasion of one's destiny" or "the running away from one's own best talent." I had wanted to stress as bluntly and sharply as I could the non-Freudian point that we fear our best as well as our worst, even though in different ways. It is certainly possible for most of us to be

greater than we are in actuality. We all have unused potentialities or not fully developed ones. It is certainly true that many of us evade our constitutionally suggested vocations. . . . So often we run away from the responsibilities dictated (or rather suggested) by nature, by fate, even sometimes by accident, just as Jonah tried in vain to run away from *his* fate.

We fear our highest possibilities (as well as our lowest ones). We are generally afraid to become that which we can glimpse in our most perfect moments, under the most perfect conditions, under conditions of greatest courage. We enjoy and even thrill to the god-like possibilities we see in ourselves in such peak moments. And yet we simultaneously shiver with weakness, awe and fear before these same possibilities. . . .

Not only are we ambivalent about our highest possibilities, we are also in a perpetual and I think universal, perhaps even *necessary* conflict and ambivalence over these same highest possibilities in other people and in human nature in general. Certainly we love and admire good men, saints, honest, virtuous, clean men. But could anybody who has looked into the depths of human nature fail to be aware of our mixed and often hostile feelings toward saintly men? Or toward very beautiful women or men? Or toward great creators? Or toward our intellectual geniuses? We surely love and admire all the persons who incarnated the true, the good, the beautiful, the just, the perfect, the ultimately successful. And yet they also make us uneasy, anxious, confused, perhaps a little jealous or envious; a little inferior, clumsy. They usually make us lose our aplomb, our self-possession, our self-regard.

Here we have a first clue. My impression so far is that the greatest people, simply by their presence and being what they are, make us feel aware of our lesser worth, whether or not they intend to. If this is an unconscious effect, and we are not aware of why we feel stupid or ugly or inferior whenever such a person turns up, we are apt to respond with projection, i.e., we react as if he were trying to make us feel inferior, as if we were the target. Hostility is then an understandable consequence. It looks to me, so far, as if conscious awareness tends to fend off this hostility. That is, if you are willing to attempt self-awareness and self-analysis of your *own* counter-valuing, i.e., of your unconscious fear and hatred of the true, good and beautiful, etc. people, you will very likely be less nasty to them. And I am willing to extrapolate to the guess that if you can learn to love more purely the highest values in others, this might make you love these qualities in yourself in a less frightening way.⁵

In another paper Maslow has brought up a different aspect of the repression of the sublime. He calls it desacralizing:

Let me talk about one defense mechanism that is not mentioned in the psychology textbooks, though it is a very important defense mechanism to certain bitter and yet idealistic youngsters of today. It is the defense mechanism of *desacralizing*. These youngsters mistrust the possibility of values and virtues. They feel themselves swindled and thwarted in their lives. . . . They have heard their fathers talk about being honest or brave or bold, and they have seen their fathers being the opposite of all these things.

Hostility toward
great men

Desacralizing
as a defense
mechanism

To see under the aspect of eternity

The youngsters have learned to reduce the person to the concrete object and to refuse to see what he might be or to refuse to see him in his symbolic values or to refuse to see him or her eternally. Our kids have desacralized sex, for example. Sex is nothing; it is a natural thing, and they have made it so natural that it has lost its poetic qualities in many instances, which means that it has lost practically everything. Self-actualization means giving up this defense mechanism and learning or being taught to resacralize.

Resacralizing means being willing, once again, to see a person “under the aspect of eternity,” as Spinoza says, or to see him in the medieval Christian unitive perception, that is, being able to see the sacred, the eternal, the symbolic. It is to see Woman with a capital ‘W’ and everything which that implies, even when one looks at a particular woman. Another example: One goes to medical school and dissects a brain. Certainly something is lost if the medical student isn’t awed but, without the unitive perception, sees the brain only as one concrete thing. Open to resacralization, one sees a brain as a sacred object also, sees its symbolic value, sees it as a figure of speech, sees it in its poetic aspects.

Resacralization often means an awful lot of corny talk. . . . Nevertheless, for the counselor . . . where these philosophical questions about religion and the meaning of life come up, this is a most important way of helping the person to move toward self-actualization. Some youngsters may say that it is square, and the logical positivists may say that it is meaningless, but for the person who seeks our help in this process, it is obviously very meaningful and very important, and we had better answer him, or we’re not doing what it is our job to do. . . .”⁶

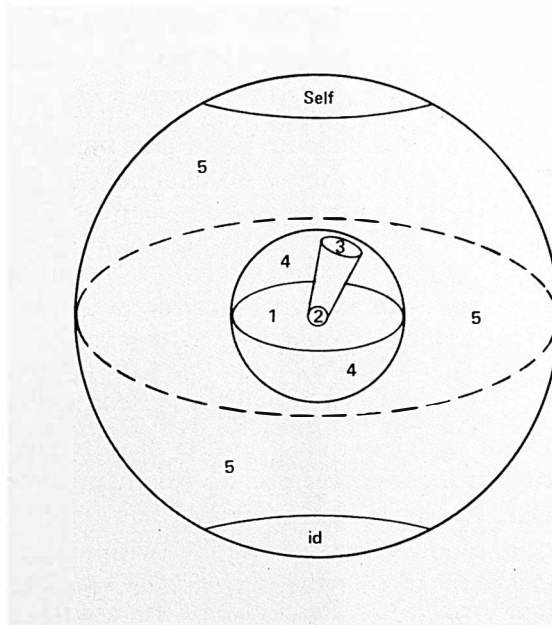
Here is one more quotation from Maslow on another aspect of the sublime; one that is perhaps closer to earth: “The Avoidance of Knowledge, as Avoidance of Responsibility,” is the title:

Fear of knowing

. . . lack of curiosity can be an active or a passive *expression* of anxiety and fear. . . . That is, we can seek knowledge in order to reduce anxiety and we can also avoid knowing in order to reduce anxiety. To use Freudian language, incuriosity, learning difficulties, pseudo-stupidity can be a defense. Knowledge and action are very closely bound together, all agree. I go much further, and am convinced that knowledge and action are frequently synonymous, even identical in the Socratic fashion. Where we know fully and completely, suitable action follows automatically and reflexively. Choices are then made without conflict and with full spontaneity . . . this close relation between knowing and doing can help us to interpret one cause of the fear of knowing as deeply a fear of doing, a fear of the consequences that flow from knowing, a fear of its dangerous responsibilities. Often it is better not to know, because if you *did* know, then you would *have* to act and stick your neck out.⁷

There is an interesting theoretical explanation of this idea of the repression of the sublime by Robert Desoille, who made it his avocation to develop the *rêve éveillé dirigé*, or directed daydream, as a psychotherapeutic tool. Desoille has woven theory and experience

1. Consciousness
2. Ego
3. Superego
4. Personal Unconscious and Preconscious
5. Collective Unconscious



Sublime Trends

Primitive Trends

into a fairly elaborate explanation of how, why, and by what agency the sublime is repressed. He has his own topographical description of the psyche, reproduced above. It includes the usual Freudian trio – the id, the ego, and the superego; but they are now supplemented by a fourth agent, the Self. The area in the center represents consciousness, the ego and the superego. Farther out, one finds the personal preconscious and unconscious. Beyond that is the collective unconscious. It should be noted that the superego does not partake of the collective unconscious.*

Desoille borrowed Jung's concept of the self and modified it somewhat. For him it means a state that represents the far limits of the sublime, a state that is the expression of the highest ideal that a person is able to entertain at any given moment. In this case, the id is the usual concept of our animal drives seeking expression. We experience it as it has been transformed in rising into consciousness, with all the associations that have been called forth by the stimulation of the primitive instincts. Desoille goes on to emphasize the unity of the psyche. The self and the id are considered to be two extreme limits within the psyche. Each exercises its own attractive

*The reader may find it interesting to compare this model with the basic psychosynthesis model of the psyche, described at the end of this issue's *PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK*. [ed.]

Superego as
a temporary
structure

effect on the ego at the center; and the ego oscillates back and forth between these two limits, the primitive and the sublime.*

The superego is that arbitrary and infantile outgrowth of the ego that represents the strictures and demands of the parents and other authority figures as they were experienced primarily in childhood. Desoille sees it as a temporary structure that must eventually be dissolved and whose role must be taken over by the Self in the mature personality.

At this point, I would like to digress into a description of the types of imagery that Desoille has habitually found to occur in the directed daydream. Desoille uses the imagery of ascending and descending in order to evoke images at different levels of the psyche, or different levels in the archetypal chain, as he puts it. The idea of ascending to heavenly heights he finds associated with sublimation, euphoria, serenity, and ultimately, with spiritual growth. But it frequently happens that the patient's ascent is blocked by a monster of some sort, perhaps a dragon. Desoille calls this character the guardian of the threshold and considers it to be an agent of the childish superego, whose function has been in the past to frustrate normal self-expression, e.g. sexual behavior. It is the patient's task in his daydream to struggle with and to overcome this superego figure. If he succeeds in doing this in his daydream he thereby nullifies

*On the basis of unconscious material, notably the imagery that is produced in guided daydreams, many workers in psychology have found that the direction of "sublime trends" leads, through increasing harmony and organization, toward a *pole* or *focus* of synthesis which can be known by direct experience. This focus has been described as "an ontological reality, a Being, a stable center of life" (R. Assagioli, Psychosynthesis Research Foundation *Newsletter*, No. 34.) The same unconscious material shows that the direction of "primitive trends" leads toward increasing conflict and fragmentation — toward an increasing number of less highly organized psychological formations, without a distinct focus or an independent, self-sustaining center. This difference has most important practical implications, and points to the danger of "personifying" or "focalizing" the id. Such personification, owing to the power of ideas and images to realize themselves (see Assagioli, *The Act of Will*, Viking, N.Y., 1973, p. 51) tends to organize the primitive part of the unconscious around a *pseudo-center* ("pseudo" because it derives its identity from the initial construct) which would be in active opposition to the self. This increases the conflict within the personality by opposing the harmonizing and integrating activity of the self, and is detrimental to the individual's growth. [ed.]

the arbitrary restrictions set up by his parents and other authority figures, and in so doing, accepts responsibility for directing his sexual and aggressive strivings according to his own judgments. At this point, the ego becomes animated by an intense aspiration to attain a sublime objective, which is still only glimpsed. The superego, which had been constructed from the introjects of the parents as a bulwark against oedipal desires and the like, becomes superfluous as the individual develops autonomy. The Self, with its higher, more sublime goals, supplants the superego.

Desoille draws an important point from Jung. He points out that Jung, among others, has emphasized the necessity of shedding one's own instinctive egotism. On this matter, Jung said that the ancient mystical precept "Get rid of all that you have and then you will receive" means, in effect, that one must abandon the bulk of one's most cherished illusions. Desoille says:

Self-transcendence

It is only then that something more beautiful, deeper, and more comprehensive will develop in one. For only the mystery of the sacrifice of oneself makes it possible for one to find oneself again with a renewed soul. These are precepts of very ancient wisdom which are brought back to light during psychoanalytic treatment. . . . This aspiration, which must come to us from a region of the unconscious, arises from a deeper layer than the super-ego. That is why it needs a special name. We will go along with Jung and call it the Self.

The conflict breaks out between the id and the Self. The Self tries to get the ego to satisfy its needs for the sublime, its yearnings for growth and the id, in opposing itself to the Self's desires, takes on the role of the repressive agent [and becomes] the expression of a new form of censorship, *the repression of the sublime*, in this case the urge to spiritual growth.

When the patient accedes to these intense aspirations of the Self which we mentioned earlier and attains certain levels of sublimation, the symbol of the guardian of the threshold changes. It is no longer that of a threatening dragon but takes on a different appearance in the daydreams. It generally appears now as a creature who is both kindly and firm, but still bars the route upward. In this situation the client no longer feels threatened, but he does feel called upon to make a conscious choice between two equally possible attitudes.

According to Desoille this is what is taking place. During the previous sessions the subject has become aware of the possibility of developing something more beautiful, deeper, more comprehensive within himself. There has been an intimation of the sublime, a call to become a finer person than he is. But for that to take place, the subject realizes now that he must renounce old habits and stop fol-

lowing lines of least resistance. He must give up the gratification of impulses from the lower unconscious, *all of which have been tolerated and even encouraged by the superego* in the past and accepted by the conscious ego.

Struggle against
the Self

But the patient hesitates to take this path upward because he feels that it will restrain his freedom and diminish his range of activities. In some cases, the patient may even feel these suggested renunciations have an *inhuman* character to them. This is when the guardian of the threshold appears—but no longer in a repulsive form. This time, it may take on the form of an angel, for example. The conflict between the Self and the id, one might say between the sublime and the base, is no longer unconscious. It is now taking place between the ego on the one hand, whose habit has been to accede consciously to those of the id's impulses that had been accepted by the superego, these impulses conforming to the lowest moral restraint of everyday life, and on the other hand, the Self, represented by the guardian of the threshold, the angel, whose call is felt to be ever more imperative.

In this case we see that the id, acting through the ego and with the collusion of the superego, struggles against the demands of the Self. But at this stage the struggle has become quite conscious; and the ego now seeks to suppress the sublime just as it repressed what seemed to it to be base and vile.

Desoille says that, in the course of a mental imagery session, there are three ways in which an individual client may react to the image of the guardian of the threshold with its call towards the sublime:

1. During that very session the subject may suddenly decide to give up his old habits because they now appear to him to represent non-values. These must be replaced by new values, which must be found and possessed. Once this decision is made the patient is again able to see himself ascending to greater heights in his directed day-dream.

2. The subject may hesitate and the session may come to a halt at that point. Subsequently, while the subject is alone, during the interval between sessions, he may decide to take on the struggle. In subsequent sessions he is then able again to progress as a result of that decision.

3. Alternatively, the subject may flatly refuse, consciously or not, to give up his illusions. With this refusal he makes a negative

transference on his therapist. Generally, it is rather discrete and of short duration, says Desoille, except in difficult cases.

Psychosynthesis⁸ makes much of the fact that we suppress and deny our impulses toward the sublime. One possible reason why we do this is because the more one is conscious of one's positive impulses, of one's urges toward the sublime, the more shame one feels for one's failure to give expression to these impulses. There ensues a painful burning of the conscience, a sense of guilt at not being what one could be, of not doing what one could do. This is not superego guilt but rather the cry of the Self for its actualization.

But we have available an easy-out, an escape from this sense of guilt, if we accept those popular intellectual arguments which reduce the call of the higher unconscious to nothing but sublimation of the impulses of the lower unconscious. Jung⁹ decried this reductionism in *Modern Man in Search of his Soul* more than 30 years ago, but we still find it soothing and comforting to deny these instincts of the higher unconscious and to settle for a degraded self-image because in some ways it is an easier one to live with.

This is the self-image of the well-psychoanalyzed man; he has undergone a sort of psychoanalytical lobotomy of the spirit, a deadening of his normal sensitivity to the higher unconscious and to the possibility of spiritual growth. The key to this denial is probably to be found in Freud's concept of sublimation with its emphasis on aim-inhibited sexual and aggressive drives as the source of the kindly and generous acts of men. This emphasis denied the existence of autonomous impulses towards goodness, toward community. This dogma was especially useful for the reduction of anxiety because it automatically relieved the patient who accepted it of all sense of responsibility for spiritual growth, and of the normal anxiety attended on this quest.

Thus the classical psychoanalytic theory of neurosis can be seen as a truncated theory of personality which, in an ideological way, tends to relieve neurotic symptomatology by amputating or anesthetizing that portion of the psyche which contains the highest and most valuable functions, those which urge us on to be the most that we can be.

In fairness to psychoanalysis, it should be said that it may be preferable for the *severe* neurotic, as were many early psychoanalytic patients, to *temporarily* put aside his impulses to the sublime. These impulses, if misused, can lead to ego inflation and solidification of

Reductionism
as defense
mechanism

Ego inflation

Therapy for both
lower and higher
unconscious

one's pathological self-image. One classical picture of this is rigid self-righteousness. So there may be situations in which the severe neurotic should be discouraged from dwelling on thoughts of the sublime until he has come to grips with the core of his neurosis, just as the aspirant is not initiated into the secrets of the society until he has developed the discipline with which to respect the facts and the skills with which to use them.

What is needed is a therapy for both the lower and the higher aspects of the unconscious. The needs of the lower unconscious are adequately met by the best forms of conventional psychotherapy. Religious guidance seeks to enlarge the scope and effectiveness of the higher unconscious. Psychosynthesis is one approach that strives to reach from the lower unconscious to the Self, helping man to recognize his higher as well as his lower impulses, to accept the responsibility of deciding which to express and which to renounce, and to deal with the anxiety that is an inescapable aspect of the process of self-actualization.

REFERENCES

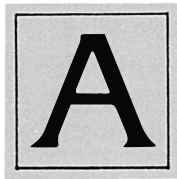
1. R. DESOILLÉ: *Le rêve éveillé en psychothérapie*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1945.
2. *ibid.*
3. A. ANGYAL: *Neurosis and Treatment*, Wiley, New York, 1965.
4. *ibid.*
5. A. MASLOW: "Neurosis as a Failure of Personal Growth," *Humanitas*, III, 1966, pp. 153-169.
6. ———: "Self-actualization and Beyond," in *Challenges of Humanistic Psychology*, James Bugental (ed.), McGraw-Hill, New York, 1967, pp. 279-286.
7. ———: *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Van Nostrand, Princeton, N.J., 1962.
8. R. ASSAGIOLI: *Psychosynthesis*, Viking Press, New York, 1971.
9. C. JUNG: *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1933.



Frank Haronian is a clinical psychologist in the private practice of psychotherapy. He has worked in clinics, schools and research facilities. He is adjunct professor at the Union Graduate School and has lectured in the United States and abroad. His writings include articles on perception, constitutional psychology, psychotherapy and psychosynthesis. He is Vice-President of the Psychosynthesis Research Foundation in New York.

A NEW HUMANISM IN MEDICINE

Stuart Miller



AMONG AMERICAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS and patients there is a widespread malaise. Despite enormous successes, a feeling of uneasiness pervades many of the men and women who work to provide care for the health of Americans, and despite better medical treatment than ever before patients too are dissatisfied.

From without, professionals are being attacked: for their impersonality, their apparent inability to spend time with patients, for the frequent lack of coordination among their services, for the chilling increase in their use of machines and specialized techniques. From within the professions themselves, arises an ill-defined resentment. Many physicians work harder and harder to serve, and die younger and younger. Treating only specialized diseases as many health professionals increasingly do, performing the same routines daily, weekly and monthly, is not satisfying to the human spirit. And yet the benefits of specialization seem to demand such costs. It has been suggested that, in reaction, some physicians develop a consuming interest in making money. No one expects an assembly line worker to be excited by his job, and for many professionals medicine has begun to resemble an assembly line. Untold thousands resist such tendencies but potent forces weigh against them. Government, concerned about inequitable distribution of health resources, proliferates proposals for reforms. But these frequently call for spreading a thinner assembly line, or for training more workers and

Assembly line
medicine

sending them to assembly lines where they are desperately needed — in Watts, Harlem, Appalachia, all the inner cities and many remote rural areas.

A relevant medicine

As if these pressures were not enough, from among many of the young entering medicine, come calls for a “relevant medicine,” for investigating folk medicine, for reaching the people. And in the Harris polls, while the physician still stands as the most trusted of all professionals, in the last ten years his prestige and authority have plummeted more percentage points than any other.*

Such a complex set of dissatisfactions and complaints,** both within and without the field of health care, is bound to shake the self-confidence of practitioners and the confidence of patients. While no single solution or point of view can claim to cope with this distressing situation, it is apparent that the root cause of this malaise is very deep. One knows that even when health care considered “adequate” by current standards is guaranteed, and indeed delivered, to every American, the malaise will not have disappeared. Perhaps the single fact that best focuses this awareness is this: despite the enormous advances of medical biology a whole host of diseases are *increasing* in every corner of the industrialized world. Professor Luigi Speciani has called them the “diseases of civilization:” heart disease, cancer, stomach ulcers, high blood pressure, and the like. The infectious diseases have virtually disappeared in the developed countries, and in their place have appeared these other diseases, diseases that seem to challenge the assumption of the 1940’s and 50’s that there would be a linear extension of the life span.

A mocking
genie

There would appear to be some mocking genie in the bottle of scientific progress, one that gives and also takes away. It is the haunting image of this genie beneath all of our medical technology that leads one to believe that the solution to our medical ills will not come from simple quantitative or even technical improvements — no number of new machines, no number of new physicians or nurses or health educators, no number of specialists or sophisticated procedures or plastic tubes will quite satisfy. The malaise underlying

*I use the word “medicine” in its lay usage, to indicate the larger part of all health care services and organizations.

**There are many more pressures on medicine than the ones I have summarized, but this brief outline may be enough to evoke the strain which the health care system is suffering.

medicine parallels the malaise that more broadly underlies our time. And it would appear that an answer cannot be sought merely from outside; it must be sought in a more inward direction.

* * *

As in medicine, so elsewhere: the advance of materialistic science and technology has failed to bring all the blessings it promised. Therefore, our task now is to keep the genuine advances of science and technology and to combine them with a health giving way of life.

In medical terms, this means that groups of investigators must begin to concern themselves with the person: not only with the patient, but with his underlying humanness. Not just with his or her disease, but with his body as a whole, and with the feelings, the mind, and the spirit — even the spirit — of the patient. An old answer to the mocking genie is that image of whole humanness, that whole creature symbolized in the great statues and paintings of Greece and Rome and the Renaissance. Those older artists knew that when the inner man's harmony is achieved, the outer form of the body will reflect its radiance. This is, of course, for us, speculation. A hypothesis to be tested. Yet, it may be that many of the health professionals' problems can be solved — as well as many of the problems of patients afflicted with civilized diseases — when we know how whole people can create themselves in the contemporary world.

Concern for the
whole man

The study of how human wholeness can create itself in our time is the special province of humanistic and transpersonal psychology. One thinks of the work of such men as Maslow, Assagioli, Rogers, Fromm, Frankl and May, among many others. Drawing on the hundred year old traditions of behavioral science and the ancient traditions of Eastern and Western humanism and religion, the new fields of humanistic and transpersonal psychology have attempted to specify the ways and means by which wholeness can be achieved. At the very least, they have brought important but recently neglected human aspects back into focus: the will, the necessity of the emotional life, the strong relation between mind and body, the overriding importance of values and of the individual spirit. Our attention has been recalled to the evolutionary thrust in mankind and in each individual for higher realizations. The new psychologies have also collected or created hundreds of methods for developing these rediscovered aspects of man.

Holistic trends

There have been two main problems, however, in applying the knowledge of the new psychologies to social institutions. The first

Limitations of mechanistic viewpoint

is the current Western resistance to the experiential aspects of educating the whole person. Like the maladies one hopes to cure, this resistance derives in part from a mechanistic view of human beings that has dominated our century—the man as machine. The resistance is buttressed by the parallel concerns with production, external results, and with what can be touched and tasted and weighed. The second problem in bringing a humanistic view back to society and its institutions has been the lack of an overarching theory and a model for professional training and discovery. Fortunately, however, recent years have seen the development of comprehensive theories that unify all the humanistic techniques. In addition, a number of practical attempts to bring the vision of the new psychology and its practical methods into troubled institutions have been successful. My wife, Sara Unobskey Miller, and I have been associated with one such overarching theory — psychosynthesis — and with the design of a practical training model for bringing new humanistic insights into professional situations. It is from this background that the Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine has been developed, as an attempt to create a comprehensive program for finding practical ways of enhancing the full humanness of health care.

A PROGRAM IN HUMANISTIC MEDICINE

If the task is to create a more humanistic health care, the only people who can do it are experienced health professionals.* Who else really knows the problems and has sufficient expertise and expert prestige within the existing health care system? Accordingly, and following the model of earlier work with school teachers and superintendents of schools, we interviewed two hundred health professional applicants for admission to our program of study in human-

*The Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine is only one attempt to address the crises in medicine. Many efforts to discover the human potentialities of medicine are in progress: The Society for Health and Human Values in Philadelphia; Human Dimensions in Medical Education in La Jolla, California; The Intern and Resident Program in Social Medicine, Montefiore Hospital, New York City; The Hastings Center in Hastings-on-Hudson in New York State; are only some of the institutions seeking different ways to create a more humanistic medicine.

Discovering a fuller humanness

istic medicine.* Of these, we selected fourteen. This group would devote itself to the exploration of the problems of humanness in medicine. Their main new resources would be the theories and techniques of the new psychologies. Their guinea pigs would be themselves. Taking an approach different from the simple extroversion of what frequently passes for human science, they would also look inward. And by looking at themselves, singly and collectively, they would prepare themselves to discover the fuller humanness of their patients. They would work together to test the relevance of the new psychologies to themselves and to others, and finally to the institution of medicine as a whole. They would be careful, slow and thorough. They would see what practical models they could develop to help with the problem of the malaise in medicine. They would form the Staff of the Institute.

The problem of finding humanistic alternatives to today's health care is exceedingly complex, the lives of real people are involved. The Institute Staff is inclined to be cautious. It includes seven physicians (six men and one woman), ranging in age from 29 to 56, in specialties ranging from internal medicine to pediatrics and public health administration, in nature of practice from the relative sanctuary of universities to the overworked routine of the downtown physician. Two lay counselors, a Director of Nursing and Vice President of a hospital, a general nurse, and a health educator complete the Program Staff. They were selected by the Directors for their strength, their skepticism, their openness and their good will. They are seasoned, practicing, respected professionals, and most of them hold full- or part-time appointments in health professions schools.

The Directors, however, are not health care people. We are psychologists and humanists. We arrange for consultants from the new psychologies to lead monthly weekend workshops. We attend the workshops and assist the participants to integrate new material. We

*Two separate study task forces, one of elementary school teachers and one of school district administrators have used a training and discovery process, similar to this humanistic medicine program, for the purpose of making humanistic innovations in the teaching of elementary reading and in the administration of school districts. The projects were funded by the Ford Foundation, sponsored by the University of California, Santa Barbara and directed by Sara Miller.

deal with resistances to the new and threatening, we point out opportunities for growth, we try to help each Staff member find his own way toward a fuller humanness. In addition, we nag. To make sure that experiential learning does not become an end in itself, and that what has been learned personally and found useful is applied professionally. But we do not determine what forms these applications will take — that is not our job or province.

Desire to serve

It has been a healing process, a privilege to work with such people. In the work, we have had what Abraham Maslow would call a “super-normal” window on medicine. What we have observed is encouraging. We observe the tremendous force of latent caring and good will in the medical profession. An enormous idealism, aspiration and desire to serve human beings exists among health care people. But frequently these qualities are squashed by an authoritarian system of training, an over-emphasis on the perfection of partial and merely technical skills, by a medical orthodoxy which has slipped, willy-nilly, into seeing people as if they were simply patients and patients as if they were simply collections of organ systems. In the triumph of science and technology over the material, there has come a natural tendency to see all of life as mere matter. To paraphrase one philosopher, “If the only tool you’ve got is a hammer, everything begins to look like a nail.” How moving to see and feel the contrast between the high human aspirations of practitioners and the hammers they are given.

Effectiveness of the Physician

We have learned other interesting things about the health professions. Though the authority of the physician who takes care of physical complaints is plummeting, it is still very high. A psychotherapist might work for six months to bring a client to the point where a professional suggestion might bring about symptom relief. There will be probing on both sides, the slow establishment of trust by the patient for the doctor to meddle with his inner life. But an ordinary physician, by virtue of his concern with life and death matters like the body’s care, can frequently carry more immediate weight. If he tells a patient to go and scream at the ocean (catharsis) to partially relieve chronic headaches, the patient often simply goes and does it.

Unfortunately, the sundering of body from mind and spirit is often extreme in conventional medicine. One observer summarized the situation by saying, “the psychiatrists have been given the mind, the clergymen the spirit, and the regular health professionals are left

Unnatural
divisions

with only the body.” But we see in our work that such divisions are not only theoretically indefensible, they are practically inefficient. Because the body is frequently the expression of emotional, mental and spiritual conditions, the health professional must be concerned with all. Just as everyone must be concerned with all. And no objection of the need for specialized “psychiatric” knowledge can obviate the necessity for informed wholistic concern in all health professionals and, in fact, in everyone.

WORKING TOWARDS A PARADIGM SHIFT

Basic
concepts

One can only be humble in confronting such a complicated institution as contemporary medicine. The contribution that contemporary science, technology and administrative organization have made to the medical enterprise is truly impressive. The work of creating a theoretical and methodological basis for humanistic practice requires continuous evaluation, refinement and testing. It is a work in progress. Gradually, as a new paradigm of health care emerges, we are making it increasingly available to health professionals, both through publications* and direct contact—training programs, lectures and courses. Some basic concepts of our paradigm of a more humanistic medicine are the following:

The patient cannot be seen simply as his disease; neither can the health professional limit his care to medical technology. The full healing potential of their relationship often depends on their interaction as whole human beings, and far exceeds the treatment of disease.

Every person achieves a unique interdependent relationship of body, emotions, mind and spirit, inseparable from other individuals and society. Illness can best be understood as a disturbance within the dynamic balance of these relationships. Health may be defined

*For readers interested in pursuing the ideas in this article a partial list of publications includes *The Human Patient; Dimensions of Humanistic Medicine: Reflections on Science and Technology, Patient Care, Administration, Training and Health Policy; The Masculine Principle, The Feminine Principle and Humanistic Medicine; and Case Studies and Methods in Humanistic Medical Care*. They are available from the Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine, 1017 Dolores Street, San Francisco, California, 94110. [ed.]

as the harmony of the whole, and the work of the health professional as aiding in the re-establishment of a more fully conscious equilibrium within the whole.

The patient and the health professional are colleagues. Their collaboration activates the latent human and biological resources within the patient for healing. The patient is encouraged to be aware of his choices and to become increasingly responsible for his own health, growth and fulfillment.

Meaning of pain

Finally, when it comes, illness can frequently be seen as a creative opportunity and no mere waste of experience, a chance for the patient to learn more about himself, about his life direction, about meaning and values. The confrontation with pain, disease, and death can be profoundly useful. Sages of all civilizations have said that pain is a great teacher. It underlines the disharmonies. The ulcer may tell us we are working or worrying too much. Pain in general tells us that we must change our lives, we must grow. If necessary, we must achieve that elevation of mind that can accept chronic pain and transcend it. Many have done this. Many health professionals can help others to do this, or to otherwise use pain creatively for growth. But generally, the thrust of contemporary medicine is toward the mere destruction, obliteration, annihilation and denial of pain, disease and death. We need to admit that route is not sufficiently broad or realistic to be called human.

* * *

Self-knowledge

To look at the medical situation from such expanded points of view calls for an expanded health professional. A few in every generation seem born that way. Methods now exist whereby others can *learn* similar sensitivities, similar skills, and a similar breadth. One requirement of such an education is that the practitioner get to know himself as a human being: his emotional nature, his sub-personalities, the strengths and weakness of his will and intuition, and so forth.

Two case reports by Institute Staff physicians follow these introductory remarks. The reports show practitioners drawing on self-knowledge achieved in training done in order to bring a more effective humanity to their medical interventions. These are simple case studies in humanistic medicine, one of an obese adolescent, the other of a dying octogenarian. They are intended as suggestive

narratives. Taken in a whole glance, each of them offers us a new image of possibility. We have encountered the mocking genie of the medical malaise. In an abstract way, we held up to him the golden form of the Whole Man of the humanists' tradition. More practically, and in the process of discovery, we now behold the images of two real doctors encountering the humanness of their patients through the means of their own humanity. These images, these stories are contrasting, but they may suggest some of the opportunities and the boundaries of the humanistic medicine that is being born.

FAT SELF, THIN SELF - Naomi Remen*

IN THE FALL OF 1972 I received a phone call from Dr. Y. He sounded impatient and annoyed. He apologized and asked me if I would do him a favor and take a "problem patient" who had been referred to him by a private practitioner in Sebastopol. And that's how I met Harold.

I admit that I accepted Harold's case with a bad grace. As Dr. Y. outlined Harold's history my heart sank. Harold was 13½ years old and had been completely well until 1970 when he entered puberty.

He was first admitted to our hospital because of intolerable generalized muscle pain. Hot on the track of some obscure but fascinating disease, the House Staff had tested Harold with every test they had — only to retire in frustration and confusion when all the results

Extensive tests
prove ineffective

*This case report and the following one were prepared especially for publication in *SYNTHESIS*. While they correspond in most respects to the form and content of typical medical case reports, there are a number of differences. Specifically, the physicians deliberately share their own inner processes as the case progresses; in addition, a number of technical terms have been avoided in order to make the cases more accessible to those without strong biological or medical backgrounds. Finally, care has been taken in the manner of presenting the case, to reveal the full human interaction between physician and patient, and its meaning. [ed.]

were normal. A psychiatric consultant was called who, after an extensive evaluation of both Harold and his family pronounced them all emotionally sound. Harold was sent home to await further developments.

His muscle pain persisted and when he was readmitted in 1971 he had been bedridden for almost a year. During that time he had gained sixty pounds. He had been seen by several private medical practitioners in the Sebastopol area and placed on various diets, none of which proved successful. He had been given many pain killing preparations; all were ineffective.

The evaluation performed during Harold's second hospital admission was even more elaborate than that done in 1970 but the results were identical – all tests were normal. Once again, a psychiatrist was called.

This time Harold was reported to be withdrawn, non-communicative and hostile, and his mother anxious and over-protective. The psychiatrist, however, was unable to say if this was a primary emotional process or simply the reaction to stressful circumstances. Once again Harold was sent home without a diagnosis to await further developments.

Worsening situation

Over the next year he gained an additional forty pounds. He was totally isolated from other teenagers and had become unwilling to communicate other than in monosyllables.

This morning, his private doctor had called Dr. Y. in desperation. Harold's weight was beginning to interfere with his breathing and the situation was deteriorating.

As this story unfolded, I felt my resentment increasing. As one of the few general clinicians affiliated with the hospital, I had become used to having the patients in whose disease process no one was really interested dumped in my office. This case seemed too much. But Dr. Y. was a well-known practitioner and his request could hardly be refused. I accepted Harold's case and made an appointment to see him and his mother toward the end of the week.

They came on a Friday – Harold in a wheel chair. Our scale, designed for pediatric patients, did not go high enough to record Harold's weight. Two nurses wheeled him down to the adult clinic where he was found to weigh 210 pounds and be 5'3" tall. This awkward process took forty-five minutes during which Harold said not a single word.

Pervading inertia

When he had been placed in an examining room with his mother I went in to meet them and obtain a history. I had requested that Harold not be undressed and he sat in his wheel chair before the writing desk. His mother had taken a straight chair in the corner of the room. My first impression of Harold was that he seemed scarcely human, barely alive. He was massive and inert, and had allowed himself to be placed in the examining room without the slightest effort to help the nurses or his mother; 210 pounds of dead weight. He was staring into his lap and did not look up during the entire time I spoke with his mother.

Her story was pretty much the same as that told by Dr. Y. Harold had spent an ordinary childhood on a ranch run by his parents just outside of Sebastopol. He was remarkable only in his scholastic aptitude (he had always been first in his class) and his interest in and skill with mechanical things — especially cars and motorcycles.

As his mother and I spoke, I watched Harold out of the corner of my eye. He didn't move.

I was becoming uneasy, I had slipped into an old pattern based on power needs — could I heal this boy? Could I make him lose weight? Would I be successful where at least a dozen of my colleagues had failed, thus proving myself the better doctor? As these thoughts occurred to me, I became progressively more anxious. This was, after all, a test — a challenge to my skill. Would I succeed or fail? In a subtle way, I had slipped to the center of the stage and was the main character in the play.

After getting the information I needed from his mother I turned to Harold who had neither spoken nor moved for a full twenty minutes and said, "Why did you permit yourself to be brought here?"

Mobilizing anger

Harold looked up. His face, like the rest of his body was impassive and inert. But his eyes were alive with anger.

The force and energy of his anger shocked me into realizing that I was certainly not alone on the stage. Here was another actor who was very present indeed.

Will to live

I felt my old power patterns fall away. For many months I had been in the humanistic medicine training program, and some new patterns had become accessible to me. I did not take Harold's anger personally although it seemed directed at me. I knew from a personal experience with chronic disease that anger may often be the will to live expressed negatively.

In addition, the training had exposed me to some new and unique experiences. During a weekend in massage techniques, I had seen the human body in a new way and had become aware of the life-energy in other people and also in myself.

Another weekend, this time in Gestalt Therapy, had demonstrated on a psychological level the strength of this life energy – that while the patient had all the questions he also had the answers he was seeking.

As I met Harold’s angry eyes I became aware of my respect for his tremendous energy – and a feeling of relief. I would not “cure” this boy or “heal” him. He did not need my energy – he needed me to help him get in touch with his own.

After a minute or so in which Harold and I measured each other and I smiled in acknowledgement of his energy and strength, he said, “Can’t you see?”

His voice was deep – a man’s voice. It was not the voice of his body but rather the voice of his eyes.

I said “Yes, I see.”

After a few minutes of silence, Harold spoke again.

“I want you to make me lose weight.”

Responsibility

I recognized that Harold was putting responsibility for his weight loss on me – and that I must enable him to assume the responsibility of his own choices.

Meaning in disease

I felt momentarily frightened – how would I do this? Then I understood that just as I had disidentified myself and my self-esteem from Harold’s weight loss, Harold would have to disidentify from his fat before he would be able to understand the meaning of his obesity, and choose to change it. I had begun to realize that there is often a message in disease – and that Harold’s weight gain was his way of expressing something. He alone had the knowledge of what this something was, although he might not yet be aware of it. I decided to risk some of the new techniques I had been taught. True, I hadn’t learned these things in medical school; true, I was anxious about really entering into a patient’s psychological life in these new ways. But there was something right, something simply human about proceeding. A Gestalt technique seemed an ideal way to help Harold disidentify from and begin to read the message in his obesity.

Disidentification

I stood up—taking a straight chair—I placed it in front of Harold.

“Put your fat on this chair.”

Harold looked startled and for the first time—not angry.

“What?”

Praying that he was close enough to childhood to be able to fantasize I said, “Heap your fat up on this chair.” I shaped it into a pantomime heap with my hands. “Do you see your fat here?”

And Harold laughed. “Yes.”

“Now, talk to it.”

Harold laughed again, “What do I say?”

“Tell it what you don’t like about it.”

After a small silence he began to talk. Words poured out—resentment after resentment. His fat prevented him from having friends—from going to school—it made him ugly—it made it hard for him to breathe, to live. After a full ten minutes Harold fell silent.

“Now, tell your fat what you appreciate about it.”

Harold was truly shocked. “Appreciate?”

“Yes, appreciate.”

This time the silence was longer. Finally, Harold said that his fat excused him from chores.

“And,” I prompted.

“Mother brings my meals in bed and waits on me”

“and”

“I don’t have to do anything I don’t want to”

“and”

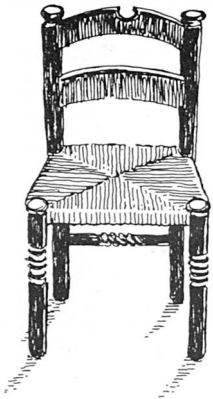
“I don’t have to try and if I tried maybe I couldn’t.”

“Harold,” I said “who has been talking?”

“Why, I have.”

“Is this ‘I’ which has been talking fat or thin?”

“I don’t know—no, wait, my fat is over there (pointing to the chair). The ‘I’ that is talking is thin.”



Unconscious
motives

“I see” — and I moved my chair until I was sitting shoulder to shoulder with Harold facing the empty chair on which he had piled his fat.

“Thin Harold”
emerges

“Well,” I said, “what shall ‘Thin-You’ and I do about this fat?”

Harold laughed again. He was really delighted. “Let’s make it go away.”

I said, “O.K.” and in a conspiratorial way we then talked about choice and decision. I told Harold that I thought that he had so recently come out of his childhood that it was possible that he had not yet had the opportunity to make an adult decision. To choose for himself rather than having a grown-up choose for him. Perhaps losing his fat might be Harold’s first decision as an adult.

An adult decision

He looked intrigued. I said that adult decisions took careful thought. I felt that Harold should go home and begin a notebook. That he should first write down all the advantages of being fat and then all the disadvantages of being fat. Then all of the advantages of being thin and all of the disadvantages of being thin.

On the remaining pages of the notebook I asked Harold to write down everything he ate so he would know how many calories he ate every day.

During the two weeks until his next appointment I asked him to decide if he wanted to lose weight now. I asked him to tell me of his decision at his next appointment.

Harold stood up and shook my hand. I felt once again a tremendous respect for the Angry Man I could still see in his eyes.

I sat alone in the examining room finishing my notes. As I stood up to leave, my eye fell on the empty wheel chair in which Harold had been brought here — and I realized he had left under his own power. I felt exhilarated and excited.

In two weeks, Harold was back with his notebook and his decision. Yes. He wanted to lose weight. I told him I would call in a dietician to consult with him.

Using the information provided by the dietician Harold devised a diet for himself, which I acknowledged as being a wise one. I then told his mother that I felt it important that she not comment or nag Harold regarding his food intake but that she put her cooking and shopping skills at his disposal. She was dubious but agreed to try. I felt her attitude was not unreasonable in that this was Harold’s

fourth diet, but I hoped that she would become more enthusiastic as Harold became more aware of his strength and his strength became more apparent to her.

Harold asked me when he was to come back. I asked him how often he felt it would be useful for him to come here.

“Once a week for now – and once every two weeks for later.”

“Well,” I said, “would you tell them at the front desk when you will be coming and have them tell me.”

Harold went to arrange for his next appointment. He walked with great difficulty but he walked.

Using the techniques of subpersonalities over the next few months, I kept Harold in touch with the dialogue between his Fat Self and his Thin Self by helping him take the role of his Observer. The “Fat Self” and the “Thin Self” can be thought of as “subpersonalities”* – organized patterns of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and feelings. Each subpersonality might then be considered as having its own needs and goals. Often these needs and goals conflict with each other and with the needs and goals of Harold himself. I pointed out to Harold how cleverly his Fat Self outwitted his Thin Self or sometimes how resourceful his Thin Self had been at a family dinner. I emphasized the cleverness, the resourcefulness – as these were major qualities of Harold’s. What he had chosen to do with his cleverness might well be negative – but cleverness is cleverness after all.

Some weeks Harold lost – some weeks he didn’t. In all this time I didn’t count his calories for him nor did we discuss any numbers at all. I made no reference to his muscle pain other than to take him off all pain medicines as they were not working anyway.

Rather, the subpersonality work continued and Harold became aware of the tricks his Fat Self played on his Thin Self and the sort of circumstances in which his Thin Self would allow his Fat Self to eat. He began to enjoy watching his own process.

The first six months of Harold’s visits resulted in the following changes on his part:

1. He lost fifty pounds.
2. He became interested in nutrition and did considerable read-

*See the full discussion of subpersonalities in this issue’s *PSYCHOSYNTHESIS WORKBOOK*. [ed.]

ing. As a result of this reading, he insisted on doing his own shopping (leaving his house for the first time). Ultimately, he began to cook. We exchanged recipes.

3. He became interested in building models and made, among others, some beautiful clipper ships.
4. He began subscribing to and reading motorcycle and automotive magazines.

During this period, I too was undergoing a profound change in my perception of my identity as a doctor. Through my training work in the Humanistic Medicine Institute and my experience with Harold, I had begun to see myself as a Gardener. I could not “create” even one blade of grass. Blades of grass, like patients, had their own life force and energy. But I could plant. I could plant in the sun if sun-loving and in the shade if not. I could water and weed with vigilance. I could spray for insects and scatter bait for snails. I no longer demanded of myself that I “heal” or “cure” — but rather that I nourish the healing power of the patient.

And then Harold stopped losing weight.

Five weeks went by without a change. After the second week, I pointed out to Harold that he had gained about a pound a week in the twenty-four months before we met. In the past five weeks he had not gained at all so that he had still reversed his previous trend. He had also grown two inches. It was some comfort.

As the weeks passed I became more and more concerned. In the stress of the situation Harold became silent and withdrawn and I began to slip again into my old pattern of success and failure. I began to feel guilty about failing to make Harold lose weight. Now, I began to dread his visits although, previously, I had always looked forward to them.

I talked to several members of the Institute Staff and received their support and suggestions. But I was still shaky and getting shakier.

At 7:30 one morning in July, 1973 a member of the Staff called; and in the course of the conversation, we somehow began talking about fat and fat kids. She asked me if I had ever noticed how my boundaries always expanded when I got behind the wheel of my car and how I *knew* my new boundaries; I could park within six inches, fit into small spaces, etc. I laughed at this lovely image; but as I started up my car a little later, I decided to deliberately experience

Nourishing the
inner life

Expanding
boundaries

this. So, I let my boundaries expand until I was the size and shape of a 1969 Valiant; and in this new shape, I drove down the street to work. I experienced a false sense of strength — big is strong; confusing my physical boundaries with my spiritual state. I imagined that this might be how a fat person feels. I also remembered a cartoon I'd seen twenty years ago where a little Caspar Milquetoast of a man gets behind the wheel of his car and is transformed into an aggressive, decisive, brutal driver; and then as he leaves his car, becomes a little Caspar Milquetoast of a man again. I wondered whether this transformation occurred because the little man suddenly felt his physical boundaries expand. Do fat people do this? Could fat have this meaning?

As I drove, I was aware that my boundaries, being much further out, kept people away. That felt all right, because I knew I could get out of the car anytime I wanted to. But for Caspar Milquetoast, that must have felt not only all right but damn reassuring. All morning at work this car image kept coming back to me and I kept giggling about it. About 1 p.m., the nurses came to tell me that Harold was here. I had not been expecting him and I was irritated.

When I discovered that not only was Harold here without an appointment but he had not lost weight, I was really irritated. (These old habits of "curing" die hard; the guilt of not producing a "cure" may lead to resentment of the patient.)

The dietician had already spoken to Harold and had suggested that he eat more, because he was more active. She had unwittingly played directly into the hands of his "Fat Self." I was really annoyed but as they had driven all the way from Sebastopol over Route 1 . . .

So I went in and in the heat of my frustration, I asked Harold why he had not lost in five weeks. He said angrily "I was hungry." I then asked him to: (a) add up his daily calories in his log. He was still recording but had stopped adding up; (b) think through again whether he wanted to diet. I told him that I felt a decision not to diet at this time would be less hurtful to him than continuing to "try" to diet and not acknowledging that he no longer wanted to do so. This sort of "trying" might make him feel that he had no choice. We discussed the Old Testament saying, "Let thy yes be yes, and thy no be no." And we again talked about his diet representing the first adult decision in his life.

By now I had disidentified from my feelings of frustration. I was no longer angry. Then I noticed that Harold had on a pair of new

Guilt leads to
resentment

jeans. I commented and in a shaking voice Harold said he recently had to buy them and they were four sizes smaller. I finally understood. About five weeks ago Harold's weight loss had begun to really show. And perhaps size *was* strength to him.

Confusion of levels

Then, I began to tell him about my phone call and my experience of letting myself expand until I was the shape of a 1969 Valiant. I talked about Caspar Milquetoast and about the illusion that size is strength and gave him several similar circumstances where a person could confuse a physical state with a spiritual state (i.e., being unable to conceive a child with being unable to mother a child). I said, "I wonder if somewhere inside you there is a driver who is used to driving a three-axle truck and that as the truck becomes smaller and smaller he becomes uneasy. The truck is becoming smaller and smaller. Soon it will be the size of . . . (I hesitated, looking for an image, and my intuition gave me one . . .) a motorcycle." And that was it.

Harold suddenly got an inward look and with a great deal of intensity said, "Have you ever been on Route 1 on a Sunday when all those big cars are bumper to bumper and no one can move, and there is some dude on a 'cycle going forty miles per hour right down the white line and thumbing his nose at all of them? Isn't that it? Being strong isn't being big. That is it—being strong is being able to move."

I said, "and . . ."

Freedom of choice

Harold said, "and being able to decide where you want to go and go there."

And then he smiled.

I was deeply touched. We have all we need to know. We just need to be reminded. Harold had seen what "strength" really was—not size, not mass—but the freedom to move, to choose—to will. The treatment had entered a climactic phase.

I asked Harold, "Who was saying 'I'm hungry'?" He said, "The driver of the Chrysler Imperial." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because he didn't understand about motorcycles."

Talking to the
body

Using another technique I had learned, I then suggested that Harold communicate directly with his body, that he talk and write to it. That he tell his body he apologized for making it hungry just now and that he appreciated its patience. That he was making it hungry because he wished to spare his bones and joints all the pain they have known in the last few years.

He laughed and said he would.

Harold returned in two weeks having lost five pounds. His opening words were, “Here—I have brought a picture of me to show you.”

He put on my desk a snapshot of an abandoned, rusted-out motor lying on its side in a field.

Next to it, he put another snapshot of the motor. This time it had been set up on blocks. It was obviously in working order and had been painted a bright light-blue.

I looked at him in confusion—and he said, “There, that’s what I really look like—I change things—the change is me.” And we both laughed.

A new beginning

A few months after that Harold started school. This had never been discussed between us—but when the fall term began, he naturally assumed that it was time to go to school. He drove there in a little go-cart he had devised from the motor he had fixed and some bicycle parts.

At present Harold has been going to school daily for six months. He is still twenty pounds overweight but seems unconcerned about this at present. Recently, the pressures of school have caused him to decide to see me only twice a year. During the last visit he told me he had spent a week making a movie with several classmates for a photography class. He had written the script and was the director of the scenario. He placed the script in my hands—“It’s called ‘The Sword and the Stone,’ ” he said. “It’s about King Arthur and the time he pulled Excalibur from the stone and everyone knew he was the king.”

“That’s one of my favorite stories,” I said. “How did you happen to pick it?”

“Oh,” he said, “I picked it because it was a most important time—it was the time that King Arthur found out who he really was.”

Harold rather than being a “problem patient” proved to be one of my most rewarding medical experiences. In finding out “who he really was,” he also taught me “who he really was” and incidentally, who I really am.

Together.

A DYING PATIENT - Robert Belknap



R. SF IS AN 83 YEAR OLD white farmer with cancer of the prostate. He had recently completed prostate surgery to remove a portion of the cancer and abdominal surgery to relieve a kidney obstruction, when his daughter asked me to assume his medical care.

She was dissatisfied with his former physician, complaining that the doctor wasn't interested and wasn't doing enough for her father. Reviewing the chart I discovered a long note from the previous physician describing the patient and his daughter as unappreciative, constantly badgering the nursing staff, hounding the physician with endless complaints, and steadfastly refusing to accept the facts about the patient's condition and prognosis. In essence, they were people who could be counted upon to blame medical personnel for whatever happened.

Alone and
withdrawn

When we first met, he was lying in bed, clothed in his white institutional pajamas, facing an empty wall. His wan face and empty eyes confirm what I suspected after a few minutes of conversation; for six weeks he has been lying in his bed without any outside stimulation. Now he is depressed, withdrawn, with little interest in life. I feel a surge of compassion for him, along with a ray of hope. Maybe his apparent weakness and lethargy reflect an emotional deprivation syndrome rather than the physical effect of the tumor. I feel angry that he has been deprived of the personal and social rehabilitation which should have accompanied surgery.

His daughter shares my anger, and keenly regrets his deteriorating condition. She isn't ready for him to die. She requests that I do whatever necessary to instill into him the desire to live, to increase his strength so he won't be bedridden. I agree to assess the situation and do my best. We have an instant alliance and good rapport, focusing on her father's future optimistically.

Defiant attitude

During his examination I encourage SF to sit up, to express his likes and dislikes, hopes and despair. He responds with hesitation at first, then with warmth, and finally with a defiant attitude toward

his illness. I begin to sense strength beneath his pale and tired appearance. As he expresses a note of optimism, I feel important and helpful, and more confident that I'm on the right track. He expresses appreciation when I liberalize his diet, ask his daughter to bring colorful pajamas, a TV, a radio, a calendar. We plan daily wheel chair visits to a sunny patio, a volunteer to read the paper to him, and I instruct the whole family in giving gentle range-of-motion exercises when they visit.

SF is most pleased that he can now eat anything he wants. Because of his kidney problems, he had been placed on a very restrictive and unpalatable low potassium/low sodium diet. He was disgusted and depressed by the endless dishes of soggy white rice. I banned rice, and together with the dietician and family, we introduced tasty and colorful foods. The dietician protested the sudden and unexpected changes—wouldn't an unrestricted diet be dangerous?

I reassured her that I would monitor his blood chemistry, and take full responsibility for any problems. I explained my belief that his last few months of life shouldn't be defined by rigid medical regimens and unpalatable diets. Why keep his blood electrolytes in perfect balance while his spirit and personality deteriorate from boredom?

At this point I felt hope and triumph—at last humanistic treatment was at hand for this elderly patient who had been left to vegetate. I learned SF had never been to a doctor or hospital until six months ago, that he had been a proud and independent man his entire life until he developed prostate cancer. Now he expressed a deep sense of shame—he could no longer care for himself, was too weak to get out of bed on his own, and had lost control of his bladder and bowel.

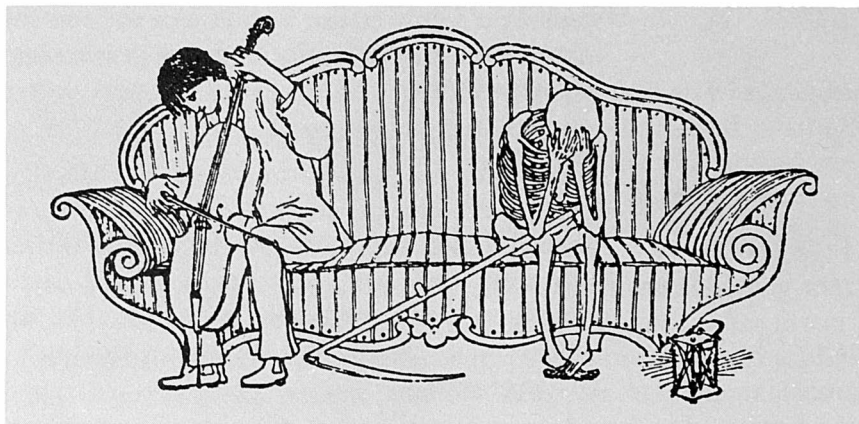
His loss of control was the source of his depression. This proud man equated self control with self esteem and despised weakness in his body. By putting him “back in the driver's seat” regarding his daily activities and meals, I hoped to evoke his pride and self esteem. Light bantering about his strength, independence, “stubbornness,” and past exploits cheered him quickly.

In the next two weeks I received only one call from SF's daughter. She expressed her appreciation and confidence in my treatment and said that her father's spirits had soared although he seemed only slightly stronger physically. Her manner and mood were obviously lighter and relaxed.

Independent life

Life is over

Suddenly Mr. SF refuses to eat. At his bedside (without his daughter in attendance) I discover he is sullen, withdrawn, and depressed. "Life is all over for me. . . . I want to end it all. Why can't you make me comfortable? Don't bother me with all this stuff."



I feel a quick pang of fear listening to his words. Immediately and almost as a matter of reflex I begin to banter with him, to cheer him up, to console him, to argue with him about his future. There are still things to do, life goes on . . . but I finished only a couple sentences when I realized who I was talking to — myself. I was arguing with my own fear of dying. *And* I didn't want to "fail" medically, especially so soon after beginning such an aggressive rehabilitation program. After all, I had all those orders written down, I might look foolish to the medical or nursing staff, since I obviously misjudged his inclination to live. *And* I had great affection for SF by this time. His life symbolized strength, integrity, and autonomy to me. I valued those *qualities*, and a part of me struggled not to see him as a *person* — physically so weak, dependent, and close to death.

I stood silently by his bedside for a moment, freeing myself from my own projections, fears, and worries. When I looked up I could see and hear SF clearly. He no longer appeared sullen and depressed—he was calm and steady. In response to my first few sentences he insisted, somewhat bitterly but with dignity, that he really could do *nothing* that was interesting to him, and why should he go on living?

Again, I have to center and steady myself before I can invite him to speak further about his own death.

“Do you feel this is the right time?. . . Is your family prepared? . . . Are your affairs in order? . . . How do you feel about dying? . . . What do you think about life after death? . . .”

As I talk with him, I feel a new warmth towards him. I am able to ask these questions without a sense of fear or discomfort, and without subtly suggesting the answers by the manner of my questioning. I feel free of the fears which seized me a few moments ago. I feel grateful for all the training which taught me such “standup” self-processing, internal self-awareness in the midst of outer activity.

Accepting death

SF talks for about twenty minutes in response. His life has been long and happy. He characterizes himself as free and independent until his surgery. He is ready to die, is not afraid, has his affairs in order, and thinks his family will accept his death, although he has a few doubts about his daughter's readiness. He is disgusted by his increasing weakness and loss of bladder and bowel control, and utterly repelled by having to lie in his own feces until an aide comes to clean him up. In essence he perceives that his body has become uncooperative and degrading, while his desire for independence and dignity is as fierce as ever. He is spirited in his determination to do what he wants, and depressed with his inability to bend his body to his wishes.

I agree with his assessment of his condition, and in a complete about-face, tell him that while I will not accelerate his death in any way, I will do whatever I can to make him comfortable while we wait together. He says he plans not to eat or drink anything. He will ask for pain medication if he becomes too uncomfortable, but right now he is all right. I promise him small doses of morphine if needed, and warn that it might take him two weeks to die without fluids. Is he prepared to fast for that long? He tells me he is prepared, that I needn't be concerned, except to help make him comfortable. I conclude our interview with a long handshake, telling him I respect his strong will and independence. I admire the way he has conducted his life, and is conducting his dying.

Mr. SF replies that he appreciates my care and understanding. I leave his room with a feeling of completion. I have communicated clearly at many levels with him at a crucial moment in his life. I have overcome my own difficulty in facing the death of this man who had become important to me, without projecting my own anxieties or interfering with his wishes.

Death with dignity

Things might have been very different if either of us had been unclear about our own feelings. A combination of chemo-therapy, intravenous and tube feedings might have kept SF alive, to his dismay, for many weeks.

He died fifteen days after our discussion, having fasted for nine days before requesting food and fluids. At that time he ate a small pudding and drank water. He then resumed his fast and became more withdrawn. As he became dehydrated, his speech became more labored. Twenty-four hours before he died, I visited him at his bedside. He couldn't talk, but nodded his head in response to my questions: no, he didn't want anything for pain.

As Mr. SF's death approached, his daughter was surprisingly calm. She seemed to trust both of us, and came to terms with her feelings about her father dying. We had several discussions together during this period. She spent time talking with her father, preparing herself for his death. After his death, she was tearful but able to handle preparations for the funeral and questions from relatives. She and I felt closer together for having participated in her father's dying.

In summary, I attended a dying patient at his bedside over a period of four weeks, and assisted him in maintaining his personal integrity and dignity. My awareness of my own feelings and projections enabled me to acknowledge the patient's wishes as separate and different from my own, and to support his decision to die.



Stuart Miller was educated in Comparative Literature and Modern European Languages. As professor at Berkeley, Rutgers and the State University of New York, Old Westbury, he participated in attempts to find humanistic alternatives to contemporary higher education. He has written a number of books and articles, including *Measure, Number and Weight*; *The Picaresque Novel*; *Hot Springs* and "The Return of the Soul." Currently, he is a Director of the Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine, a Senior Associate of the Psychosynthesis Institute, and an Editor of *SYNTHESIS*.



Naomi Remen is a pediatrician and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She graduated from Cornell University Medical College in 1962 and trained in Pediatrics at the Cornell-New York Hospital Medical Center. She has been Associate Director of the Ambulatory Pediatric Division at Stanford Medical Center and Director of the Pediatric In-patient Division of Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco. She is currently Supervising Medical Editor of the Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine.



Robert Belknap received his undergraduate training at Stanford and his medical degree from the University of California at San Francisco. He did his internship at the Sacramento Medical Center and two years of residency in Ambulatory and Community Medicine at U.C.S.F. He presently practices family medicine in Mill Valley, California and is on the Staff of the Institute for the Study of Humanistic Medicine.

RESOURCES

Resources is a regular feature highlighting books, journals and other means for further exploring the ideas and practical methods presented in *SYNTHESIS*. The aim is to review not only recent material, but rather to draw on useful resources whenever they originated.

The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology. Miles A. Vich, ed. P.O. Box 4437, Stanford, Calif. 94305. Semi-annual at \$10.00 per year; single copy, \$5.00.

This unique journal deals with “transpersonal values and states, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, ecstasy, mystical experience, being, essence, bliss, awe, wonder, self-actualization . . . the theories and practices of meditation . . . and related concepts, experiences and activities,” to partially quote its statement of purpose. Two issues a year have been published since 1969, and in its back numbers are to be found first publication of some of Abraham Maslow’s posthumous papers, Baba Ram Dass’ talks in Maryland and Kansas, plus papers by Charles T. Tart, Stanislav Grof, Elmer and Alyce Green, Chogyam Trungpa and numerous others. The journal asserts the transpersonal as a valid realm of human knowledge that deserves the respect of psychologists and of researchers in general. From the standpoint of the person working out guidelines for his own growth, and for professionals whose interests touch on various

aspects of the transpersonal, *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* is a pioneering contribution to the field.

Peoplemaking. Virginia Satir. Science & Behavior Books, 1972, 304 pp., \$7.95. Softcover, 1975, \$4.95.

Virginia Satir has counseled families in California for easily fifteen years. In 1965 her book *Conjoint Family Therapy* was published. It was intended for her colleagues in the helping professions. *Peoplemaking* is explicitly written for parents. It is a simple, forcefully written, how-to book—one that does not start from scratch in the familiar, “so-now-you’re-going-to-have-a-baby” fashion, but begins instead with the problems that families back themselves into over five, ten or twenty years. Her main concern is to give families ways of discovering for themselves whether or not they are communicating.

To Virginia Satir, problems are not something terrible; they are virtually the stuff of which living together is made, whether on the scale of the family or in social units of any size. On the basis of

thousands of observations, she has concluded that a “nurturing family realize(s) that problems will come along, simply because life offers them, but they will be alert to creative solutions. . . . Troubled families . . . put all their energies into the hopeless attempt to keep problems from happening; when they do happen – and, of course, they always do – these people have no resources left for solving them.” Her approach is at least as oriented towards helping people accept problems as towards solving them. The important question is whether the family is an open system which “offers choices and depends on successfully meeting reality,” or a closed one which “depends on edict and law and order and operates through force, both physically and psychologically.”

Peoplemaking is written in a warm, sturdy, continuous “you-and-I” language which is easy to read without compromising with the reader in the least. Many sentences begin, “I happen to believe . . . ,” whereupon the reader learns exactly what the author believes, and is encouraged to like it or lump it. The book is full of exercises, ranging from private ones that a person can do alone to those involving a whole family. Many have a beautiful directness and compassion, such as these to help adults understand babies’ feelings: lie on the floor and see how it feels to look up at someone; try to make your wants clear to another without speaking; sit down and let someone standing give you a pat on the head!

Peoplemaking is written for parents, but it is probably equally useful for anyone who works professionally with families or children.

The Act of Will. Roberto Assagioli, M.D. Hardcover, Viking, 1973, 278 pp., \$10. Softcover, Penguin, 1974, \$2.95.

Roberto Assagioli is the Italian doctor and psychiatrist who originated psychosynthesis, and elaborated it over the course of his long life. In *The Act of Will* he presents the essential psychosynthetic view of the vital, active personality—one that lives in and responds to the world from a stable, loving center of awareness and choice. “*Being a will* . . . is different from ‘having’ a will,” he writes, and the reader soon realizes that the will as Assagioli describes it—the central function of the personality, to which sensation, desire, emotion, imagination, thought and intuition are all related—is far from the conventional idea of the will as a kind of “elbow grease” that is definitely “had”—either by oneself or by others!

This misunderstanding is a natural result of the circumstances in which people experience themselves willing; “. . . the simplest and most frequent way in which we discover our will is through determined action.” But the will’s “proper function . . . is not to carry out the execution [of a task] directly” but to affirm and energize the body, feelings and mind as *they* work. The personal will faces in two directions—towards the outer world with an attitude of free and unhurried choice; and inward toward the Transpersonal Will, with which the personal will learns to cooperate and, gradually, to fuse. The act of will as a whole is a process of discovering the best in us, giving it form and making it an available reality to others.

SYNTHESIS

The book is balanced between theory and practice so that the exercises make Assagioli's discourse real to the reader. *The Act of Will* is sure to be of value to people who are learning to combine self-discovery and progressive inner freedom with a practical, giving outer life.

Mount Analogue. Rene Daumal. Softcover, Penguin, 1974, 120 pp., \$2.50. (Translated from French by Roger Shattuck.)

René Daumal's *Mount Analogue* was written in occupied Paris during the years leading up to the author's death in 1944. It is a story about the inward and outward experience of mountain-climbing. Witty, engaging and psychologically concise, written on two levels throughout, it is unfinished at less than a hundred pages.

An author, Théodore, who has written an article on the symbolism of the mountain, has imagined in it a special peak which might truly perform a mountain's symbolic function of "uniting Earth and Heaven." "Mt. Analogue" would have an unreachable summit, but a "base accessible to human beings as nature has made them." Three months later Théodore receives a note from one Pierre Sogol, who claims to be sure of the mountain's existence. He teaches mountain-climbing to supplement his income from "undertaking reputedly impossible inventions" ("since they know I can't do any other kind of work they pay me badly"). Sogol and Théodore gather six others and embark for the South Seas, following Sogol's elaborate but (when he explains them) perfectly understandable calculations—"regarding the problem as solved and deducing from the situation all

the logical consequences. This method has always served me well in every field."

When the expedition finds Mt. Analogue, the spiritual life stops being a metaphor and becomes the real power in the story. The strong, gentle and impassive native guides, who can survive in the distant upper regions, easily take charge, leading the party to a base camp in the foothills where they can make their first adjustments to the successively lighter air ahead of them. And here Daumal's death lets the tale drop (appropriately enough) on the threshold of a mountain whose slope rises indefinitely—already far past the frontier of conventional human self-knowledge.

Mount Analogue is a charming and more-than-intelligent little book that draws its strength from a spiritual sense of direction which first dreams of, then sights and sets out towards the higher goal.

How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. Alan Lakein. Hardcover, Peter H. Wyden, Inc., 1973. 204 pp., \$8.95. Softcover, New American Library, 1974, 160 pp., \$1.50.

Many dislike books by "efficiency experts" because the experts seem to regard speed as valuable in itself. Alan Lakein, on the other hand, is genuinely concerned with saving time rather than with necessarily increasing production. "The kind of control I am recommending," he says, "is in many ways analogous to good muscle tone. It is the sort of control over your time (and your life) that is neither too tight (i.e., compulsive, restrained, obsessive) nor too loose (i.e., apathetic, indifferent, lazy). . . . The ideal is balance."

Lakein has his clients begin by examin-

ing, not how they could do what they do faster, but whether they want to do it at all. To this end he suggests making a list of lifetime goals, then a list of goals for the next three years, and then a list of “ways I would live if I had only six months left.” The last tends to bring neglected feelings about one’s present activities into the open, where they can be integrated with the more conscious level of planning.

Lakein has a revolutionary view of that inescapable modern tool, the “To Do” list. “*Don’t Worry About Completing Your List*,” reads a boldface heading. “It’s not completing the list that counts, but making the best use of your time.” This means that you decide the relative importance to you of its items, marking them as A’s, B’s and C’s. A’s are to be done promptly

during one’s best hours for work. Among B’s one can pick and choose; and with C’s the approach is, “How terrible would it be if I didn’t do this?” Lakein unfolds a view of time effectiveness in which efficiency, a more easygoing pace, and straight procrastination all have their appropriate roles. The point is to know what you want to do and do it, instead of doing what you think you have to do and complaining that you “don’t have enough time.”

This is a valuable book for anyone seeking to use their day to move in a chosen direction. It is a compendium of the momentary problems that arise in applying the will, and of ways to skillfully move around personal obstacles when the time is inappropriate for dealing with them deeply.

Index

Absorption, of subpersonalities, 88-89

Acceptance —

- of death, case example, 159
- of feelings, case example, 71
- of subpersonalities —
 - and disidentification, 80
 - exercise for, 93-96
 - resistance to, how to handle, 79
- phase of subpersonality harmonization, 62-63, 73-74, 78-81

Ambition, working with, case example, 72

Anger —

- mobilizing against inertia, 147
- working with, case examples, 71-72

Angyal, Andras, 127-128

Anxiety, 127

Archetypes —

- feminine, 118
- masculine, 118

Assagioli, Roberto, 139

- and founding of psychosynthesis, 113
- and Freud, 113
- "A Higher View of the Man-Woman Problem," 116-123

Attention, feeds energy, 77-78

Awareness —

- experience of, 28
- grounding of, 92
- importance of in time management, 105
- in Gestalt therapy, 28

Balancing, subpersonalities, 89

Belknap, Robert —

- "A Dying Patient," case history, 156-161
- biographical sketch, 161

Blame, 63n

Block, solution at mental level, case example, 76

Body —

- disidentification from, before death, 159
- separation of, from mind and spirit in medicine, 142
- technique of talking to, case example, 154

Body image, boundaries of, 152-153

Boredom, 126

Bowditch, 19

Breakthrough, psychological, 22n

Brotherhood, 57n

Brown, George, "The Farther Reaches of Gestalt Therapy," 27-43

Buber, Martin, 30

Campbell, Joseph, 41

Case examples —

- acceptance of feelings, 71
- accepting responsibility for subpersonalities, 74
- ambition, working with, 72
- anger, working with, 71-72
- block at mental level, solution of, 76
- "chair" work in Gestalt therapy, 149
- choice and decision, evoking of, 150
- depression in illness, handling of, 157
- disidentification from subpersonalities, 68
- frustration, working with, 72
- fusion of personal and transpersonal, 88
- fusion of subpersonalities, 69, 88
- grounding insights, 92
- guided daydream, 65-71
- including subpersonalities, importance of, 58
- inertia, 147
- inner dialogue, 75-76
- integration in subpersonality harmonization, 75
- observer, use of, in therapy, 75
- peak experience in guided daydream, 70

- projection onto physician by patient, 148
- rejecting subpersonalities, 74
- repression of the sublime, 76
- shame at loss of self-control in illness, how to handle, 157
- subpersonalities interaction over time period, 151
- superconscious, value of in personal integration, 75
- synthesis in subpersonality harmonization, 76
- Case studies —
 - dying patient, 156-160
 - Gestalt therapy, 145-155
 - meaning in disease, 145-155
 - subpersonalities, 64-76, 145-155
 - weight problem, 144-155
- Catharsis, 72
 - in medicine, 142
- Center, acting from, 114
- Choice, importance of in time management, 105
- Collective unconscious, 114, 118, 131
- Community —
 - loss of sense of, 127
 - tendency toward, 126
- Compassion, 41
- Complexes, 108
- Compromise, 62
- Conflict —
 - between subpersonalities, 61, 85
 - becoming aware of, 110
 - types of solutions, 81
 - identification with, 86
 - constitutes transition to integration, 86
 - in the personality, 54
 - minimizing inner, 77
- Confluent Education, 28
- Conscious Self —
 - see “I,” “Identity,” “Observer,” “Personal Self,” “Self”
- Consciousness, 131
 - function of personal self, 114
 - of daily life, exercise, 103
- Continuity —
 - in existence, 53
 - sense of, 53
- Control, of individual by subpersonalities, 61
- Cooperation, in integration of subpersonalities, 87-88
- Coordination —
 - and objective observer, 80
 - phase of subpersonality harmonization, 62-63, 73, 82-84
- Couple, in psychosynthesis process, 121
- Core personality, makeup of, 110
- Criticism, constructive, 62n
- Crystallization in personality, cause of, 78
- Crystals, examples of synthesis, 21n
- D**avid-Neil, Alexandra, 56
- Death —
 - accepting, case example, 159
 - case study, of dying patient, 156-160
 - defiant attitude toward, 156
 - fear of, 53, 127
 - moment of acceptance of, case example, 158
 - psychological, 38
 - with dignity, 160
- Decision, as growth technique, 150
- Defense Mechanisms —
 - desacralization, 129
 - reductionism, 135
- Depression, in illness, cause and handling of, case example, 157
- Desacralization, as a defense mechanism, 129
- Desoille, Robert, 125, 126, 128, 133
 - model of psyche developed by, 130-131
- Development —
 - of the individual, 34
 - natural sequence of, 57n
 - process of, 10, 36
- Dialogue, between subpersonalities, 80
- Difficulties, energizing, 77-78
- Dignity, in dying, 160
- Directed daydream —
 - see “Guided daydream”
- Disease(s) —
 - disidentification from, 148
 - meaning in, 148
 - case study, 145-155
- Disidentification, 115
 - and transcendence, 111
 - from subpersonalities, case example, 68
 - leads to acceptance of subpersonalities, 80
 - stepping back from subpersonalities, 81
- Diversification, 109
- Drive(s), 10
 - as core of subpersonality, 111
 - to evolve, 19
 - to perfection, 14
 - biological, 14
 - psychological, 14, 113
- Dying, process of, case study, 156-160

SYNTHESIS

- E**colology, inner, in personality, 109
- Education —
confluent, 28
need for both maternal and paternal influence in, 122
of adolescents, 35
- Ego, 131
boundaries, extension of, 29
inflation and higher impulses, 135
therapy, 56
use of observer in, 81
- Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Irenaeus, 10
- Elementary particles, 15
- Empathy, and identification, 57n
- Energy —
flow increased from subpersonality work, 86
and groups, 21n
kinetic, 21n
potential, 21n
psychological, 22n
released by synthesis, 21n
systems of, 21
transfers, 21
transformations, 16
transmutation of, in personality, 60
utilization of, 22n
- Entropy —
description of, 20n
negative, 14
- Eternity, 130
- Evolution —
and random mutations, 18
and mankind, 42
- Exercises —
see “Techniques”
- Existential frustration, 12
- Existential moment, in Gestalt therapy, 28
- Existential questions, 126
- Existential vacuum, 11-12
- “Fair witness” —**
see “Observer”
- Fantappie, Luigi, 20n
- Fear —
of death, 53, 127
of knowing, 130
of our highest possibilities, 129
- Feelings —
acceptance of, case example, 71
suppression of, 100
- Feminine principle —
honoring of, 120
need for in society, 119
see also “Masculine and feminine principle”
- Femininity, higher aspects of, 120
- Field of consciousness, 114
- Fox, Sydney, 25
- Frankl, Viktor E. —
biographical sketch, 13
“The Depersonalization of Sex,” 9-13
- Freedom —
and responsibility, 13
psychological, 61
- Freud, Sigmund, 10, 113
denial of higher impulses, 135
- Frigidity, 12
- Frustration, working with, case example, 72
- Fuller, R. Buckminster, 20n
- Function, its relation to structure, 24, 25
- Functions, cultivating underdeveloped, 121
- Fusion —
of subpersonalities, 59, 88-89
case example, 69, 88
synergic effect of, 89
- G**ames of manipulation, 42
- Genetic coding, 24
- Gestalt therapy, 27-43, 80, 148
and observer, 81
“chair” work in, case example, 149
misuses of, 32
- Global culture, emerging, 123
- Great men, hostility toward, 129
- Grounding, 92, 100
of guided daydream, 76
- Groups, and psychological energy release, 21n
- Growth —
and genetic coding, 24
approaches to, 57n
fostering subpersonalities, 82
urge to, 126
- Guidance —
considerations for, 30-31, 41, 43, 56-77n, 105n
misuse of techniques in, 32
see also “Psychotherapy,” “Therapy”
- Guided daydream —
acting out resolution in, 74

- and R. Desoille, 132
- case example, 65-71
- description of, 64
- peak experience in, case example, 70
- reaction to symbol of Self in, 134
- transpersonal experiences in, 75
- used with subpersonalities, 65
- see also "Guided imagery," "Mental imagery," "Visualization"
- Guided imagery —
 - and ideal model, 76
 - its primary value as road map, 76
 - see also "Guided daydream," "Mental Imagery," "Visualization"
- Guilt, from not actualizing sublime, 135
- H**abit patterns, 108
- Hallucinogenic drugs, 23
- Happiness, and self-transcendence, 12
- Haronian, Frank —
 - biographical sketch, 136
 - "The Repression of the Sublime," 125-136
- Health and Illness, in humanistic medicine, 143-144
- Health care, 143
- Hierarchy —
 - in nature, 15
 - organizational, of the psyche, 108
- Higher impulses, 125
- Higher needs, 125
- Higher unconscious —
 - see "Superconscious"
- Higher Self —
 - see "Self"
- Holism —
 - and levels of organization, 17
 - in education, 17n
 - in psychology, 17n
 - need for in medicine, 139
- Homeostasis, 9
- Homosexuals, 119
- Humanism —
 - "A New Humanism in Medicine," 137-145
 - need for unifying theories, 140
 - resistance to, 140
- Humanistic medicine, 137-145
 - and pain, 144
 - definition of health and illness in, 143
 - groups working toward, 140n
 - importance of choice and responsibility, 144
 - nourishing healing power of patient, 152
 - principles of, 143
 - relationship between patient and professional, 144
 - role of professional in, 144
 - search for a, 137
 - see also "Medicine"
- Humanistic psychology, 139
- Humor, value of, in subpersonality work, 78
- I**, 53, 114
 - as center of synthesis, 61
 - see also "Identity," "Personal Self"
- Id, 131, 133, 134
 - danger of personifying, 132n
- Ideal, commitment to, 127
- Ideal model, technique of, 64
- Identification(s), 54-55
 - and empathy, 57n
 - false, 114
 - with a conflict, 86
 - with subpersonality
 - alternating, as a technique, 80
- Identity, 114
 - experience of, 52
 - experiencing true, 115
 - personal enhancement of, 54
 - sense of, 52
 - see also "I," "Personal Self"
- Ignorance, 25
- Illness and health in humanistic medicine, 143
- Imagery —
 - see "Guided daydream," "Guided imagery," "Mental imagery," "Visualization"
- Images, as "language" of the unconscious, 100
- Imaginative senses, 92
- Impasse, 38, 81
- Impotence, 12, 13
- Impulses —
 - higher, 125
 - recognizing higher and lower, 136
 - spiritual, 126, 127
- Inertia, case example, 147
- "I-ness" —
 - see "I," "Identity," "Personal self"
- Inferiority complex, 79
- Insights, conceptual, as a therapeutic technique, 76
- Instincts, 10, 11
- Integrated personality, 61, 63

SYNTHESIS

Integration, 58
 in Gestalt therapy, 28
 phase of subpersonality harmonization, 62-63, 84-89
 case example, 75
 see also "Subpersonalities"
Interpersonal relationships, 62n
"I-Thou" relationship, 29-30

Jonah complex, 128
Jung, Carl, 131, 133, 135

Keyserling, 56, 57n
Knowledge —
 and action synonymous, 130
 avoidance of, 130

Laws, universal, 15
Levels of organization, 14-17
 in psyche, 108
 in subpersonalities, 58, 60, 108
Life —
 ability of, to improve itself, 19
 nature of, 25
 secret of, 16
 vs. death, 16

Limitations, transcending, 110
Lorenz, Konrad, 13n
Love, 9, 10, 29
 need for, related to need for power, 83
Lower unconscious, 113
 see also "Unconscious"

Manipulation(s), 32-33
 games of, 42
 of patients, 30
Mankind, evolution of, 43
Man-Woman problem, higher view of, 116-123
Masculine and feminine principle, 118-119
 accepting both, 118
 distinct from man and woman, 119
 present in both sexes, 119
Maslow, A.H., 10, 128-130, 139, 142
Materialistic science, failure in medicine, 139
Mathematics, 16, 17
Matter, 14
 drive in living, to perfect itself, 14-26, 113

 drive to generate life, 24
Maugham, Somerset, 55
Meaning —
 in disease, case study, 145-155
 search for, 12
Meaninglessness, 11
Medicine —
 assembly line, 137
 self-knowledge in the practice of, 144
 specialization in, 137
 working with whole man, 139
 see also "Humanistic medicine"
Membrane, nature of in biology, 23
Mental imagery, 134
 see also "Guided imagery," "Guided day-dream," "Visualization"
Middle unconscious, 146
Miller, Sara Unobskey, 140, 141n
Miller, Stuart —
 "A New Humanism in Medicine," 137-145
 biographical sketch, 160
Mind, in Gestalt therapy, 37
Molière, 112
Movement, exercise with subpersonalities, 99-100
Murray, Henry A., 55

Natural selection, theory of, 18
Nature, animate and inanimate, 15
Needs —
 different from wants, 73
 in subpersonalities, 73, 79, 82-83
Negative transference, 134
Neurosis, sexual, 10, 12

Observer, 80, 100, 104, 106, 151
 attitude of, 114
 in Ego therapy, 81
 in Gestalt, 81
 in subpersonality harmonization, role of, 80-81
 in Transactional Analysis, 81
 relation of, to superconscious, 75
 use of, in therapy, case example, 75
 see also "I," "Personal self"
Opposites, in subpersonalities, 84-85
Organisms, formation of, 15-16

Organization, levels of, 14-17, 58
in subpersonalities, 58, 60, 108

Pain, meaning of, 144

Peak experience, 22n, 35, 86
case example of, 70

Perls, Frederick, 27-28
and Gestalt therapy, 29-38

Personal Identity, 53
see also "I," "Identity," "Personal self,"
"Self"

Personal psychosynthesis, 115

Personal self, 53, 114
consciousness and will, two central functions
of, 114
see also "I," "Identity," "Self"

Personality —
aspects of, 53
conflict in the, 54
diversification in the, 53, 109
integration of the, 58, 61, 63
system of, 109

Physician(s) —
authority of, 142
decline of public confidence in, 138
fear of death in, 158
idealism in, 142
power needs of, 147
resentment toward patient, 153

Physics, 25

Planetary psychosynthesis, 123

Pornography, 11

Power, personal, 42

Preconscious, 131

Primal therapy, 41

Primitive trends in psyche, 131, 132n

Programming, of the human being, 34

Promiscuity, 11

Psychoanalysis, 113
rejection of higher impulses by, 135

Psychological elements, 108

Psychosynthesis, 136, 140
and Eastern and Western approaches, 113
and Freud, 113
and Roberto Assagioli, 113
cooperation with natural process of evolu-
tion, 113
description of, 112-115
in a couple, 121

of humanity, 123
methods employed in, 115
personal and transpersonal stages, 115
recognizes uniqueness of individual, 115

Psychotherapist —
pitfalls in role of, 31
role of the, 30, 127
see also "Guidance"

Psychotherapy, 136
and importance of recognizing uniqueness
of individual, 57n
misuses of, 32
purpose of, 127
role of theory in, 32
techniques in, 105n
see also "Guidance," "Therapy"

Qualities —
available, limited by subpersonalities, 61
cultivating underdeveloped, 121
exercise for developing, 105
filtered by subpersonalities, 85
freeing from rigid formations, 111
opposites in subpersonalities, 85
transpersonal, 115

Quantum mechanics, 18

Random mutation, 18

Rebirth, experience of, 41

Recognition —
phase of subpersonality harmonization, 62-
63, 73, 77-78
exercises for, 77-78, 93-96

Reductionism, 9, 16, 142
as defense mechanism, 135

Relationships —
"I-thou," 29-30
sexual, 10-11

Remen, Naomi —
biographical sketch, 161
"Fat Self, Thin Self," 145-155

Renunciation, 134

Repression, of healthy feelings, 128

Repression of the sublime, 79n, 113, 125-136
and the "guardian of the threshold," 132
case example, 76

Resacralizing, 130

Resistance in therapy, exercise dealing with,
105n

SYNTHESIS

Responsibility —

- accepting, for subpersonalities, case example, 74
- avoidance of, 130
- linked to freedom from superego, 133
- projection onto physician by patient, case example, 148

Reverence, 25

Roles, 53-54

- and subpersonalities, 38, 54, 109
- as expressions of subpersonalities, 54
- concept in Gestalt therapy, 38
- masculine and feminine —
 - and case of George Sand and Chopin, 119
 - choice, not necessity, 117, 122
 - feminine not inferior, 120
 - not our identities, 112
 - primary of the human being, 118
 - stereotypes and prejudices, 118
 - transcending of, 119

Rolf, Ida, 31

Sacrifice, 133

Science, 14-26

- failure of materialistic science in medicine, 139
- physical, relationship to biology, 15

Self, 113, 134-135, 136

- and body, feelings, mind, 114
- Desoille's concept of, 131-132
- need for stable sense of, 127
- personal and transpersonal, 114
- reactions to symbol of, 134
- supplants superego, 132-133
- transcendence of, 9, 12, 133
- see also "Transpersonal Self"

Self-actualization, 136

- as resacralization, 130

Self-criticism, 100

- how to watch out for, 93

Self-identification, 115

Self-justification, personality tendency, 114

Self-righteousness, and higher impulses, 136

Self-transcendence, 9, 12, 133

Servan-Schreiber, Claude —

- biographical sketch, 123
- "A Higher View of the Man-Woman Problem," 116-123

Service, urge to, 126

Sex —

- depersonalization of, 9-13

desacralization of, 130

Sexual —

- aggressiveness in animals, 13n
- frigidity, 12
- impotence, 11n, 12
- neurosis, 12
- roles —

- and case of George Sand and Chopin, 119
- stereotypes and prejudices, 118

Sexuality, 10-11

Shame —

- of illness, case example, 157
- of not actualizing sublime, 135

Shapiro, Stewart, and Ego Therapy, 56, 81

Specialization, in medicine, psychological results of, 137

Speciani, Luigi, 138

Spinoza, 130

"Stepping back" —

- see "Disidentification"

Sublime —

- repression of, 125-136
- trends and primitive trends, tensions between, in psyche, 131-132
- unconscious fear of, 129

Subpersonalities, 38, 46-48, 52-89, 114

absorption of, 88-89

acceptance determined by values and self-image, 79

case example, 74

act as filters for qualities, 85

and guided daydream, 65

and roles, 38, 54, 109

balancing each other, 89

basically good, 73, 74n

case studies, 64-76, 145-155

center of, 60

clusters of, 57n

communication with, 73

comparison to organs in body, 109

competition to cooperation, 84

composition of, 108

conflicts, 61, 85, 88

becoming aware of, 110

between opposites, 85

types of solutions, 81

controlling individual, 61

core of —

basically positive, 82, 84, 110

basic urge or drive, 110

description of, 60

diagram of structure of, 60

dialogue between, 80

- disidentification from, 81
 - case example, 68
- diversity of, 54
- examples of, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 64-66, 83, 85-86, 87-89, 92, 95-96, 104, 111, 149
- exercises for working with, 93-107
- formation of opposite, 85
- fostering growth of, 82
- fusion of, 59, 88-89
 - case example, 69, 88
- giving them excess attention, 77
- how many to focus on, 78
- identification with—
 - alternating of, as a technique, 80
 - temporary, as a technique, 80
- importance of including, 58
 - case example, 58
- in opposing pairs, 84
- interrelations, exercise on, 97-98
- levels of organization in, 58, 60, 108
- limit expression of qualities, 61
- needs—
 - effect of repression of, 82
 - fulfilling, 79, 80, 82
 - outgrowing childish, 82
 - vs. wants, 73
- numbers of, 108
- only one way of looking at personality, 57n
- over time period, case example, 151
- phases of harmonization—
 - acceptance phase, 62-63, 73-74, 78-81
 - exercise for, 93-96
 - analysis of case study in terms of, 73-76
 - coordination phase, 62-63, 73, 82-84
 - exercise for, 93-96
 - distinct but not separate, 84n
 - integration phase, 62-63, 84-89
 - approaches to—
 - absorption and fusion, 88-89
 - cooperation, 87-88
 - time sharing, 87
 - case example, 75
 - continuing process, 111
 - whole being greater than sum of parts, 89
 - recognition phase, 62-63, 73, 77-78
 - exercises for, 77-78, 93-96
 - synthesis phase, 62-63
 - case example, 76
 - culmination of individual growth, 89
- positive and negative aspects of, 78, 110
- rejection of—
 - case example, 74
 - negative effects of, 79
- techniques—
 - alternating identification, 80
 - combining alternating identification and objective observer, 81
 - temporary identification, 74, 80
 - time-sharing, 62, 87
 - see also “Subpersonalities, phases of harmonization”
- top dog—under dog conflict, 38, 56, 80
- transcending their limitations, 110
- usefulness of concept, 62n
- usefulness of each, 73
- working with, 57n 93
 - agreements and compromises, 62, 83, 87
 - avoiding self-criticism, 95
 - compassionate understanding, 80
 - feeding, 83
 - finding underlying need, 83
 - freeing qualities from rigid formations, 111
 - importance of understanding, 83
 - increase in energy flow, 86
 - value of humor, 78
- Superconscious—
 - description of, 113
 - source of wisdom, 114
 - value of, in personal integration, case example, 75
 - see also “Sublime,” “Unconscious”
- Superego, 131
 - appearance in guided imagery, 132
 - as a temporary structure, 132-133
- Survival instinct, 53
- Symbols—
 - in Desoille’s system, 132
 - in guided daydream, 64
 - “language” of the unconscious, 100
- Synergic effect, in fusion of subpersonalities, 89
- Synthesis—
 - and crystals, 21n
 - Biological and psychological drive to, 14
 - energy released by, 21
 - goes beyond the personality, 89
 - needs higher order center, 60-61
 - of east and west, 113
 - of masculine and feminine, 122
 - phase of subpersonality harmonization, 62-63
 - case example, 76
 - integration with mankind and world, 89
 - pole or focus of, in psyche, 132n
 - psychological, process of, 22n
- Synthetic civilization, 122

SYNTHESIS

- Syntropy –
 - description of, 14, 20n
 - reason for difficulty of observation, 20n
- Szent-Gyorgyi, Albert, 113
 - biographical sketch, 26
 - “Drive in Living Matter to Perfect Itself,” 14-26, 126n

- T**echniques –
 - art, 97-98
 - catharsis, 72
 - for dealing with resistance in therapy, 105n
 - for developing qualities, 105
 - for increasing awareness, 103-107
 - for time management, 105
 - guided daydream, 64
 - ideal model, 64
 - movement, 99-100
 - talking to body, 154
 - “The Dance of the Many Selves,” 99-100
 - “The Door,” 93-96
 - “The Evening Review,” 103-107
 - example of use, 72
 - “The Pie,” 97-98
 - “Third chair,” 81
 - “Who Am I,” 48
 - with subpersonalities –
 - acceptance, 93-96
 - alternating identification, 80
 - combining alternating identification and objective observer, 81
 - coordination, 93-96
 - interrelations, 97-98
 - recognition, 77-78
 - temporary identification, 74, 80
 - time-sharing, 62, 87
- Theory, role of, in psychotherapy, 32
- Therapy –
 - see “Guidance,” “Psychotherapy”
- Time management, exercise for, 105
- Top dog–under dog, 38, 38n
 - conflict, 56, 56n, 80
- Traits, 108
- Transactional analysis, 56
 - use of observer in, 81
- Transcendence –
 - and avoidance of repression, 110
 - by disidentification, 111
 - drive to, 9
 - misunderstanding about, 110
 - need for, 126

- of roles, 119
- of self, 12, 133
- Transmutation of energy, in personality, 60
- Transpersonal psychology, 139
- Transpersonal Self, 63, 115
 - blend of individuality and universality, 114
 - will of, 115
 - see also “Higher Self,” “Self”

- U**nconscious –
 - communication with, 100, 131
 - higher and lower, need of therapy for both, 136
 - see also “Collective unconscious,” “Lower unconscious,” “Middle unconscious,” “Superconscious”
- Understanding, and knowledge, 17
- Uniqueness –
 - in molecular structure, 18
 - in relation to sex, 119
 - of clients, principle of psychosynthesis, 122
 - of couples, 122
 - of the individual, 56-57n, 117
- Unitive perception, 130
- Unity –
 - and diversity, 54-55, 56-57n
 - as universal pattern
 - of psyche, Desoille’s emphasis on, 131

- V**alues, 134
- Vargiu, James G. –
 - biographical sketch, 90
 - “Subpersonalities,” 52-90
- Visualization –
 - difficulties with, 92, 100
 - evoking other imaginative senses, 92
 - how to, 91-92
 - see also “Guided imagery,” “Mental imagery,” “Guided daydream”
- Void, inner, 11

- W**eight problem, case study, 145-155
- Will –
 - developing, 115
 - evoking choice and decision in medical patient, case example, 150
 - function of personal self, 114
 - of Transpersonal Self, 115
 - to live, 147

Woman, higher view of man-woman problem,
116-123

World View, distortion of and resolution, case
example, 76

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: *Charter Subscription* (begins with *SYNTHESIS 1*) Two Years \$18* One Year \$10*
Regular Subscription: (begins with current issue) Two Years \$20* One Year \$12* *Gift Subscription*: Same as Charter Subscription
*Outside U.S. — add \$1.50 per year (Canada and Mexico add \$1 per year)

REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION

SYNTHESIS
830 Woodside Road
Redwood City, California 94061

Please send me a Regular Subscription to *SYNTHESIS* beginning with the current issue.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Years at \$20* | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment Enclosed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Year at \$12* | <input type="checkbox"/> Bill me (U.S. only) |

*Outside U.S. — add \$1.50 per year (Canada and Mexico add \$1 per year)

Name

Address

City State Zip

GIFT SUBSCRIPTION

SYNTHESIS
830 Woodside Road
Redwood City, California 94061

Please enter a Gift Subscription to *SYNTHESIS* beginning with *SYNTHESIS 1*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Years at \$18* | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment Enclosed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Year at \$10* | <input type="checkbox"/> Bill me (U.S. only) |

*Outside U.S. — add \$1.50 per year (Canada and Mexico add \$1 per year)

Inscribe my gift card "From"

Gift for

Address

City State Zip

My name

Address

We are offering a special Charter Subscription rate to those readers who would like to follow the sequence of ideas presented in *SYNTHESIS* from the first issue.

CHARTER SUBSCRIPTION

SYNTHESIS
830 Woodside Road
Redwood City, California 94061

Please send me a Charter Subscription beginning with *SYNTHESIS 1* so I will have the complete set.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Years at \$18* | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment Enclosed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Year at \$10* | <input type="checkbox"/> Bill me (U.S. only) |

*Outside U.S. — add \$1.50 per year (Canada and Mexico add \$1 per year)

Name

Address

City State Zip

We are offering a special Charter Subscription rate to those readers who would like to follow the sequence of ideas presented in *SYNTHESIS* from the first issue.

CHARTER SUBSCRIPTION

SYNTHESIS
830 Woodside Road
Redwood City, California 94061

Please send me a Charter Subscription beginning with *SYNTHESIS 1* so I will have the complete set.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Years at \$18* | <input type="checkbox"/> Payment Enclosed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One Year at \$10* | <input type="checkbox"/> Bill me (U.S. only) |

*Outside U.S. — add \$1.50 per year (Canada and Mexico add \$1 per year)

Name

Address

