

The stage of youth in the four life phases is the first, the entry, into the social process and is classically termed the "preparation". Ontologically this preparatory stage is both the moment and the perpetual recognition that one is constantly made new, that life is always an apprenticeship in which knowing and doing are an eternity of raw discovery, and that life demands detached vision and recognition of the interior depths in the same act of being. This ontological grasp of youth can be held with four characteristics which point to the function and qualities that define the preparatory stance: youth is defined by raw discovery, life apprenticeship, prophetic vision and implosive vitality.

The first delineating characteristic of these phases is that youth is defined as Raw Discoverer. That is to say, youth is impelled to quest after, seek for the knowable unknownness of his world. In any given situation in which youth finds himself, he absorbs quickly the obvious and looks for the residual new that can be discovered. It is raw discovery in that the situation is allowed to yield that which is the given new. He rearranges the given, not confined by conventional definition, his imagination allows every possible configuration of the new to emerge. The lucidity he brings is the lucidity of new-born eyes, a virginal lucidity, rather than the lucidity of experiential wisdom. It is not that he approaches a situation without presuppositions or operating images but, under the impulse of raw discovery, youth creates a fresh set of presuppositions to contain the NEW.

Another aspect of this characteristic is that he lacks no courage to seek the impossible. The possible/impossible dualism for youth does not strongly impregnate his consciousness. The impossible task is possible; the quest will be consummated. This kind of courage is there in youth because his fears are not imagined but are actual fears. He fears only the real threat. And that threat can be dealt with, worked through, handled, overcome.

The societal function of the characteristic of raw discovery is that youth signifies the courage to discover the new, to approach the unconcerned, to discern the unimagined life that constitutes every life situation. Every encounter is so animated by the new that the life struggle that emerges is the struggle to order the encounter so that it is in creative relationship with the obvious ongoingness.

In the arena of the physical, he expects himself to discover and surpass his limitations. The 10 sets of tennis, the weekends without sleep, engagement in contact sports displays his physical prowess. Youth is also the time of exploration between the sexes. It is as though one day youth experiences himself as an It; then next day he is blushingly self-conscious about the sexual OTHER. Insatiability to discover, understand, and possess the OTHER leaps into action. For the male youth, it is the "how many scalps" talk; for the female, "how many dates" talk. Not separate from this is the discovery of your own unique OTHERnes--the awe of which is both fascinating and fearfilling.

The characteristic of raw discovery, in relation to the rising adult, indicates that the mundane situation can be discovered to be unlimited in its very given; in relation to the established adult, the discoverer dramatizes



that life must always be rediscovered; to the elder phase, who tells himself that all is done, completed, youth demonstrates that life is always new, that the possibility of new discovery transcends time and space.

The malaise that is born out of this characteristic function of raw discoverer is seeking the new for the sake of the new. Hedonism of all varieties breaks loose. Cynicism about old scars allows raw discovery of the new to become an escape from affirming the mundane ongoingness so that the paradox that the quest for the new is to be found in the midst of the frailty of creatureliness breaks down and life is fragmented into the unfulfilling old and the sensual new.

The second delineating characteristic of this phase is that youth is defined as life apprentice. Operating images can be grasped as practical stylizing, wonder trainee, experimental thrust and self creator. Practical stylizing is a gathering of available data that will create a context for his own individual life style. Experiencing every encounter in life as a first brings about the wonder training during this particular period of life. All endeavors are into the unknown which gives every thrust an experimental undertaking. During the apprenticeship phase creation of self is invented and is a solitary exercise. This dynamic takes into account all elements of previous heritage and programming out of which bursts forth a unique creature which is both the invented and the inventor.

The societal function of the apprenticeship period is to participate in the perpetual inventing of the new world and appropriate learning as a life time process. The struggle within apprenticeship is forging some form of context that will receive and store the data for him as he continues to participate in all life situations.

The youth relates to the Rising Adult by exemplifying that life is always open ended and possibilities are unlimited. The operating stance of the learner holds the value that one's destiny is always on the other side of decision. The youth relates to the established adult with their thrust of illustrating that there is always the possibility of exceeding a previously made destinal decision. Relating with the elder, the youth call attention to the reality that the former's destiny can always be renewed with a new decision.

The learner encounters the physical in the arena of personal adornment. With their concern over outward apparel they are able to regulate and refine how other people are going to relate to them.

The malaise of the Life Apprentice is that he prefers to operate out of an automatically-arrived-at craftman status. There is an unwillingness to participate in the pain and struggle that constitutes that image by desiring to circumnavigate the development of skills.

The third delineating characteristic of this phase is that youth is defined as prophetic envisioner, or operates out of the propensity to create and demonstrate what is to come. The first aspect of prophetic vision is deciding to see the future without the support of well-tested presuppositions and experience.



This raw creativity in itself symbolizes the vision of the yet-to-be. Secondly, prophetic vision involves the dreaming which reinvents the entire situation by seeing it through unfettered imagination as it might be. Thirdly, it includes the questioning of the present which marshalls the ideals of the past to the task of creating the future. The fourth aspect of prophetic vision is intuition of the next 1000 years, the sense of the moon man, by which youth, disconnected from the direct experience of the old, decide to sense the way it will be. The youth stage plays the societal function of intuiting the direction which the future will take. But that this activity is picked up, society becomes sterile--unable to birth life--in the face of the new. The life struggle of the youth dynamic is to be grounded in the genuine deeps of the youth situation in which it finds itself--this is a struggle to appropriate the past and future of one's society as they are demonstrated in the present, the prophetic visioner encounters the physical as experimentation or dreaming. He struggles to recreate his physical makeup and appearance to fulfill his ideal images, as they come to him from his family and peer group. He creates new entities of himself--tennis player, lover, intellectual--with facility, always watching for and trying out what possibilities he will try out. The characteristic of prophetic vision relates to the rising adult phase by bringing to them self-consciousness of the fact that they are living out of and establishing a vision of the future, whether they would or not. To the established adult stage, the prophetic envisioner characteristic demonstrates that they can recreate the vision they have embodied. In relation to the elder dynamic, prophetic envisioner insists that his visionary wisdom be part of the glue of the emerging vision. The malaise of prophetic vision is in the refusal to ground the vision of the future in all of life. This takes the forms of grounding in rebellious, intellectualized or romantic images of the demands of the future, or of refusal to create pragmatically useful pictures of the future.

The fourth delineating characteristic of youth is the quality of the implosive vitalist. As the one who injects discontinuity, the youth dynamic illuminates the sheer fascination of the encounter with life and acts out the wildness of being. In terms of the embodiment of risk, it is the youth dynamic which holds before society the possibilities open to any situation. Youth seeks the meaning in each encounter and thus calls for every situation to be bled of its meaning. Finally, as youth brings his expectations to the concretions of life, he demands of both himself and others that a stance be lived out of. The social function of implosive vitality is that of spiritizing every situation, or dramatizing the fact that the present situation is significant. In relation to this function, the struggle to vitalize the deeps is always in tension with the struggle to continue standing as the sheer offense required. The physical dimension of implosive vitality includes the wildness of any physical contact, the glory of massive exertion and trial and the discovery of the raw symbolic power of one's physical presence, either in its strength or in refusal to conform to social norms. In relation to the rising adult, the implosive vitalist demands radical assessment of the adults new-found stance. Youth as the implosive vitalist forces the established adult to raise valid new questions about his established stance. The implosive vitalist dynamic relates to the elder by demonstrating to him that he can continue to risk before the unknown in the moment as he has risked in the past. Implosive vitality is easily perverted into a "do your own thing" artificial stance which loses the transparent power of the offense.



The overall malaise of the youth phase is based in the sociological refusal to affirm the historical past as creative and necessary and as one's own heritage. As a result of this, contemporary youth abstract themselves from any complicity in or responsibility for the present social situation. Thus, the demand to create the possibility of a particular social future vision, is reduced to sociologically irrelevant experimentation either on behalf of one's self alone, or as a cynical negation of life itself.

In conclusion, to remind once again that the life phases are not chronological determinations but are dynamics in and through which individual authenticity and corporate creativity are experienced. The dynamic function of the emerging generation (youth) role is that of dreaming dreams of the future. Whereas the established adult necessarily conserves and maintains the present and the elder enlivens the past, the youth, either self-consciously or unself-consciously lifts up the beckonings and cries of the future thus enabling the Present to be a relevant and comprehensive convergence of the past and that which is to come.

The task of the youth in relation to the established adult calls them to be freely obedient to that which is the necessary deed for all men; in so doing, it challenges the temporal idols which the established adult has breathed life into and stands in loyal opposition to the propensity of the established adult to rationally order the world with a stronghold of structures that oppress rather than release the raw creativity which demands expression for full humanness. The task of the youth in relation to the Elders is to remind him that once he was young, now he is old; that the final death is close at hand; that his physical death is a revelatory sign to the other phases and, as such, is the possibility of dramatic affirmation of the contingency of all things. Youth negates the romanticism of the elder who, in his lifelong struggle to be fully human, pretends that he shall live on forever and, finally, youth signifies that hope is to be found precisely where there is no hope.



1. The second lifetime has been imaged in one ancient society as the time of the householder or today it could be described as the time of the family--the primal establishment of the next generation. The aspects of this phase are described as the social actualizer, the ethical formulator, the foundation builder and the practical visioner. It seems that within this phase there are two primary subphases symbolically divided at the year 30.

2. ~~THE Social Actualizer~~ The first role is that of social actualizer in which his spirit decision is to locate his life in relation to society's needs and shove that life into the breach. He impells society in acting his part in the social drama as a natural challenger, a soldier, a striver for creative engagement. He is driven to answer the question of how and where to place his particular power. He is self-consciously aware of his body, its mature state and the demand to engage it creatively in the social process. He has become a rising idol to the youth, while both energizing and prodding the arrived adults and also evoking images of immortality in the on looking elder. The malaise in this role is discernable as social backfire, instead of being the thrusting power of social re-creation he becomes a noisy explosion accomplishing nothing.

3. The Ethical Formulator Another aspect of this lifetime is the social role of ethical formulator. It is in this time that one forges his unique sociological identity by also discerning needed social patterns, molding adequate structures, and articulating the ethical frame. The crucial struggle of this time is the risking what is assured, to create what is needed, inventuring to lose the inheritance to gain the new world. As the ethical formulator one is aware that society travels on his physical power during this lifetime and so he is constantly battling to use energy wisely--not to let it be eaten up nor go unspent. In relation to the other phases, the second lifetime inspires the youth for hope in a new society, it focuses and prods the politically powerful, of the next lifetime with new social issues, and provides the elder with the new data from which he must do his comprehensive contextualizing. The malaise appears in the collapse of the ethical formulator into moral innovator whose creative concern is for the sake of accomplishing "his own thing" or refusing to discern the comprehensive need and merely adopting old patterns.

4. The Foundation Builder The role of foundation builder is one of the aspects of the second lifetime. This is the time of maintaining the economic dynamic by planting one's roots, settling in, signalling responsibility by serving society as procreator. The struggle here is a question of hitting the mark with the irrevokable investment of one's life, such as choosing a spouse, locating locational thrust, producing and preparing children for society. The relationship is struggle to one's physical being here is very concretely one's capacity or incapacity for procreation and the discerning and disciplining of the necessary use of that capacity to serve society. As the foundation builder, he calls the youth to productive activity, he provides the upper adult with support troops, and calls for the elder to evaluate the past wisdom in terms of the needs of the future. Society is crippled when this phase refuses to see significance of procreative role and exploits society in defying its social cruciality therefore plunging into sensuality or in reducing the totality of life to this aspect of its role thus insulating itself within the family.

5. The Practical Visioner The final role category is that of practical visioner in which one creates and participates in disciplined experiments in



formulating his future in society. Here he crosses the transitional bridge from idealism to realism from rebellion to productivity in electing to cast his future within the given society as a structural revolutionary. His struggle in society is with the creation of operating visions broad enough to be informative, yet practical enough to be feasible. He finds himself mature of body and obliged to come to terms with his physical gifts. As demanded by the necessity of expending them in the future. He demands that youth responsibly focus their dreams, he calls the arrived adults models into question by presenting his own; and he casts the elder in the role of hoary-headed prophet. The demonic possibility is that this contextual visioning may be reduced to short-run schemes for his personal gain.

6. The Malaise. The malaise in this period can be summarized as a flight into immediacy. One aspect of this sickness is the bracketing of the past and the future by sowing one's wild oats, that is to say, by wild speculation of one's own resources and those of society. This can be illustrated by the activities of Billy Sol Estes. Another aspect avoiding the demand to invent the future is his parasitic relation to society demonstrated by his unquestioned adoption of old patterns thus hoping to reap a bountiful harvest without investing anything of his own which would mean risk. Blindly entering papa's business is an example here. Another negative response to the complexity of social demand is to reduce one's world to that of job or family or both as illustrated simplistically by t.v. family comedies i.e. Father Knows Best, Life with Father or My Three Sons.

7. Conclusion. The second life phase, or the lower middle period, is a period of struggling emergence and a digging in to the social fabric. These two aspects of this phase are the differentiating characteristics of the subphases referred to in the introduction. This phase is the wellspring and creator of authentic forms of social responsibility that is questioned by the emerging generation; grounded by the upper middle phase and spiritized by the elders. It protects the survival of all life by demanding the upper middle to integrate the new with the old to provide flexible pattern of social forms. It sustains life by providing channels of articulation and engagement for the dreams of youth. It maintains life by honoring the depth relationship to life of the elders. Alexander the Great who conquered the world before his 33rd birthday or Albert Einstein who first espoused his theories on relativity at age 26 are examples of the creative genius and power of this life phase.

## INTRODUCTION

1. The established adult life phase represents the backbone dynamic in society. It is the phase in which, with the family sent-out, a "settledness" is expected. This is the phase which is imagined in response to the phase THE ADULT. This is the time that one passes the half-century mark moving from an identification with the younger to an identification with the older. In this phase four roles are embodied. They include the Political Servant, the Present Conserver, the Social Ruler, and the Style Controller.

## POLITICAL SERVANT

2. The established adult life phase is embodied in the primary role of the political servant. In this role man is the invisible manipulator. He is the one who determines the needs of society through his firm entrenchment in the society. The dynamic of this phase operates in the planning of social structures. There is a responsiveness to the world situation and an experienced perceptiveness in the one who is in this phase. He is the practical advisor to society. He struggles to be the servant of history holding the tension between the old and the new as he orients society in terms of its possible options. His is the demand to be the serious one. He struggles to affirm the fact of an aging physical appearance and to use the dignity of that appearance to give him power in addressing any situation. As he relates to the youth he holds their vision over against the real situation. He orients the vision of the rising adult and receives the wisdom of the elder. His trap is in using his wisdom and power wantonly and toward his own druthers or in withdrawing from society into some reduced role.

## PRESENT CONSERVER

3. The second role that discloses the existence of man in established adult phase is that of the present conserver, the stronghold of the establishment. This dynamic holds and secures the present for the sake of the future. The conserver maintains the social fabric. He gives or withholds sanction upon the manifestations of the social processes. He struggles with the decisions required in the judicious regulation of the dynamics of society. He must provide the checks and encouragements for the trends of the times. He is demanded to be the settled one. He must deal with the shock of awareness of his ageing. Cuteness in his dress and custom becomes an obvious negation of his social role. He demonstrates to the youth the necessity of structural ordering. To the rising adult he provides an established pattern of engagement and to the elder he gives permission to be the elder by picking up the reins of society. He is tempted in two directions; either to become entrenched in past patterns or to turn his back on the past.

## SOCIAL RULER

4. The third aspect of the established adult phase takes place when man begins to rule over all of his social relationships. In this phase man begins to serve as the town father. The whole society rests upon this role. When changes are demanded, this is the dynamic where the alternatives are examined. The ruling dynamic is present where the direction of the total society is



determined. People over 40 and under 60 participate most in this phase in so far as actually moving society. The social ruler is the dynamic of activating the society which is being maintained and perceived by the whole established adult population. The struggle of this phase of life comes in the demand to be perfect, in the expectation that the assigned job will be completed. This is the phase in which man finds he must stand and stand, must be the one who is always there in the struggle to bring every situation off. This task comes at that point in life at which the diminishing physical stamina foretells a wanting power and the decision to operate with increasing pains and discomforts must be made. The established adult provides an image of respected authority for the youth while standing as the one who must judge the various proposals and ventures of the rising adults. The established adult earns the political scepter of the social realm from an adult who has entered the elderly phase. The less than full use of human capacities over the total society results in the pitfall of operating in a reduced social arena of understanding or in tyrannizing those with whom he comes in contact.

#### STYLE CONTROLLER

5. Finally, the established adult phase is seen as the controller of societal style. These are the scene setters of the society. This dynamic is perhaps most apparent in the process by which society selects those who will occupy the responsible positions in its institutions. The dynamic is also evidenced in the means by which the practical education of society is carried out. It is to those in this third life phase that society has entrusted the power to grant or withhold its imprimatur. The dreams and visions of the age must be brought before the established adult whose judgement is seen as the sine qua non of history. If there is any hesitation in the rendering of this decision the entire culture skips a beat and suffers irrevocable damage. The function of the style controller is to embody the goals of society. The struggle for the style controller is to come to terms with either being a failure or knowing that he has made it and seeing that that is nothing. Before this phase in life he was looking forward. Here options begin to close. He is what he is going to be. The decision to be the necessary style as required by the situation must be made in the midst of sensing tiredness, of rarely feeling rested. The established adult symbolizes the establishment to the youth and provides an image of established adulthood for the rising adult. In his relationship to the elder he gives affirmation and absolution upon the best contribution that came before him. The temptation to operate in a "We've always done it this way" pattern or to follow every new wild idea that comes along can turn this role into that of an irrelevant image bearer.

#### MALAISE

6. The malaise of the established adult life phase appears in the form of those forces which prevent the dynamics of this phase from operating. There are four categories of such forces. First, a refusal to live beyond the dynamics of the earlier life phases. This refusal is acted out by the eternal sophomore or the "youthie" style in the established span of life. The refusal to consider anything new and never taking himself seriously are other avenues of escape from this dynamic. Second, an abdication of the demands of this life phase. Man's search for more and more data and his dependency upon others



indicate such an abdication. The permissive dissipation of power which occurs in the stance of "everyone has a turn up front" is a subtle rejection of the demands of this phase. Third, a preoccupation with matters of administration that prevents authentic engagement with the dynamics of this phase. The image of man never leaving the Board Room typifies operating in a reduced social arena of life. The inclination to operate only in a manageable portion of society and to take one's self too seriously are also manifestations of this preoccupation. Fourth, the ferocious disregard of possibilities offered by engagement in this phase. This is observable in the holding on to irrelevant traditions, in the abuse of other life phases, in the stance of having life all wrapped up and in assuming the posture of the aged before his time.

#### CONCLUSION

. 7. Thus the dynamic that is held in the phase of life of the established adult is primarily that of social servant who conserves, rules and controls the style of society. In that society is maintained by preserving this wisdom of the past and giving ear to the vision of the future this phase is key in the social dynamic. As redeemer this phase stands in the now, between the opportunity for significance in the future. In the immortal words of the ancient western philosopher, Jack Crabb: "Life begins at forty".



In this life phase, man has been born three times and died three times. Now as he enters this fourth phase he is born for the fourth time and knows his next death will be the last. He will be recreated no more except in the general resurrection. The life phase of the elder begins with his gradual disengagement from life in this world and moves toward his preparation for his final death. In the midst of this phase of life, the authentic dynamic of the community elder embodies four roles:

1. The Reflective Sage
2. The Transparent Guru
3. The Renunciating Guide
4. The Dignified Exemplar

The Reflective Sage and the Dignified Exemplar are primarily relations to their culture whereas the Transparent Guru and the Renunciating Guide are relations to the mystery. Furthermore, the first of each of these categories describes the basic relationship to the culture and the mystery whereas the latter of each are the stylistic descriptions of living before culture and the mystery. In his roles and functions, the authentic dynamic of the community elder serves to enliven the past of the culture and thus breathe spirit into the whole community.

The first characteristic role of the elder in society is the Reflective Sage--the wise one who has brooded in depth upon who he is culturally and knows what must be passed on to subsequent generations. This role includes four societal functions: transmitting the heritage, communicating the origins, reflecting the experience, and dispensing the wisdom of the community. The elder as the Reflective Sage transmits the heritage of the community. His task is to reflect upon, understand, and transmit the heritage and life values of his people. He must do this at every level of society, from the family to the nation. He must interpret his heritage in the light of the universal in order that subsequent generations may know and understand the wisdom and the legacy of their heritage. Secondly, the Reflective Sage communicates the origins of his people. His task is to ground the heritage of the people in its origins so as to expose the contingency and relativity of that heritage. Thus, the elder exposes the history of his people in both its beginnings and its destiny as a relationship to the final mystery beyond every heritage and every people. Thirdly, he reflects the experience of his people. His task is to brood over the classical and revelatory events in the history of his people, and to consider the subsequent heroic cultural responses to those events. He does this so that his heritage may be continually enlivened and so that the eternally present possibility reflected in that heritage may be passed on to the next generation. Finally, the elder as the Reflective Sage dispenses the wisdom of his culture. His task is to draw together the signs of the times into an inclusive picture, and to give the advice, pass on the wisdom, and communicate the stories, symbols, and rituals created by the culture in order to free the men of his time to deal creatively with the future as it impinges on them in the present. The life struggle of the Reflective Sage is to hold the tension between the richness of his heritage and recollection and the demands of the future so as to force the meaning of the particular time in which he lives as a center for the entire historical process. The struggle to be the Reflective Sage is intensified for the elder as he experiences himself growing detached from many of his physical propensities. As his physical powers diminish he is forced away from the active life to the reflective one. Finally, as he moves toward the end of this phase, even his



mental capacity becomes clouded and his struggle to recollect intensifies. The Reflective Sage is a sign to youth in that he is singlemindedly concerned with subsequent generations. He reminds them of their responsibility to their heritage to carry on the task. In relation to the rising adults, he is a sign in that he is dependent upon their data--he depends upon them to discern accurately the signs of the times. In relation to the established adults, he releases them to action. His constant attention to the inclusive picture relieves their paralysis over the ambiguities of their responsibility. The malaise in the role of Reflective Sage is abdicated responsibility. The elder has been cut off from society. The crisis of our times have produced a future shock within him. In the midst of this situation, the elder tries to hold only to the past--escaping to childish phantasy or retreating to a past no longer related to the future. Society cannot function without the Reflective Sage who continually gives society back to itself in the form of its lively heritage. As the elder has participate existentially in every phase of life, and brooded to the bottom what it means to be a unique historical being living before the mystery, he is the only one in a position to take upon himself the role of Reflective Sage.

The second characteristic role of the elder is the Transparent Guru--he embodies the communal spirit, he is the saint who passes on the blessing, the prayerful one who hopes for the future, the religious who exposes the deeps of the life. The Transparent Guru embodies four societal functions: creating the wonder sanctifying the situation, he gives the blessing of the tribe, his presence symbolizes the presence of the ultimate, the final, in every situation. The Transparent Guru spiritizes the heritage of the people--he has lived through it all, and embodies and embraces the heritage in his own being; thus in his life and recollection he turns that past into vibrant life-giving spirit. The transparent guru guards the religious dimension--he honors the symbols, summons the spirits, and demands respect for the deeps of life. As Transparent Guru, the elder experiences the constant struggle to maintain the strength and selfhood that is required to be the spiritizer, rather than floating off toward a living death. Physically that struggle is experienced as bodily heaviness and an inability to demand of the body the rigor of engagement of earlier life phases. The elder as transparent guru reminds the youth of the preciousness of their vitality--asking of them what their life is about and at the same time standing as a constant reminder that one day their own life will end--thus demanding of them that they live their present vitality fully and in a comprehensive context. To the rising adult, the Guru function demands that they assume responsibility for their own existence--the elder affirms, generally with some amount of pride, their newly established families and reminds them that their life life is in a context of past and future--adding many insights into the value and meaning of life. The elder as Transparent Guru reminds the established adult of their own approaching age and holds them accountable for their accomplishments of their life--always being the counsellor or advisor in their struggles. To turn to talk about the malaise of the elder in the Transparent Guru dimension is to say he has become an outmoded symbol to the youth, he tries to sentimentalize his situation and demands that the adults maintain the status quo. The elder confronts the fourth death--the final death--and in that finality sees the mystery--wherever the elder looks, the dread and fascination of the enigmatic finality is present to him. Indeed, as the transparent guru, he becomes the trans-social symbol of that finality for the whole community.



The third characteristic role of the elder in society is the Renunciating Guide--the resigned one who experiences his icons destroyed, his meanings broken, his life as taken away from him, who must relate himself to the radical freedom of renounced attachments to world and things--to the final through the veil freedom of this last stage of life--the final death discerned as utter inescapable obligation to the way life is. This role includes four societal functions: portraying detachment, manifesting nonchalance, representing the absurdity, and dramatizing contingency. The elder is detached from life--forced to retire from his job, his family is dispersed to separate units, and the commanding power he once held in the practical functions of life rapidly diminish. In that detachment, the elder becomes a guide to the freedom of life itself. Nonchalance is manifest in the ability of the elder to loose himself from the anxiety of everyday demands--from the conformism of social immediacies; this is the refreshing ec-centrism of some elders in regards to social custom--the helpful nonchalance of being able to look back upon the crises of their lives and laugh, and thus enable others to live through the crises of their lives--seeing that a crisis of life does not mean the total collapse of existence. For the elder, the self-consciousness of the absurdity of life is intensely present in that the elder is acutely aware of the fact that all the strivings of life are finally for nothing. This self-consciousness of the absurdity is manifest in the occasional naughtiness that the elder would not have permitted himself at an earlier stage of life. Finally, the elder as the Renunciating Guide is the continual dramatization of the final contingency of life--he is the old one, his friends die, he experiences illnesses and pains--he is the reminder of his own death, and in that reminds every man of his death. The life struggle of the Renunciating Guide is to hold the tension between life and death--to embody within himself passion for the life that is his while he symbolizes to himself and his people the facticity of death. This is particularly apparent in terms of the whole process of aging. As his physical being ages--tiredness, weakness, dulled senses, blurred mind, his struggle is to maintain the vitality he has rather than give himself over to senility. In relation to the youth, the Renunciating Guide symbolizes final destiny reminding youth of the death within life. The Renunciating Guide is the sign to the rising adult of the futility of all human achievement--that humanness is contingent upon that which is beyond all human endeavor. The Renunciating Guide reminds the established adult of the absurdity of human accomplishments--that all the power and greatness finally will wane to impotence. The malaise of the Renunciating Guide is living death. In the midst of the isolation of this phase in the social process the elder has simply embodied death either as the foolish horse put out to pasture or as the bitter tyrant who manifests his hatred for life in every action. The role of Renunciating Guide affirms the elder life phase, it dramatizes that the takenawayness of life is the way life is, that renunciation is a self-conscious decision to give life--to give up life, that life as it is, is takenawayness, and that that takenawayness is good.

The Dignified Exemplar is the elder statesman within the community who signifies the fruition of a life lived to the fullest in every phase. The Dignified Exemplar embodies four societal functions: preserving the culture, symbolizing the tribe, eliciting confidence, and grounding the primordial. The initial function of the exemplar is the grounding of the primordial by representing and embodying the journey of man from the beginning of time; for it is



overagainst the exemplar that one is confronted with the question of the beginning of the beginning of beginnings. The second function is that of preserving the culture by supplying a context for the future through the recreation of the past from his stored wisdom and tribal memory. Thirdly the dignified exemplar symbolizes the tribe by serving as the harmonizer providing the glue that continually maintains the familial group. Finally he elicits confidence through his style born of the wealth of life experience built on his observation of and participation in struggle and strife and thereby commanding awe and respect from all he encounters by his very presence. The elder as dignified exemplar struggles to maintain his human dignity in the midst of a stage of life in which all those things which externally reminded him of his value are taken away from him. Physically the struggle is often experienced in the pain of arthritis and gout and the long and incapacitating illnesses of old age, as well as the diminishing of hearing, sight, and mental clarity. As dignified exemplar, the elder demands of youth a standard of style by providing an image of authentic human dignity and holding the youth accountable for the dissipatedness of their own life style. The elder provides for the rising adult an image of a responsible life style--a hero for them to live up to which enables them to see that it is possible to live through the crisis of their lives to a dignified old age as the pillars which imaginally frame society. In relationship to the established adult the elder role as dignified exemplar eases their fear of their own approaching age by rehearsing with them the collegiality of age and life experience. To turn then to articulate the malaise of the elder as dignified exemplar--he has become the eternal vacationer---to the youth, an exaggerated liar and a whining symbol of an outmoded past is the malaise of the role to the adults. Without the exemplar the community finds itself bereft of a model capable of illuminating the possibilities for the other life phases whereby they may measure decisions, maintain a sense of community, benefit from recounted life experience and stand present to their final destiny.

The malaise of the elder is that he has abdicated his role as Reflective Sage, Transparent Guru, Renunciating Guide, and Dignified Exemplar in relation to all life phases. Rather than authentically being the Reflective Sage, he spends his time telling reduced stories about the past and attempting to freeze the past, living on the immortality of some reduced accomplishment which gave life significance. Instead of authentically exploding life into the transparent mystery of existence as guru--the malaise of elderhood often expresses itself as the elder being an outmoded symbol to the youth--who often laugh and scoff at the elders, who try to sentimentalize the past, and a fuddy duddy to adults as the elder tries to maintain an already hollow status quo. Rather than embodying the authentic image of the Renunciating Guide, the elder often retires into isolation from the other life phases and symbolizes a living death in which he just quits--lets society go on as it pleases and forfeits any influence he might have over the direction and course of history. In lieu of authentic human dignity as an elder exemplar, the malaise that is experienced in that dimension is that the elder becomes simply the eternal vacationer--traveler--exaggerated liar and the whining symbol of an outmoded past--sun city and the third floor mahogany office irrelevances are the signs of the collapse of authenticity in the elder as exemplar.

The elder is that aspect of society which enlivens the past through a very existential confrontation with the coming end of time. The elder finds himself



ontologically concerned with the meaning of life. The elder rehearses for the youth the preciousness of the vitality of youthfulness while at the same time holding accountability to the primordial origins of existence and providing an image of human dignity out of which to live. For the adults the elder remembers the wisdom of their past heritage and enables them to use it in the task of the present while maintaining a stance of nonchalance towards those overwhelming crises of adult society--the very life of the elder constantly reminds the adults that one day their life will end. Thus the role of the elder in society is always concerned with forging those images whereby the entire future of civilization will be profoundly enriched.