Ecumenical Institute 3444 Congress Parkway Chicago, Illinois 60624 February, 1973

## THE OTHER WORLD: SIGNIFICATING MYTH FOR OUR TIME

Introduc- tion: Practical Use Of The Other World	of The Other World		Other World as Myth  Other Significating Function of Myth					
	Social Renewal	The	As Myth Of Social Santifi- cation	Signifi- cant Space	Signifi- cant Time	Drama: Signifi- cant	Drama- turgical	
		a-				Relations	Mission The Order	
P 1 2	3 5	6 12	13 16	17 25	26 29	30 35	36 3	

Sec 3

R-12

PRACTICALITY AND THE OTHER WORLD 1. This paper is written in an effort to elucidate some so-called "practical" dimensions and implications of the recovery of the "Other" World." Taken literally, of course, practicality in this context is absurd. The "Other World" is itself a metaphor describing transcendent, mystery-filled ontological reality.

OTHER WORLD IS NECESSARY TO SOCIAL RENEWAL 2. But the concern over practical implications is still real. Like many other people who share something of our comprehensive social concern, we understand that the loss of the sense of human significance is the cardinal contradiction of our time. We know that social renewal is deeply intertwined with the renewal of the human spirit, and that without a recovery of our capacities to enter the "Other World", there will be no renewal of the spirit. We have even delineated the Other World into four, sixteen and sixty-four "states of being." We have intensified consciousness of the "Other World" in ourselves and in others, and the intensification has left us all far richer. But there is still a brooding question of "what now?" in all our minds.

CREATING A NEW MYTHOLOGY 3. It is tempting to speak glibly of the need to create a "new mythology" for out new era, for we know that in the past, mythology has been the framework upon which men have hung their perceptions of the Other World. Hence, "practically speaking," it is not enough simply to invent new, cute or intriguing stories with either imperative or indicative moral implications for our time, and call that a mythology. Myths have provided a screen through which men order and and interpret meaningful reality. But clearly, a mythology for our one-level uni-verse will be quite different from the kind that served the multi-story world of the Babylonians or other ancients.

RATIONALIZA-TION OF LIFE SIGNIFICANCE IS NOT ENOUGH 4. We have known for a long time that highly rational philosophical or theological analysis is not enough. Nor is historical reflection sufficient, though we are aware that history is itself a form of mythology, insofar as it informs us of how to live. The sciences for a while promised to take the place of a mythology, but that hope has faded also. Each of these possibilities failed because the human spirit is not reducible to intellectual categories.

PHENOMENO- )-LOGICAL ANALYSIS WILL BE NECESSARY IN INVENTING THE OTHER WORLD 5. What is clear through all of this is that a new mythology must come into being if the human experiment is to continue in history. And, while no single individual nor group ever finally controls such things, a new mythology will certainly have to be intentionally invented—it will not just happen along by accident. But certainly this inventing will be experienced as discovery. Indeed if we intend to have anything to do with inventing the new mythology, or if we even expect to recognize it when it is invented, then we will need to have a phenomenological understanding of how the Other World affects people.

WHY IS THE OTHER WORLD SIGNIFICANT FOR RESURGENCE? 6. To reiterate, then, there is common agreement that at least one of the keys to a renewed world will be a recovery of this Other World that we have been talking about. But why is this so? Obviously, we are not motivated in this primarily by a longing for past ages, but by awareness of acute inadequacy in our own time.

OTHER WORLD LENDS SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS WORLD 7. Fart of the answer is that the Other World lends significance to this world. What is the necessary relation between this world and the Other World that results in this something that we call "significance?"

WHAT DO MEN WANT FROM THE OTHER WORLD? 8. Let us approach the question functionally. What is it that men have to gain from experience in or of the Other World? If we ask what we want of the Other World, we tend to find the question very difficult. We have been cut off from the Other World for so long that we hardly know what to ask of it. We are like the beggar who could think of nothing more grand to ask of the King than a new pair of shoes.

PRIMARY SOUVENIR IS THE POWER TO LIVE FULLY 9. But men of the past have sought and found the power to live fully. This has been the primary "souvenir" of the experience of the Other World. Exactly what the "full life" means, however, seems to depend heavily upon the cultural context in which the Other World is experienced. For so-called "primitive" man, it included control over the natural forces of the universe--the spirits, the demons. The shaman or "witch-doctor" could control those forces to bring about healing or destruction. He gained magical power. For the Buddhist, it was the power of participation in the mystery, taking into himself some of that aura or quality, and the participation in life with a combination of full consciousness and detachment, and near absolute control over self. No one goes near the Other World without being, in some way, changed.

THE OTHER WORLD IS DANGEROUS

10. Entrance into the Other World is dangerous. Every religious tradition that points to a dimension of reality other than that immediately accessible to sense experience agrees on this point. He who does not trust the Other World finds it dangerous territory. It plays tricks on him, and sometimes even slays him. And so it does similarly to the one who perceives the Other World but says no to entering it, or to the one who enters it half-heartedly. If they return, they do so as "zombies", as those who are utterly lucid about life, but utterly hate-filled toward it. This also is common in every religious tradition. Thus, the Other World can either turn out to be heaven, or it can turn out to be hell. Like Jacob when he wrestled the angel to gain his name, sometimes the hero returns from the encounter with the Other World with a wound that remains with him until his death, though he is otherwise victorious.

OTHER WORLD TRAVELLERS ARE THE SANCTIFIED ONES il. In Christian theological tradition, the one who has entered the Other World and returned "victorious" is the sanctified one. Like Moses, he "saw God" and lived. The power that he gains is God's power, which he has received in exchange for the sacrifice of his own self-concern, his own self-interest. Sanctification does not imply that one is living in the Other World, and has the capacity to re-enter it, apparently at will.

OTHER WORLD TRAVELLER RE-TAINS THE AURA OF THE MYSTERY 12. As the one who has returned from the Other World, the sanctified one returns as the embodiment of the Mystery in human form. He has surrendered himself. He lives without problems, though he is usually deeply engaged in the activities of the world. He is detached. He has the power of his will over his own self, and he is able to work and act with an effectiveness that often appears to others as miraculous. He also may bring back with him a wound as a sign of his struggle with the powers of the Other World

SANCTIFICATION
IS INDIVIDUAL;
MYTH IS
SOCIOLOGICAL

13. Sanctification is a term used to emphasize the relationship of an individual person to the Other World. It may be the personal power to live the fulfilled life. Mythology, on the other hand, holds the expression of the relationship of society to the Other World. Or, mythology is the framework which those who are sanctified use to understand their common experience of the sanctified life. Hence, until the emergence of the concept of an individual appeared in the world, probably from the experiences and understandings derived from Persian Zoroastrian thought, it was probably not even possible to talk about a concept of sanctification.

MYTHIC CON-SCIOUSNESS PRECEDES SANCTIFICATION 14. Mythological consciousness, or the capacity to participate in the Other World through a social or communal mythology, precedes individual participation in the state of being called sanctification both historically and conceptually. Hence, our use of the concept of the "Other World" may serve as bridge between individually-oriented sanctification, and socially-oriented mythological consciousness.

PSYCHOLOGY AS A HELPFUL WAY TO INTERPRET THE OTHER WORLD FOR SECULAR-MINDED MAN

- 15. In the twentieth century, psychology has provided the mind of secular man with a convenient way of rationalizing his half-conscious awareness of the Other World. Thus it is not surprising that Carl Jung should discover other worldly states of being cropping up in the midst of his individual psychoanalysis. Nor is it surprising that the best writers on the subject of mythology find it necessary either to box their subject in as a subordinate department of sophisticated literary criticism, or else, as Joseph Campbell does, interpret the whole matter through psychological categories. For psychology is the only way secular man has had to discuss his awareness of his own consciousness.
- 16. But Campbell is not blind to the understanding that myth is a sociological category. He has stated directly in a lecture given at Northwestern University in November 1972, and indirectly

WRITERS ON MYTH NOT SOCIOLOGI-CALLY BLIND, BUT TRAPPED in various places in his writings, that the collapse of mythological consciousness is a present social block or contradiction. But he simply does not see that there is any way in which that community or social awareness can be recaptured. And so his final conclusion is essentially that each individual ought to seek out or create his own myth, for himself alone. That conclusion conditions the usefulness of everything Campbell has written on the subject.

SOCIAL, AND NOT INDIVIDUAL SANCTIFICATION

17. Our concern in this paper, however, is to describe the way the Other World operates on the sociological plane. Or, if you like, it is an attempt to write about social, and not individual sanctification. That is, we want to talk about how mythology works in phenomenological categories. What function is performed for men in society by a mythic framework that describes the Other World?

THE MYTHOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF CONVEYING SIGNIFICANCE

a sense of the significance of life and existence. A mythological system gives men a screen for distinguishing the real from the unreal. A negative example is seen in the inability of both red and black men to grasp what was happening to them when their lands were occupied by white Westerners. They simply did not comprehend this novel invasion until it was far too late to take defensive measures, because they had no place for such a novel event in their mythological screen. Initial experiences of exploitation were not "real", and therefore they accorded them no significance.

EFFECTIVE SIGNIFICATION 19. Wherever a mythological screen has been more or less effective, it has worked in all three ontological dimensions of space, time and relations. That is, it has created significant space, significant time, and significant relations for the societies that built it. Let us look at each of these.

MYTHOLOGY AND SPACE

- 20. Myth has made places and objects real for men by making them transparently part of a universal framework, that is, by making space transparent. In primitive mythology, nearly every object that a man owns or uses has "holy" or "set-apart" significance, in that the myth defines not only its uses, but its origins: that is, it gives the "origin and aim" of the object. An Australian Aboriginal knows nearly every object in his environment by personal name, and has a story that accounts for its being where it is. If he has gone on "walkabout", he is never lost. This process of signification is not so very different from the practice of blessing particular objects in Western religious practice, for instance, swords or ships. However, primitive man understood every real object to be blessed, or mythologically significant.
- 21. For man in a mythological universe, time tends to be entirely kairotic, rather than chronological. That is, each time he perform an activity of life, such as hunting, harvesting, or creating a craft object, he is not performing a single activity along with other activities. Instead, he is reduplicating a very act of the

MYTHOLOGY AND TIME gods. And in some understandings, he is not even reduplicating that act, he is participating with the forces of the universe in the original act of creation itself. Thus, mythology is not concerned with history. It is concerned with the intensification of time, not with its passage. Singular events, of course, which are subsequently incorporated into the mythological framework, become watersheds, by which periods of time are identified as "before" or "after". But it is the intensity of a particular period and not the sequence which is important.

SIGNIFICANCE GIVEN TO SPACE AND TIME THROUGH NAMING WHICH RELATES TO COSMIC CENTER 22. Thus, mythology locates both space and time in "other worlds," residences of the gods, of the natural and supernatural forces. Both space and objects, as well as time and events gain significance through the process of naming, or of identification. Significance comes through having an established place within the cosmic framework. Particularity, this-ness and that-ness, is overcome spatially by relating every object to a cosmic center. Temporal particularity, then-ness and now-ness, is overcome by relating every event to the original creation.

SIGNIFICANCE DOES NOT REQUIRE RATIONALITY 23. What becomes immediately clear once the function of myth is looked at in this way, is that significance, meaningfulness in human life, has little or nothing to do with rational apprehension. The really one and only thing that human beings require for a sense of significance is that they be in possession of some story, or some series of images, that merely suggests a cross-dimensional unity in reality. A rational comprehension or logical progression is only of secondary importance.

EXISTENTIALLY, THE CONTEXT GIVES SIGNIFI-CANCE, NOT EXPLANATION Very few people living in the Western world today could prove or demonstrate any of the major propositions of molecular physics or chemistry if they had to. Yet we all use the devices of twentieth century technology, and we have some generalized picture in our heads of how they work. The point is that the bare promise that a theory exists to explain the phenomena that surround us, is generally sufficient to permit us to relate to them effectively. Existentially, the questions of "how" or even "why" are relatively unimportant to us. What matters is that the phenomena that we experience can be put into a context that has a niche for it along with all the other familiar things of our world.

SPACIAL
SIGNIFICANCE
THROUGH THE
INTERCHANGEABILITY OF
PHYSICAL AND
SPIRITUAL
SPACE

25. From a functional standpoint, then, the other World is therefore the transcendent order of reality, the sheer existence of which is sufficient to give a sense of "significance" to this world of mundanity. It explains nothing, It gives importance to everything by exploding immediacies and universalizing particularities. And, phenomenologically, significance, or importance, is experienced in direct proportion to the breadth of context that an individual grasps.

6

PURPOSIVENESS IS NECESSARY TO HAVE SIGNIFICANCE: TEMPORAL FLOW 26. But if our spatial metaphor for describing significance or meaningfulness is "universality of context," then we need also a temporal metaphor. In order to experience significance, every individual, every community or group must experience itself as being part of a temporal flow with a beginning and an end beyond the brackets of his own experienced life. He has to be able to tell himself that he was born for some purpose other than his own immediate existence, and that the expenditure and termination of his life will be for the sake of something greater than his own existence. Put simply, to experience significance, each man must feel that his life has a purpose, an end. He must have a teleoplogy."

SIGNIFICANCE THROUGH JOURNEY PARTICIPATION 27. Mythology gives men the sense of purposiveness and temporal flow by placing him on a journey, for, intuitively, every man knows that he cannot live (as opposed to mere survival) without purpose. As Eliade points out, the way this works is that men gain purpose through the principle of cosmic or primordial repetition. Men gain significance by participation in paradigmatic reality. He repeats what the gods and/or the ancestors have done before him. Thus, he focuses on his "cosmic model", either a heroic or a divine figure, and repeats in whole or in part the life and activities of that figure.

SIDELIGHT ON SELF - TRANS-CENDENCE 28. It is significant to note that for "primitive" man, living out of an established cultural mythology, the matter of self-transcendence as we have struggled with it in dealing with sanctification, is not an issue. He has little or no choice but to transcend himself. Individualistic behavior is, a priori, socially deviant behavior. Significance comes from the precision with which one is able to reproduce the cosmic reality. But this is really not at all foreign to the experience of Western man. In times of crisis, say, for instance, in times of war or the advent of natural catastrophe, Western man experiences the ecstatic exhilaration that comes from working out of a common goal or purpose. The "London bonbing blitzes" provide the commonest cliche illustration out of World War II.

MISSION AND SIGNIFICANCE 29. The same reality, the same purpose-significance giving dynamic, is, of course, built into the whole of the Movement's conception of "mission." To say that "history and self-hood are two sides of the same coin," and "nothing less than being the Church is worth the expenditure of your life", are two ways of conveying a story that serve this function. What primitive man did not have to contend with, at least in the way that modern man must, was the necessity for self-consciously building the models in interaction with which the patterns of his life were forged.

RELATIONS AS DRAMATURGY 80. This leads us to the third ontological principle of mythology which has to do with the dimension of relations. That is, in order to experience significance, man must not only experience space in context, time in flow, but he must also experience time,

space and man, all in relation to one another. Let us call this the principle of dramaturgy.

31. As Casairer says, myth as a human dynamic seems to have existed prior to individual self-consciousness, historically speaking. It is also true, as a dynamic of human consciousness, that the sense of drama exists prior to any effort whatsoever to interpret it. Drama does not require any interpretation, to be significant. Hence, speaking from the phenomenological experience of it, myth is contentless drama, the content for which is filled in from the particularities of the human life situation. This is why most of the self-conscious attempts to create myths convey a strong impression of hollowness or inauthenticity. Authentic mythical content is always created in the process of doing dramatically.

32. A myth "happens" whenever an individual or a community performs an act out of self-conscious responsiveness or obedience to the Mystery. For it is only possible to relate positively to the Mystery of life dramaturgically or adventurously, in a way that presumes the relation of time, space and every dimension of life. When a man or community performs activity in obedience to the Mystery, that action, and consequently the actors, the stage, the props and the plot, all take on at least some of the aura of the Mystery itself.

- 33. Objects and events in myth have a strange, even earlie quality of changeability Reality itself is seen as existing on a single undifferentiated plain. Non-substantials, like rhythm and music are often treated as objects or characters that can be seen and touched. Creatures, animal or human, have interchangable forms that are altered at will, according to the direction and point of the particular myth. In mythology, the whole does not always equal the sum of its parts. All that was needed for the gods to restore Dyonisius to life, for instance, was his heart, and from this they effected a complete reconstruction of his being. In primitive black magic, or voodoo, the destruction of a person's hair or fingernail clippings affixed to a doll or effigy was considered quite sufficient to accomplish the destruction of the person himself.
- 34. To say the same in an analogous fashion, when acting out of obedience to the Mystery, one has entered the "Other World." The parameters of the real and the possible change radically. Hence once again, the drama and the actors take on the quality of the Mystery, and the actual outlines of their ersons and actions become fluid. One finds the same sorts of things in literature of mystical experience.

MYTH AS CONTENTLESS DRAMA AND INAUTHENTIC MYTH

MYTH AS DRAMATURGICAL DOING AND ACTION

UNDIFFERENTI-ATEDNESS AS A CHARACTERISTIC OF MYTHOLOGY

UNDIFFERENTI-ATEDNESS MANIFESTS MYTHICAL, DRAMATURGICAL MYSTERY THE OTHER
WORLD IN
CONTEMPORARY
LITERATURE

Consequently, the Other World is the world as we know it, 35. but with the added factor of dramaturgy. The Other World breaks into the midst of this world at any point where we sense ourselves participating in a temporal flow that is characterized by dramaturgical flow, undertaken in relation to the Mystery. The Other World breaks in whenever we sense that what we do is being "watched" -- that we are "on stage" in the presence of the Mystery. In the film "Cabaret," the other world is portrayed on the stage of the Cabaret. This is where the events in the lives of the film characters are portrayed through mythology. The stage charicatures the life events and thus intensifies the experience of them. In the John Fowles novel The Magus, the hero is made to undergo a brutal form of highly dramatic experience where at first he is permitted to live out the kind of experiences that he has daydreamed about all his life. Suddenly the drama is rudely exploded in his face. He sees then that the only drama he will ever have is the drama he creates with others willing to participate with him in that creation. Hence, Fowles has truly created a myth for modern man.

RELATION TO ORDER HISTORY 36. The crucial insights in all of this are not at all foreign to the life of the Movement. We have said for a very long time that in the act of worship, we are rehearsing the Christ drama for the sake of enacting it in the midst of daily life. We know that the only new mythology that will ever be authentic is the mythology that contemporary man invents as he stands, in his freedom, before the Mystery, his given situation, and the gift of his acceptance. And the sole purpose of his drama is to invite others to live out of their freedom through participation in the creation of the drama.

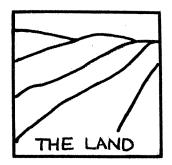
RELATION TO THE NEW RELIGIOUS MODE AND THE NEW SOCIAL VEHICLE 37. There are many other implied relations between dramaturgical mythology and the life of the Movement. The creation of the New Social Vehicle is, as it were, the creation of a new and fresh stage for the dramatic happenings of the Other-Worldly life. It offers stage props that give others new roles, or new possibilities. The New Religious Mode includes the exercises one performs to permit himself to invent his roles. Or, they are devotional and liturgical rehearsals that enable those roles to happen.

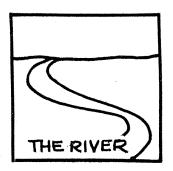
THE OTHER WORLD CHARTS 38. What then of the treks, the Other World charts, the "states of being"? How do the states of being, in particular, relate to what we have just been trying to say about dramaturgy and contentless myth? The very concept of a "state of being" has a quality of fixedness, of stability to it that seems almost antithetical to the dramaturgical, especially when a particular state is treated in isolation, as in a visit. But seen as a dramatic whole, the Other World charts provide four magnificent guides along the journey, that guard against reductionism and temporal successiveness. They define the flow of the acts and scenes, but do not determine the content of the drama.

SUMMARY

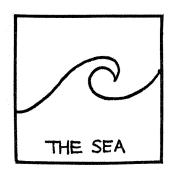
39. In summary, seen from this vantage point, the Movement and the Order become a magnificent theatrical troupe -- whose primary function is to teach its craft to all.

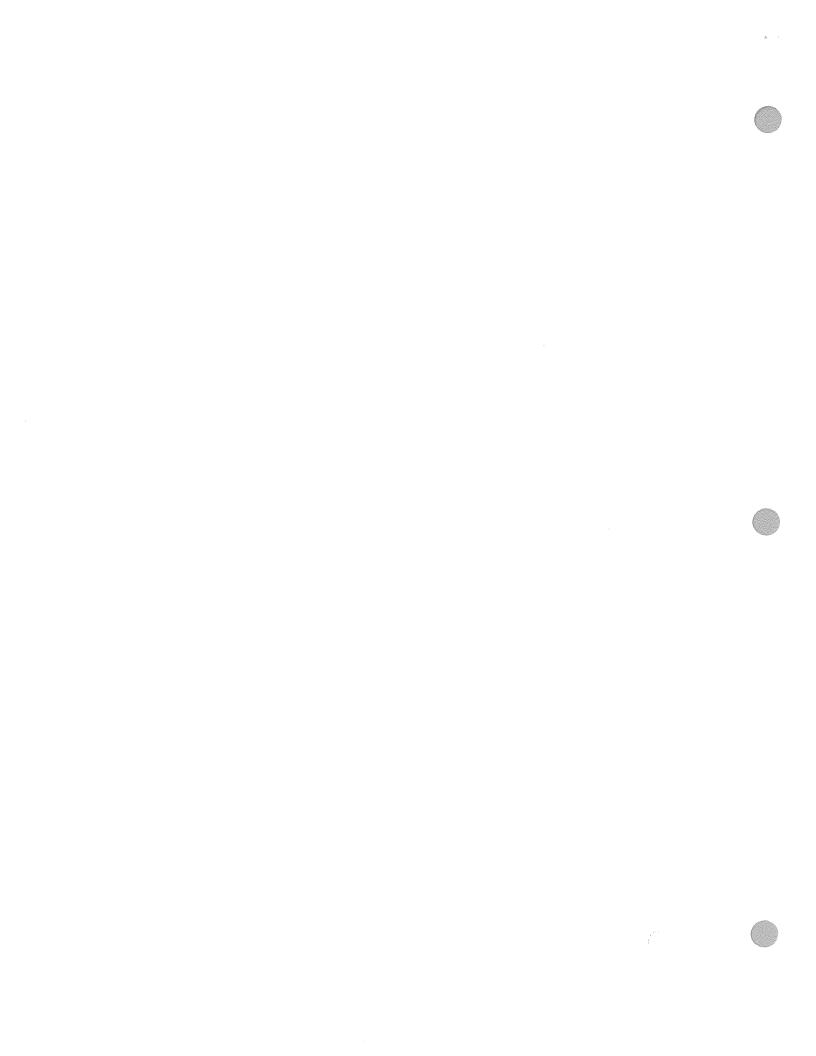
			w .y

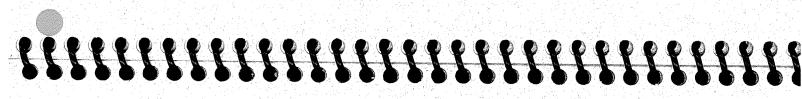










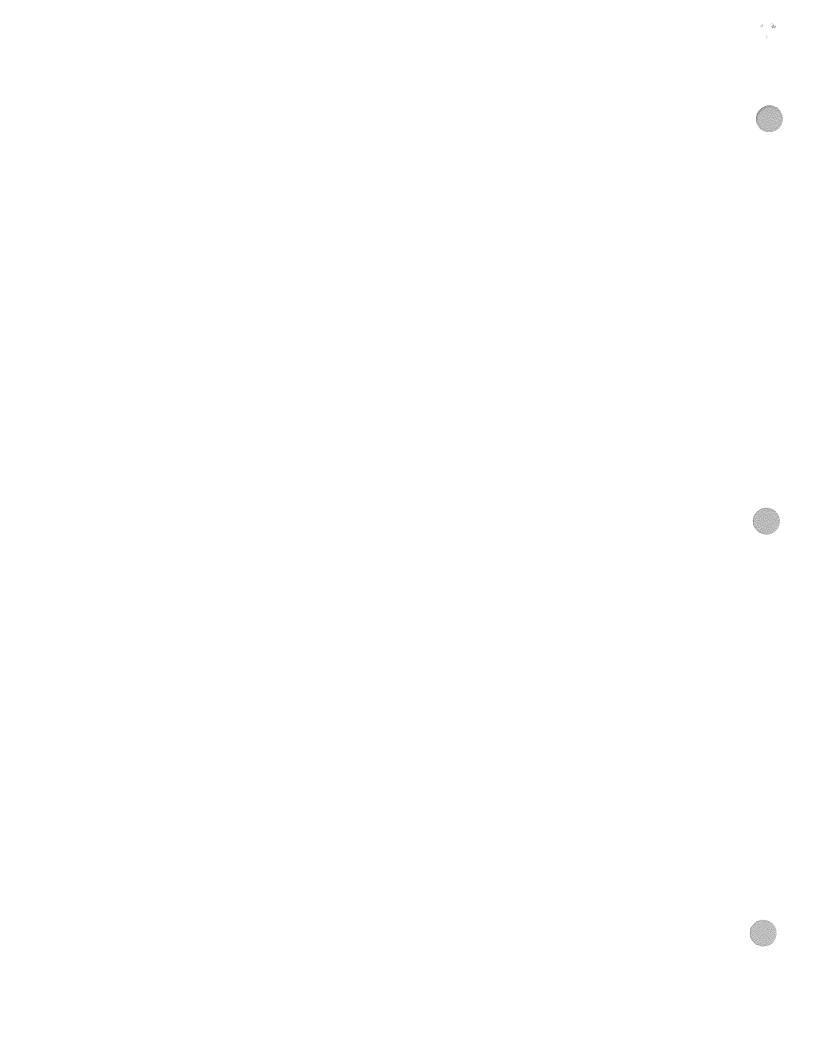


## Welcome & Introduction

A revolution in consciousness swept across the planet in the twentieth century. Local people awakened to their nationhood and individuals matured at younger and younger ages. A 13-year-old ranked in the top golfers in a recent tournament. Two-year-olds are learning to speak sentences. Teenagers are taking their lives and others' into their own hands. Consciousness is not all sun and light. It is also confusing, isolating, and baffling -- especially when social structures and forms have not yet caught up with the mystery, freedom, care and fulfillment people are embracing.

The definition of spirituality may be presumed by many. But the truth is human spirituality and human consciousness knows no bounds. Hence no labels fit. This revolution is deeper and wider than any we have known before in our human history. It is deeper. Conventional wisdom is only an aide, not a final answer. It is wider. All ages, all cultures and peoples, all creation is participating in the glories and the pain.

We are on an unprecedented journey, a journey in consciousness and a journey of inventiveness. We are creating a range of spirit practices to help us navigate through these waters. We pause to think. We meditate and pray. We move our bodies. We dance. All of these are in dialogue with a rich heritage from world cultures and religions. But each practice plumbs new depths, opens new windows and charts oceans of awareness in ways that surpass the priests and sadhus of past centuries.



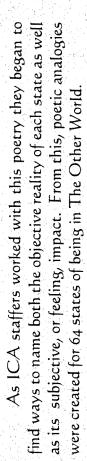
One way to map the internal life of humans is to describe spiritual states of being. Scientific analysis and dictionary initions fail to capture the richness of this inner world. Atty -- metaphor, simile and graphic stories - do a better job.

In 1972 the staff of the Institute of Cultural Affairs ated a map of the human interior universe. Literature was died. Lives were perused and consciously examined. tures were given. Workshops were done. Four areas of nan consciousness were developed. Within each area four is lor ways of experiencing consciousness] were named. The rts are amazingly holographic. Each "trek" is found in each of other treks -- mystery, freedom, care and tranquillity is in h of the four treks. In each state of being the whole spirit m is present.

The poetry of this interior landscape went something like "In each person there is:

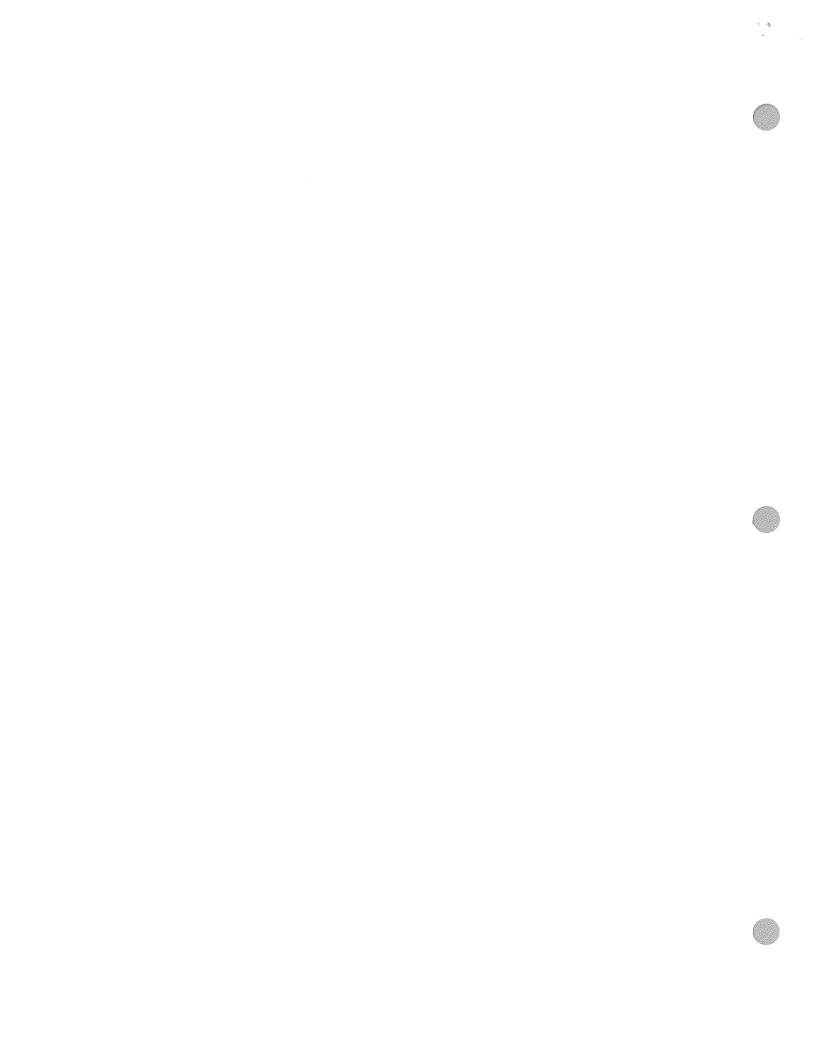
- a Land of Mystery that beckons us with fear and fascination,
- a River of Consciousness that floods our being with freedom and obligation,
- a Mountain of Care that challenges us to responsible service
- a Sea of Tranquillity that fulfills our highest aspirations and cosmic being itself."

When we are conscious of our consciousness these areas within and around us constantly. It is the Other World in midst of This World, the realm of the sacred in the ordinary Id of the day-to-day.



- In The Land of Mystery we meet the "inescapable power" and mystery of life itself. This mystery transforms and recreates all that we are.
- The River of Consciousness is our human experience of true freedom. We are free to be aware of life, being conscious of how we live, think, act, and be who we are. We are free to be inventive with our lives, inviting others to be free as well. We are free to decide what duties we will honor or not honor and what we will do with our lives.
- On The Mountain of Care we are reminded of our innate compassion for the world about us and our desire to serve it somehow. We are called to give ourselves to our world and to live out our unique purpose in this moment of history.
- The Sea of Tranquillity celebrates the realization that we can live fully as the spirit beings we are. We come to know who we are and where we stand in this world. We know meaning is everywhere in life. We find the indescribable peace and unspeakable joy of being who we are. And we discover that life itself goes on beyond us into the realm of eternity itself.

This Spirit Book invites you to explore one of these four areas: The River of Consciousness. By Friday afternoon the seven streams in the Millennium Connection conference will converge into one river. This is the realm of human freedom: the freedom of awareness, the freedom of inventiveness, the freedom



his area of the Other World provide us with exercises for our ecision and the freedom of obligation. Eight states of being ney together. The intent of this book is to make possible a quality spirit erience for each of us. So we invite you to experiment. Use book as a tool, not an answer. Explore, note what works for , risk your own intuitions and behavior to make this week a lity journey for yourself and for all of us together. Your inner ney this week is a sacred trust.

ortunity for you to reflect on your own journey in the River of Each exercise includes poetry, questions, and an asciousness by creating something new for yourself alone or hare with others. May this journey be a meaningful one for

## THE OTHER WORLD in the midst of this world

THE LAND OF MYSTERY - Human Contingency MY ULTIMATE LIMITATIONS

Humbly in my daily life - I meet the Mystery

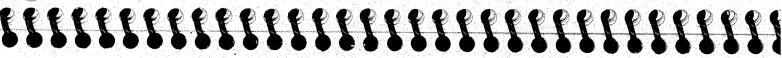
THE RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS - Human Freedom MY RADICAL AWARENESS

Waking up, I am responsible, boundlessly free - A Self

THE MOUNTAIN OF CARE - Human Passion MY INCLUSIVE SERVICE In love - I discover how I can uniquely serve this world

THE SEA OF TRANQUILITY - Human Beatitude MY ULTIMATE REALIZATION In ordinary life - I find happiness, peace and fulfillment















Ç

