

INTRODUCTION

Clarification of the Summer '72 breakthrough regarding the "Other World" remains a task of major importance for the Movement.

Persons today are turning to turning to horror movies, to novels of the exotic, and to mystery cults for a taste of the numinous. It is as if the bland mundanities of life have become distasteful, and persons are longing for a flavor of the transcendent to bring spice again into the ordinary. The Church has traditionally provided satisfaction for these longings with an extensive "Other Worldly" mythology and a wealth of rituals and symbols which pointed to a dimension of experience beyond the merely secular. But the Church married its wisdom in this area to a pre-twentieth-century cosmology, so that when the latter collapsed, so also did the former. Bultmann's essay "The New Testament and Mythology: (Kerygma and Myth, I, page 1-44) is the clearest articulation of this collapse and its theological implications. But the result of this situation in practical Christianity has been a polarization between a conservative supernaturalism on the one hand and a liberal secularism on the other. The former verges on superstition and the latter reduces symbols of the faith to trivia. Both have lost the ability to articulate and to celebrate the awesome depths of reality experienced by every man.

During the Research Assembly of 1972, the Global Spirit Movement recovered a consciousness of "The Other World" in the midst of ordinary experience and devised a set of images for articulating this consciousness in an understandable fashion. The task now is to push this imagery for rational clarification so that the reality to which it points can be further investigated. This clarification will protect the imagery from collapse into a new superstition or a new romanticism.

Two issues come immediately to mind. The first is, "What IS 'The Other World'?" It is much easier to talk about and to rehearse experiences of its "topography" than to have a clear understanding of what one is talking ABOUT; but once one has clarified the dimension of reality which he is describing, then he is free to move ahead with his description without fear of mere subjectivism. The second issue is, "What has been man's wisdom about this dimension?"

Three research papers are presented here. The first sets forth a contemporary phenomenological understanding of the Other World and suggests ways in which traditional theology has talked about this reality. The second paper traces man's ways of talking about the Other World through Western history, ending with an analysis of how present secularization has obscured this reality. The third emphasizes the social necessity of embodying a mythology which includes the dimension of reality called "the Other World." These papers should not be regarded as final results but as stimuli for informed brooding by the Movement.

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EIGHT THESES REGARDING THE OTHER WORLD

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IN EXPERIENCE

THE OTHER WORLD IN EXPERIENCE				THE OTHER WORLD, IN THEOLOGY			
I Basic Dimension of Reality	II Decisional Dimension of Self	III Valuational Dynamic of Conscious- ness	IV Experience of Fear and Fascina- tion	V Relationship as Heaven or Hell	VI Christ Event Transforma- tion	VII Perpetual Depth Journey	VIII Angelic and Demonic Forces
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THE OTHER WORLD IN EXPERIENCE

I. "The Other World" points to a dimension of reality.

1. As Bultmann notes, the world man encounters is uncanny--it has about it an element of mystery, riddle, darkness, which does not diminish with scientific investigation. "The Other World" is a poetic image pointing to this finally incomprehensible dimension of reality with which every man deals, whether consciously or unconsciously.



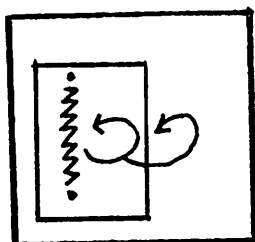
2. The ultimately puzzling nature of reality gives rise to science as well as to mythology, and it expands rather than diminishes with every scientific advance. No three good reasons or cosmic laws explain or account for the fact of man's life, either in general or in particular. Whether considered in the microcosm or the macrocosm, in the psyche or the society, in the physical or the intellectual, life remains a mystery of largely incomprehensible forces unpredictably interacting, weaving kaleidoscopic montages of sense and nonsense, meaning and absurdity, pattern and chaos throughout time and space. True and valid science both begins and ends here. Every man knows that finally he does not know, that he must finally come to terms with the unknown. The works of Loren Eiseley vividly expose this dimension of mystery and wonder in ordinary experience. He tells of a nuclear physicist who, on first discovering the reality of sub-atomic space and the illusory quality of solid matter, was unable to walk across a floor without snowshoes for fear of being swallowed up by the encompassing abyss.

3. "The Other World" is ontological. Any comprehensive schema for examining reality must necessarily include consideration of the mysteriousness of being, its finally impenetrable character which leaves its mark on all beings. "The Other World" is not peculiarly religious; it is a dimension of reality which, along with other dimensions, religion rehearses and celebrates. It is like gravity in that it is hardly ever noticed, but always present functioning as a basic presupposition for every action.

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II. "The Other World" points to a dimension of the self.

4. As Kierkegaard notes, the self is a relationship which relates itself to its relationships and in taking a relationship to its relationships, grounds itself in the transcendent. In the process of taking a relationship to one's given relationships, one is dealing with that dimension of the self pointed to with the poetic image "The Other World."

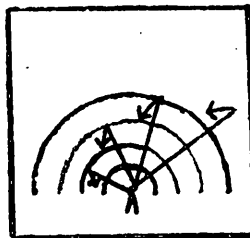


5. On a given morning, I awaken with a start to find a heavy load of work to be done. That is my immediate situation (represented by the waxy lines in the diagram) in the midst of which my identity will be created. Further, I find myself intensely irritated at the degree of expenditure required of me by the particular assignment--or, perhaps I find myself keenly exhilarated by the prospects of adventure during the day. These are emotional responses (represented by the inner arrow) to my given situation which come from my subjectivity and which may be more or less controlled by my will. But at the moment of recognizing both my given situation and my moodal response, another issue is raised: How will I use my given mood in my given situation? Will I ignore it as insignificant (stoically)? Will I attempt to excuse it or hide it as evil (satanic)? Or will I receive it as good and strategize to use it for the sake of the given task (faith)? Any one of the three options is open. The arena of the self in which this issue is raised and these decisions made is pointed to by the poetic image "The Other World." Every man operates on this level, although usually the decision is unconscious as one tacitly assumes a set of rules or priorities. In fact, however, this decision is open at every moment, and when this openness is exposed, the experience is like having one's securest foundation shaken. Everything seems to come unglued. (The outer arrow represents this last dimension.)

6. The Other World is elusive. The moment one is clear about his situations and his responses and his subsequent decisions, his clarified insight itself becomes that which demands another decision of him. It becomes that which may be used or received or rejected. The Other World thus slips from grasp at the very moment of its appearance. This phenomenon is the basis for the Church Fathers' insistence that the Other World is under the sovereignty of God alone: every effort to grasp the mystery of my being only raises new dimensions of mystery and decision with which to deal. The Mystery which forever prevents the securing of one's life by endlessly posing life-decisions is God. The experience is like pursuing the horizon: the reality is ever-visible but never attainable.

III. "The Other World" points to a dynamic of consciousness.

7. As H. Richard Niebuhr says, the self always operates within a context which provides meaning and value to his life. Furthermore, the context which one holds as primal in value exercises both a negative and positive function on all other contexts. In the context of the ultimate power and mystery of being, all that is, is relative, and all that is, is good. The manifestations of these dynamics in human consciousness are the states of being poetically designated as the "topography of the Other World."



8. Often I operate out of the context of my own whims. Occasionally, however, I give priority to the context of my family. When that happens, my own whims undergo a strange transformation: they become relatively unimportant in determining my decisions. But they become critically important as factors to be considered in determining the style with which the task of the family is to be carried out. The same is true of any broadening of contexts. When, for example, the nation assumes priority, the family becomes unimportant as a source of value and a determiner of decisions, but crucially important as part of, and means to furthering the cause of the country. When the ultimate power of being, or God, becomes one's operating context, ALL becomes both relativized AND valuable as participant in, exemplar of and instrument of that final reality. The outermost arrow represents this dynamic.

9. The Other World is in the midst of this world. The experience of consciousness of the sovereignty of radical mystery does not permit absorption and isolated contemplation. Rather, it throws one back into the midst of his situation with a transvaluation of values which includes both radical detachment and intensified engagement. The effect of this dynamic of consciousness is like that of jumping up: the higher you go, the more certain and powerful the impact on coming down.

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IV. "The Other World" is both attractive and repulsive.

10. As Otto states, the experience of that dimension of reality designated as "The Other World" is an awe-filling experience including within it elements of both fear and fascination. Those moments in which the mysterious depths of reality are disclosed confront one with the radical insecurity of all existence and the illusory character of every reference point; simultaneously they expose that which alone endures--that vague and shadowy reality which is ever-present and which alone is capable of ultimate reliance.



11. Movie-makers in our time have capitalized on this characteristic of the mysteriousness of life. Horror movies and episodes of mayhem in "ordinary" movies are commonplace. The movie-goer finds himself horrified and repelled with the violence, pain and terror portrayed on the screen. Yet he comes in droves to sit transfixed before scene after scene of gore dramatizing the radical strangeness of life in a kind of vicarious ecstasy. The spine tingles, muscles stiffen, breath shortens, adrenalin flows, and one finds oneself incredibly alert, keenly sensitive and ready to move in a moment. This experience, by no means limited to horror movies but occurring whenever the transcendent is disclosed, is appealing despite its fearsomeness. Whenever one confronts that which demolishes all his security, every ounce of his creativity is elicited, and in the midst of his terror he finds himself keenly alive.

12. The Other World is man's home. That which elicits the full vitality of man is not the mundane, trivial, manageable tasks he undertakes. In our time, men have often reduced experience to this dimension and have found it boring or deadening. But vitality occurs when one finds himself dissatisfied, insecure, threatened and literally driven to creativity. The dimension of reality called "The Other World" performs this function and is therefore the source of life, man's home.

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V. "The Other World" may be either Hell or Heaven.

13. As Tillich notes, the exposure of the whole arena of ultimate relationships and risk and uncertainty is a terrifying experience. The whole of one's life takes on a new, intensified importance. If this consciousness is received as good, it is Heaven--God-given and God-ruled forever. If, however, one relates to this final reality in distrust, disloyalty and hatred, it is Hell itself. "Hell" and "Heaven" are poetic images pointing towards one's relation to the final reality.

14. The resemblance between religious experience and psychosis has fascinated psychologists since the time of William James. In the sudden exposure to heretofore unrecognized dimensions of consciousness, all one's presuppositions are swallowed up in a re-valuation of what life is about and for. All the culturally-provided props for social and personal adjustment seem to be resting on nothing. Values swirl, certainties vanish, chaos appears, and a life-or-death struggle is imminent. Objectively, one experiences the naked questionableness of all of life. Subjectively, one experiences both total void and radical demand. The powerful responses to the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and subsequent revivalists illustrates the powerful impact of exposing to persons this recognizable but un-recognized dimension of reality.

15. Exposure of "The Other World" is dangerous. The times in history of "one-dimensionality" when either "This World" or "The Other World" is lost from consciousness are times when that experience becomes unbearable. In the Middle Ages "This World" was intolerable and persons flew to the other. In our time, "The Other World" is seen as unbearable and persons flee to this one. The exposure of the missing dimension, then, involves thrusting one into the midst of what seems to him to be Hell itself. And the one with the power to cast a soul into Hell is one to be feared. Only when one grasps this fact and faces its responsibility dare he deal publicly with this dimension of life.

VI. Jesus Christ transforms "The Other World" from Hell to Heaven

16. That which allows the self to stand before the awesome depths of life is the Word alone. Without it, he must retreat in terror. With the exposure of his estrangement and the word of acceptance, however, man can stand before all the depths and heights that exist. In other words, the Christ event not only transforms my relations and actions in the penultimate realm; it ALSO transforms my experience of life's ultimate dimension from Hell to Heaven. These are two distinguishable but inseparable dynamics of the Christ event in a person's life. Gustav Aulen discovered this dimension of the Christ event was held by the classical Church Father, and only recently de-emphasized in the Church.

17. The consciousness of that realm of open decision and mystery designated as "The Other World" often appears dark, chaotic, tumultuous, agonizing and altogether terrifying. I experience the raw demands and possibilities of my life as dread-filled, and my normal tendency is to recoil in horror. This recoil can take many forms: naivete, phariseeism, sensuality, etc. Underneath them all, and not far below the conscious level, is a deep fear of the depths of life. And this is hell itself, for it amounts to running frantically from that which is inescapable. But sometimes an occasion happens when a Word is addressed to me that THAT dimension of life is not only approved, but is a unique, unrepeatable, missionally efficacious and altogether GOOD facet of my being. At such moments the chaos and turmoil does not vanish, but it becomes transformed into Heavenly rest. The experience is that of being made one with the depths of life, or finding one's being justified. The Church has always understood this dynamic and has spoken poetically of Christ, not only as savior of this world, but ALSO as a cosmic, eschatological figure who does battle with and defeats Satan himself, thereby freeing man from Hell. The cosmic Christ engages in a cataclysmic battle with Satan himself and emerges Christus Victor in the "Other World."

18. One can now grasp why the Fathers insisted on maintaining the two natures of Christ. Save that Word reaches both elements of one's life, one is left in a state of rebellion which devastates him.

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VII. Life in "The Other World" is a perpetual depth journey.

19. As Tillich noted, exploration of the depths of life is an ongoing process. The move from addiction to surface appearance into more profound awareness of the self and of reality is never finally achieved. Man always faces new crises which challenge his assumptions, violate his expectations and demand his creativity, regardless of the perceptual level he has achieved.

20. The journey of the human consciousness from naivete to profundity has been the topic of theologians, mystics, myth-makers, poets, and philosophers from time immemorial. Abstractly, the continued development of one's experience and reflective capacities provides new data to confound one. In addition to this, however, one's insights into life's final mystery have a way of becoming themselves "un-hinged" and occasions for further probing into increasingly obscure and terrifying areas. St. John of the Cross's Dark Night of the Soul, St. Teresa's Interior Castles, and Bunyon's Pilgrim's Progress are literary expressions of this journey into consciousness, and each takes care to mark out various stops along the route. Initially, the break with appearances comes primarily as an incursion of Mystery which, when pursued, leads to radical consciousness of one's decisional capacity. When this is followed, one is confronted by strange, passionate care for all that is, and out of the frenzy of active caring comes a tranquility which exceeds comprehension and constitutes human fulfillment. The 64 "States of Being" in "The Other World" do not represent sequential progress. Nor are they static entities. Rather, they represent signposts for locating oneself in a journey that moves erratically without a fixed sequence and with varying degrees of depth.

21. Roman Catholic mythology has held the images of Purgatory to indicate the process involved in the transformation of "The Other World" from Hell of Heaven. Protestants have spurned this image, primarily because of superstitious practices surrounding it, but have pointed to the same reality with the category of "sanctification." The initial transvaluation of values comes with the Christ event, but the complete embodiment of them is a lifelong struggle.

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VIII. "The Other World" is populated by "angels" and "demons."

22. As Calvin notes, "angels" are those forces which function to manifest the mysteriousness and depths of life to men. The incursion into consciousness of strangeness of reality comes in the midst of experiences which appear from the outside--or even on later reflection--to be altogether ordinary, mundane or even trivial. Yet for the subject, they are unexplainable occasions of transparency when another dimension of reality is perceived. The imagery of "angels" and "demons" points to whatever it is--whether psychological or social forces or something else--that transforms ordinary experience into disclosure situations.

23. History texts are filled with stories of ordinary events which occasioned a major transformation in the life of the person to whom it occurred. Augustine's overhearing of a children's song--Luther's experience of a thunderstorm--Wesley's terrifying voyage through a storm at sea. In each case an "ordinary" event suddenly became an occasion which illumined one's life in great depth and intensity. Every person experiences the dynamic--whether it be in a breathtaking view of a rural landscape or a confrontation with ghetto squalor--whether in facing Nature's rawness of in meeting urban magnificence. The occasions are infinite. Every event has the potential for becoming suddenly transparent to the Other. This transformation of events from trivia to windows into reality itself is indicated mythologically as the activity of angels and demons.

24. "Angels" and "demons" are distinguished by the value given to that which is manifest. If the mysteriousness and depths of life is received as benevolent and trustworthy, the forces are considered "angelic" if, on the other hand, it seems malevolent and fearsome, the forces occasioning its perception are considered "demonic." The similarity of the disclosing function of these forces is indicated in Christian mythology with the notion that demons are rebellious or fallen angels. The struggle of the self with the issue of evaluating the "Other World" is held by the imagery of a celestial battle raging between angels and demons.

THE OTHER WORLD IN HISTORY

THE OTHER WORLD IN HISTORY

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		Myth and Prim- itive Man	Philo- sophy and the Greeks	History and the Hebrews	Myth for Jesus	Myth for the Church Fath- ers	Myth in Dia- logue with Medie- val Church	Post- Medie- val Change in Sym- bol- iza- tion	The Other World and Secu- lar- iza- tion	Spa- tial: Resac- ral- iza- tion	Temp- oral: Myth of Pro- gress		
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THE OTHER WORLD IN HISTORY

1. The Other World has been an important symbol in Western civilization. As such, its transformations have been closely tied to developments in Western history; at times affecting history in critical ways, and at other times being affected by the historical situation. This paper is a consideration of the symbolic nature and function of the Other World and an analysis of its role in Western history.

I. THE OTHER WORLD: SYMBOL AND EXPERIENCE.

2. Man shows up in a field of experience which includes God, the world, society and himself. He experiences this community of being by virtue of his participation in it, yet precisely because he exists as a partner in the community, he cannot comprehend the whole. There is no vantage point outside of existence from which man can comfortably catalogue the elements which constitute his field of experience. Furthermore, man cannot sit back and contemplate his ignorance of the whole with detached irony, because it is not complete ignorance. His existence itself condemns man to explore the field of experience in which he participates. And in experience he confronts the final mysteries of coming-to-be and passing-from-being, realizes his participation in them, and is thrown right back on the yawning no-thing at the center of his being. And out of this dreadful experience, man births the symbol--an image that points to and holds him before his experience of himself and his participation in being. This is not a leisurely speculation, nor a poetic musing--it is a mad grasp at survival, an act of desperation. Symbolization is thus the essence of humanness.

3. The forging of a symbol does not alter the givenness of human being--the empirical realities of man's existence are unchanged. But the act of symbolization does change man's awareness of the field of experience. The symbol shapes man's experience, and the new experiences themselves call the symbol into question as an adequate articulation of them. And in every case, it will be both adequate, in that it is a product of the depth experience of participation in being, and inadequate in that it does not comprehend the community of Being itself. Man then is faced with the choice--and again it is an existential situation, not an abstract philosophizing--of living out of symbols that destroy his experience by closing him off from its empirical fullness, or once more wrestling with being itself for the meaning of his own existence.

4. In the sense of the above remarks, when man forges symbol he experiences the transparency of this world and articulates that experience by means of images and concepts which illuminate his concrete ongoingness. Or, symbolizing, per se, is expressing the fundamental human experience of the Other World in the midst of this world, to the extent that this is true, the recovery of the Other World is a continuing dynamic in human history. Indeed, it is the theme of history itself.

II. THE OTHER WORLD AND THE BIRTH OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

5. Three basic kinds of symbolizations of the Other World lie at the roots of Western civilization: myth, as the self-understanding of primitive man; philosophy, as the way of life developed as the ideal of Greek civilization; and history, as destinal revelation, emerging in the self-consciousness of the Hebraic people. These three forms were synthesized and transformed in early Christian thought to shape the main-streams of Western culture.

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6. Primitive man articulates his self-awareness by means of the myth. He experiences the world as a unified whole, expressed in myth as a magical fluidity of forms--Zeus becomes a bull, Hercules a god, people turn into trees, and so forth. The Other World permeates this world, suffusing it with mystery. Myth as a mode of consciousness is a compact symbolization, where one perceives the two worlds as one fundamental reality.

7. The mythic expression of time illustrates this kind of experience. Myths of the eternal return point to the primordial as an aspect of the present--the Creation and re-enactment of creation, on which the Creation depends. The cyclical understanding of history keeps time from being perceived as a unique dimension of consciousness. Space is the fundamental category of experience--existence is ordered around the places of hieratic importance (the Omphalos) and interior journey is expressed as external travel in space, as in the Odyssey.

8. In many ways, for primitive man, the Other World is this world and this world is the Other World. The paradigmatic symbolization of the Other World has not yet been articulated out of the compact "I-Thou" encounter of primitive man with God, his world and society. Primitive man experiences the order of being as a "Thou" in Buber's sense, to which he takes an existential personal relationship, rather than an "It" to be perceived and manipulated. The fragility of this awareness is seen in the collapse of primitive self-understanding when exposed to modern civilization. But it is important to note that myth related man successfully to his experience for far longer than has civilizational symbolization and that the break with myth was a slow, painful process. Furthermore, the break was not a clean one--myth continued to operate as a mode of consciousness in civilization and it continues to operate, though in a complicated manner, today.

9. Myth as we have been discussing it thus far is oral rather than written. By the time myths are written down, society has already passed to the early stages of civilization and the experiences of such a great transition present the myth-writer like Homer or Hesiod with peculiar problems. Hesiod for example, faced with a wealth of conflicting and contradictory myths, many of which pointed to the matriarchal origins of Greek pre-civilization, organized the mythic materials in his Theogony into a generational story ending with the ascendancy of Zeus and rationalizing the patriarchal order of archaic Greece. To summarize, civilization is based on the positing of tensions in the field of experience--self and society, male and female, Creator and creature, and so forth--so that the "I-Thou" primitive relationship to the universe is broken, and the myth resting upon that relationship becomes at first problematic as in the Hesiod, then sterile, promoting radical reactions like the Dionysiac rites, and finally, as Xenophon saw, downright inappropriate.

10. In Greece, the experience of the polis as it underwent severe social change in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. revealed the inadequacy of the myth as illuminating principle and created the experiential context for a new symbolization of order--philosophy. The Other World was conceptually articulated out of this experience of this world into the symbolization, paradigmatic for the Greek, which was called "form."

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11. The "discovery of the mind" is one way of talking about this transformation of consciousness--man experiences something within him which participates in a special way in the community of being. An emphasis on the individual personality and character broke through the primitive unified consciousness--in Homer there is no word for either "body" or "soul"!--in the lyric poets (eg., Sappho,) and developed in the tragedians (eg., Sophocles and Aeschylus) into a keen awareness of the depths of human existence. In Aeschylus' The Suppliants, for example, a political and ethical struggle leads the Athenian king to the discovery of his own soul, a discovery treated with the utmost awe.

12. For centuries, the pre-Socratic philosophers had been reflecting on the problem of "the one and the many"; is reality fundamentally diverse as it seems to be in my experience, or is it somehow unified? Socrates turned philosophical reflection to the ethical problems posed by the new discovery of the depths. These two streams merged in Plato and Aristotle to produce the symbolization which is called "philosophy," pointing to the attainment of man's soul to God. Plato's symbol of the "World of Forms" gives special emphasis to the transcendent or Other World pole of experience, while Aristotle's insistence on the existence of the universal only in the particular places his downbeat on "in the midst of this world." For both of them, philosophy is a way of life in which one attempts to turn away from confusion and malaise which results the search for seeking normative reality in the convention of social opinion which produces only confusion and malaise, and turns to focusing on the true order of being itself.

13. Philosophy did not halt the decay of the polis, and the loss of the experience which engendered the symbolizations of Plato and Aristotle led to their "opaquing" in the Hellenistic era into systems of rival dogmas, like Stoicism, Cynicism, materialism, and so forth.

14. At roughly the same time a break with myth also occurred though the Hebraic symbolization of history as an articulation of the experience of Being revealing itself to a people and creating its destiny. In their desert experience the Hebrews broke through the cyclical understanding of time, which had persisted even in Greek philosophy, to a wholly new awareness of historical direction.

15. Many of the Near-Eastern peoples had assumed a single divinity, so the point of the Hebraic discovery was not that it was of monotheism but of radical monotheism. Summodeism--fitting the gods into a pantheon based on political exigencies--was not an option for the Hebrews, though the Prophets were clear that it presented a constant temptation. God for the Hebrews was the one living God, revealed to them in the awesome formulation: "I shall be your God and you shall be my people." Yahweh revealed himself to them as awful and majestic, and yet in some way "theirs." As his people they perceived themselves to be the channels by which the Other World becomes manifest in the midst of this world. They had a destiny which gave them a past.

16. This symbolization of the Other World was in tension with the historical reality of political defeat by other nations, which led, toward the beginning of the Christian era, to a provincial legalistic pietism. The monotheistic symbol went opaque, ceasing to illuminate the openness of human experience and instead immanentizing the Other World into utopian socialism and moralism, as Gogarten describes in Christ the Crisis.

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III. THE OTHER WORLD AS A CHRISTIAN SYMBOLIZATION

17. It will be noted that by the beginning of the Christian era all three symbolizations of the Other World--myth, philosophy and history--had cased to freight experience, though the symbols in their opaque form were by no means out of existence. In the Roman Imperial symbolization, in Eastern mystery cults and in neo-Platonism, elements of all three symbolizations survived in varying mixtures. Into this world came Jesus, preaching that the "Kingdom of God is at hand!" This-worldly pietism was exposed, sterile dogmatomachy superseded and empty mythologies toppled.

18. Jesus turned from this world to the Other by his radical insistence on the sovereignty of God alone. this world is transcended by the ordering of life to the eschaton--symbol of final reality--resulting in the radical transvaluation of "to die is to live". At the same time, Jesus insisted that the Kingdom is here and now, that radical orientation to the ground of being implies taking responsibility for this world.

19. In articulating its experience of Jesus, the early Church opened the opaque symbolizations of the myth, philosophy and history while yet insisting that the Christ happening was a unique history-changing event, available to everyone for all time.. The empirical existence of the Church moved from the tenuous and dangerous early years to the final triumph over the rival Imperial symbolization in the fourth century. But political supremacy was itself an experience demanding further articulation of the New Testament symbols.

20. In the City of God, Augustine formulated the paradigmatic Christian symbolization of the Other World as a theology of history. The City of God is above and beyond history and the City of Man is in history: the Church faces the Other World and holds human history present to its ground in divine Being by pointing to the Christ, Redeemer of the World. Fundamentally, this same formulation was reiterated by Aquinas seven centuries later, though he used ontological or being categories rather than history or anthropology categories. Using the rediscovered Aristotelian conceptual framework, Aquinas connected the Other World and this one in terms of the transcendence of God as Creator of the world and His immanence in its being as its sustainer. The forging of these conceptual tools of transcendence and immanence mark one of Aquinas' most striking achievements.

21. At about the time Aquinas was erecting the monumental intellectual edifice of the Summa, the Gothic cathedral was rising majestically above the towns of Europe providing the popular artistic expression of the Thomistic formulation of Christian other-worldliness. Flying buttresses firmly but gracefully anchored the structure to this world, permitting it to soar to the heights symbolic of the Other in a way no other culture had imagined, let alone achieved. Similarly, Dante, in the Divine Comedy, used the poetry of the new Italian vernacular to translate the Thomistic conceptual symbolization into the fullest expression of Christian myth.

22. These symbolizations of the Other World were created by and in turn shaped the experience of medieval man, or, to put it another way, they existed in tension with the empirical reality of the times. And the times for the common man were exceedingly oppressive. Thus, despite the fact that the more or less official theology was the inclusive statement, "Other World in the midst of this world," the great majority of men broke the tension by taking the symbolization literally to mean

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spatial locations. Heaven and Hell were physical "places" quite apart from this "place", the vale of tears. Popular millennialism reflected this loss of transparency.

23. When the Church took responsibility for Western Civilization after the collapse of the Empire, it held before itself and society the symbol of the City of God. In practice, though, the Church often identified itself institutionally, or in the institution of the Papacy, as the City of God, thus effectively stripping the symbolization of its transparency. The Other World was often a rationalization for what in effect amounted to absorption into this world.

24. It was precisely this danger that awakened the monastic movement. By withdrawing from this world, the successive monastic orders sought to keep alive the Other World in the midst of this world. Whereas the Papacy cut itself off from the Other World by the late Middle Ages, monasticism often ended in severing the connection to this world by identifying itself institutionally as above this world.

25. Another empirical experience in tension with the Other World was the result of the Church's successful conversion of Europe. Pagan mythologies were dealt with in a variety of ways by the Church, but, especially in the popular mind, pagan myth never totally disappeared. In *Beowulf*, for example, there is a tension between Christian and Nordic myth. Similarly, the cult of the saints and the Virgin were in constant danger of collapsing the Other World into this one. Finally, the institutional Church itself became imbued with pagan myth when it appropriated the recovered classical mythology during the Renaissance, as the expensive and splendid restoration of the Vatican indicated.

26. It is interesting to note that it was at precisely these points that the Reformers attacked the Roman Church. Luther's task, in this sense, was the recovery of the Other World in the midst of this world. This recovery, however, coincided with the triumph of secularization and was absorbed by it: vocation, for example, in the theology of Luther and Calvin represented an authentic recovery of Christian other-worldliness, yet quickly was collapsed into a reduced rationalization of burgeoning capitalism.

27. The tension of the "Other World in the midst of this world" symbol was broken toward the end of the Middle Ages in the institutional church and replaced with the symbolization of the "two-story universe." What was involved here was not just an image-shift but a transformation in the process of symbolization itself, which is implied by the concept of allegory. In allegory an abstract notion is translated into images with univocal meanings; or, there is a one-to-one correspondence between this world and the Other. You know you are dealing with allegory as opposed to symbolism when you have something that is utterly unintelligible without a key and is totally intelligible with it. It smacks of gnosticism. When symbols continue to operate after they have gone opaque, you have allegory.

28. Along with the tendency toward allegorization of the Other World in the late Middle Ages went an upsurge in asceticism. As a religious exercise asceticism intensifies the experience of the Other World in the midst of this world, as in Saint Francis. When the tension between the two worlds was obliterated, asceticism was

THE OTHER WORLD IN HISTORY

denying this world and thus back-handedly cutting the ascetic off from the Other World. The flagellants, for example, in their frantic attempt to leave this world behind succeeded only in radically affirming this world in its opaqueness. In its extreme manifestation, one-worldly asceticism passes into psychopathology: Campbell discusses the issue as the difference between "essential" and "paranoid" schizophrenia.

29. Similarly, forms of mysticism appeared which purported to spell out existence-transforming models gained by the mystic, e.g., Joachim of Flora. The final silence characteristic of classical mysticism, as in Aquinas' "It's all straw", is replaced with codebooks and cabalas. Thus the symbols of the deeps and the Other World came to point to substantive storehouses of worldly wisdom and the existence-illuminating symbolism tended to degenerate into occultism.

30. Finally, when the Other World is cut off ontologically from this world the symbolic contacts of superstition are established in the popular mind. In the Middle Ages this world became peopled with good and bad denizens of the Other World, powers demanding fear and propitiation, which need was met by the countless witches and warlocks and other magical manipulators who proliferated. It should be noted that this magical disruption of the tension in the symbol, "the Other World in the midst of this world," became especially pronounced only after the mass psychosis induced by the Black Death. The Middle Ages on the whole were no more superstitious than any other era.

IV. THE OTHER WORLD GOES INTO HIDING

31. Secularization is the essential characteristic of modern history and secularization is a relationship to the Other World. Modern experience denied the adequacy of the two-story universe symbolization of the Other World, and the response was to discard the symbol and confine experience to this world. But the key to the phenomenon of secularization is that the symbols of transcendence which had been birthed in experience of the Other World were reintroduced and applied to this world and, torn from their transcendent experiential context, the symbols went opaque.

32. Of course, secularization was fought tooth and nail by the churches right into the twentieth century. Resistance to secularization on the symbolic level while capitulating to it existentially, as happened in Europe and America in the 18th and 19th centuries, produced fundamentalism. This involves hermetically sealing off the symbols of transcendence from impure contact with this world--the world of everyday experience. As Kierkegaard pointed out in his critique of 19th century "Christendom" this results in a kind of moralistic schizophrenia which makes a mockery of Christianity. The other response of some churchmen--liberalism--attempted to reconcile the Church to secularism, but usually at the expense of the symbols of transcendence. The point is that both parties had hidden the Other World by cutting it loose from its experiential source.

33. However, the predominant trend in modern history has been the embracing of secularization--the opaque plane of this world was defined as the only field of experience. Transcendence was not perceived as "real". By denying that the Other World has an experiential reference, modern culture has cut man off from a part

THE OTHER WORLD IN HISTORY

of his experience, from its wholeness. It has denied that man participates in Being itself. In this sense, secularism is a decapitation of Being from the field of experience.

34. The nature of this process was correctly identified and named by Nietzsche, as the process was nearing its end point in the late 19th century, in the statement "God is dead." Western culture had lost its ground at the very moment that it was conquering the entire world. New symbols that would hold man authentically before his experience were called for. This was the great task of Zarathustra--culture-creation, or the forging of symbols that would ground culture in its transcendental source in being.

35. Examining the historical process of secularization, one sees two related dynamics working to "hide" the Other World--the resacralization of this world and the immanentization of the eschaton, relating to space and time respectively. Science, by creating a methodology for the effective manipulation of experience in this world, provided the epistemological basis for both of these symbolizations.

36. One of the chief cultural differences between Judaeo-Christian and primitive culture has been the de-divinization of this world. Now in the early modern period this world was resacralized by the transference of symbols of transcendence to the immanent field of experience. In terms of spatial imagery, the Other World became for modern man the "New World"--the ever receding frontier holding the promise of existence-transforming regeneration and worldly success. From the Pilgrims to the astronauts, the Kingdom of God has been located programmatically within this world.

37. Another striking resacralization of this world occurred in political thought and experience when the state became the focus of significant human meaning. Theoretically, this was worked out by Machiavelli and especially Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century. Historically, this is described as nationalism, or, in its extreme 20th century variant, as totalitarianism.

38. The Baroque style of art is a visual expression of this resacralization of the world: the light pouring through the ceiling of the Baroque is the light of this world--Newton's light and the light of the classicist painters--having as its experiential referent not a transcendent relationship to God but a relationship to Louis XIV--a light illuminating not the mystery of existence but chubby cavorting angels.

39. In secularization, time is dealt with symbolically by the immanentization of the eschaton. That is, the symbol of the eschaton as a description of an experience of the transcendent ground of being is collapsed to a programmatic goal. History becomes the source of meaning, rather than receiving its meaning from the experience of being. The millenium becomes a utopia--a realizable perfect institution.

40. The Enlightenment embodied this immanentization of the eschaton; indeed, it has been called by some historians an attempt to build the City of God on Earth. The process receives its clearest articulation in the symbols, "philosophy of history," elaborated by Hegel, and "revolution," developed chiefly by Marx. In both thinkers history fully reveals its meaning and reaches its end point on this earth, though for Hegel the process is one of knowing while for Marx it is one of doing. Marx and Hegel both transfer the symbolization of the Other World as eschaton to the end term

of an immanent dialectical process. The popular expression of this immanentization was the 19th century myth of inevitable progress.

41. The bankruptcy of modern secularized symbolizations like the above became manifest to most Western thinkers after the horrors of the First World War. Yet one last terrible attempt to restructure existence according to the opaque symbols of pietistic this-worldliness was made in Germany between 1933 and 1945. Space was resacralized as the Fatherland; the eschaton immanentized as the Thousand-Year Reich. Aspects of reality that did not fit the myth were ignored or viciously destroyed. In the war that defeated Germany, the great secular Western myths were demolished, leaving a new world and the need for a new mythology of humanness.

V. CONCLUSION: THE RECOVERY OF THE OTHER WORLD

42. In summary, we have examined the nature of symbolization to try and define the Other World as a symbol of the wholeness of being in which every man participates and which he can experience in the mundanity of his existence. It is the symbolization of such experiences in such a way that they illuminate the experience of mankind that makes and changes history. To put this sociologically, history is the transformation of structures and the dynamical relations between them through time. Such change takes different form in different periods of history, but it always occurs through the dynamic of myth and the agency of those who have taken responsibility for the direction of history by creating that myth.

VI. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER BROODING

43. History is a relationship to the Other World. This thesis has a threefold meaning: first, history as a category of consciousness is not possible without an understanding of the Other World; second, a culture interprets its history in relation to its understanding of the Other World, organizing the past according to this idea; and third, empirical history itself moves in relationship to a people's contact with the Other World.

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THE OTHER WORLD:
SIGNIFICATING MYTH FOR OUR TIME

THE OTHER WORLD: SIGNIFICATING MYTH FOR OUR TIME

Introduction: Practical Use Of The Other World	Functional Phenomenology of The Other World		The Other World as Myth												
	Myth And Social Renewal	Nature Of The Other World	Other World As Myth Of Social Santifi- cation	Significating Function of Myth											
				Signifi- cant Space	Signifi- cant Time	Dramaturgy									
						Signifi- cant Relations	Drama- turgical Mission The Order								
P 1	2	3	5	6	12	13	16	17	25	26	29	30	35	36	39

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 our 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 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
LEND
SIGNIFICANCE
TO THIS
WORLD

7. Part 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

11. 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

18. The overall function of any mythological system is to convey 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", in the sense that the mythological screen had no place for them, 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 performs 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

24. Examples are provided by the common man's use of science. 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 INTERCHANGE- ABILITY 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.

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 "teleology."

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 bombing blitzes" provide the commonest cliché 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

30. 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,

THE OTHER
WORLD IN
CONTEMPORARY
LITERATURE

35. Consequently, the Other World is the world as we know it, 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 caricatures 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.

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

MYTH AS
CONTENTLESS
DRAMA AND
INAUTHENTIC
MYTH

31. As Cassirer 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.

MYTH AS
DRAMATURGICAL
DOING AND
ACTION

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.

UNDIFFERENTI-
ATEDNESS AS A
CHARACTERISTIC
OF MYTHOLOGY

33. Objects and events in myth have a strange, even eerie 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 interchangeable 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 Dionysius 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.

UNDIFFERENTI-
ATEDNESS
MANIFESTS
MYTHICAL,
DRAMATURGICAL
MYSTERY

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 persons and actions become fluid. One finds the same sorts of things in literature of mystical experience.

THE OTHER WORLD: SIGNIFICATING MYTH FOR OUR TIME

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.