

THE ROLE OF THE ELDER AND PRESUPPOSITIONS
IN RELATION TO WHOLE SYSTEMS TRANSITION

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PREFACE

This paper is one in a series of monographs related to Whole Systems Transitions. It is a paper that is concerned for a new role for the elder. The question could be raised, "What has this to do with Whole Systems Transitions?" However, on second reflection it is apparent that it has a direct relationship to WST. In the first instance, if WST has to do sooner or later with the society as a whole, the elder is becoming by leaps and bounds a numerically larger part of society. In other words, society has to deal with elders one way with another than just pushing them aside to be cared for until they die. In addition, as this paper will attempt to point out, the elder has a genuine role to play in the ongoing evolutionary process and the humanizing of society today. This will be dealt with in the first part of the paper.

Finally, all people operate consciously and unconsciously out of some presupposition. What presupposition contributes to the role of the elder and WST the best? A presupposition will be developed in the second half of the paper. It is felt that only a presupposition of the scope presented could sustain the role of the elder both in vision and continual motivation. In addition, an attempt will be made to point out that this presupposition is adequately grounded and opened enough to give WST an opportunity to take place continuously. This will be dealt with in the second half of the paper.

Today's society is hardly equipped to provide a role for the elder. Instead, what it does is create a negative image. Most are retired at at the age of sixty five years. They are seen as having no productive relationship to society. They have their societies, clubs, travels, and now even lobbies. However, these are tolerated by the rest of society as something in which those whose time has past may participate. In fact, they are not just tolerated, but seen by many as a liability to society. This is especially true in the economic realm. Add to this for many of the aged: loneliness, sickness, insecurity, separation from friends and family, and fear of total incapacity and burden on others; and it is not difficult to see that a vibrant role does not seem to be immediately available.

Such a lack of role has not been true of the past. Many cultures have assigned roles to various age groups and elders played as key a part as others. Usually some form of transcendence is assigned to the second half, or latter part, of life. This association holds across cultures and historical epochs.

Aboriginal societies attribute religious power to elders. In China this part of life was associated with a process of transcending the mortal realm, and participating in a divine one. In India, the Laws of Manu, codify a similar connection. In the last phase the elder went into the forest, a symbol for

the inner realm, and there cultivated it with yogi practices, meditation, and austerities in order that the other age groups would be connected with the life force of the energy that to flowed through them all.

Western tradition including both Greek and Judeo-Christian roots held similar positions for the elderly. Plato held that only mature persons of fifty (old at that time) or more could understand Truth which for him was an eternal realm of Ideas which transcended the material and moral order. In the Jewish tradition, later life was often linked to the Sabbath. It was a time for studying the Torah and grasping deeper wisdom, the better way to love God. Even urban secular societies in a shallow fashion, although not realizing the archetypal roots, portray God as an old man with a white beard. In all traditions, elder's time was a time for approaching the mysteries of God, a time of transcendence, a time of living and transmitting the spiritual life. (ABC,1986, pp. 172,3)

These are some of the reflections of the past about the Elder:

The old people give you life.
Elders are a bridgehead to the sacred.
Elders bring magic into your life.

How can these things be? We can see how the elders in the past carried a store house of knowledge in his memory that he transmitted to the younger generation. However, in our modern technological society all factual information is available to all at any age. There is of course a difference between facts and knowledge patterned out of those facts, and finally a huge leap from knowledge to wisdom. We will come back to that later in the paper. However, one function taken away from the elder does not mean the role of the elder is defunct. On the contrary the archetype of the elder is needed just as much, if not more so, today as any time in history.

Archetype are the instinctive universal codings or patterns in the collective psyche through which primal energy is shaped into our daily activities. Jung saw the collective unconscious as containing the whole spiritual heritage of mankind's evolution born anew in the brain structure of every individual. This is not static or frozen, however, Indeed the "born anew" is a new creation, recreating the whole spiritual heritage for an appropriate response to each age.

This paper hopes to contribute to that recreation for our time. Indeed, life prepares the old ones for this role. Life has many gifts it gives to the elder so that he or she may function fully in that role. These gifts seen in light of the archetypes in the spiritual heritage of the collective unconscious give us an opportunity to regrab and recast that role.

In part one the main sources used in developing the thesis are a series of articles by Allen B. Chinen focusing on studies of fairy tales in later life and especially his book, In The Ever After; the The Tibetan Book of the Dead edited by W. Y. Evan-Wentz; a book by the same name written by F. Fremantle and C. Trungpa; and The Dream of the Earth by Thomas Berry. In the second part the sources, are Memories and Visions of Paradise by Richard Heinberg; and the two books, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, just listed. For the Conclusion, Fritjof Capra's article, "A New Vision of Reality" was used as a source reference. In addition, the books, seminars, and conversations of and with Jean Houston have been a constant source prodding me into continually opening myself to the depths of inner life and providing me with wisdom, images and tools to aid in that journey.

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PART I: LIFE'S GIFTS TO THE ELDER

A Journey to the Archetype The Return of Magic

Many people dread becoming old. They are angry over the indignities of aging, despair over recuperating from losses, envious for what younger people still possess, and greedy for more life. It is no wonder that despondency is a state old people struggle through. It was only when Gautama the Buddha was exposed to sickness, old age and death that he begin his spiritual struggle in life. And old age itself is filled with sickness and finally death. So how can one say that life brings gifts to the elder? On the other hand the Buddha didn't reach his enlightenment until he was old and his order reached huge proportions during the latter days of his life. And with us, what is the indicative of old age? What trends does the elder have going for his or her life?

Inwardness

Old people find themselves alone. This can take place through all the children leaving home, retirement from work, death of a spouse, choosing or having to move, physical infirmities and on and on. Many elders become despondent over being lonely and succumb to loneliness. However, others turn inward. This seems to be the trend in the latter stage of life.

Psychodynamic theories of human development especially those of Carl Jung and Erik Erikson abundantly use the psychological study of adult development. Most of their work was intuitive and based on personal experiences with individuals in psychotherapy. Subsequent research on aging with large numbers of people has proven many of their observations to be correct. Some of these will be noted.

Dealing with the unconscious and the world of imagination seems to be the first and foremost task of later life. Jung argued that the search for the Self was the task of the second half of life. At the same time other researchers find that numinous experiences, bordering on the mystical seem to increase in the second half of life. The "late style" of great artists often reflects a numinous sense of wonder.

Turning inward allows introspection to take place, including confronting the neglected aspects of the self, hidden in the unconscious. Jung emphasized the importance of introspection such as the coming to terms with one's own evil (shadow) and reclaiming the child. During this process maturing adults begin to understand metaphors in a more complex way. They begin to perceive many more connections between, proverbs, parables, and myths and the real life they are living. This allowed them to apprehend more complex psychological truths, as well as

symbolize a link between the other world and this world including one's individual life and the social order. About a story read in childhood, one person said, "Then it was just a story, now at seventy I see it is my life story." It is interesting that Maslow in his study of self actualizing individuals found that all the subjects who qualified were over fifty years of age.

But no one is able to sustain a turn inward unless there is radical acceptance and reaffirmation of their own life. Erikson called this integrity.

The mature individual, Erikson argued, must learn to affirm his or her life just as it happened, for better or worse. He must realize that his life history is, to use Erikson's own words, "something that had to be and that by necessity permitted no substitutions." With such integrity, the individual does not compare himself wistfully with other people who may seem more fortunate, or wonder about opportunities missed along the way. He or she does not ask those unanswerable questions, "What if I did this...? What if I did that ...?" Instead, the individual says quietly, but firmly, "I am who I am. I have lived as I have lived." (C p. 91)

"Not this - not that" Experiences

By the time one reaches old age it seems that he or she has had about every type experience there is. As one aged person said, "In principle, I have been everywhere, seen everything, known everything, experienced everything, and suffered everything. What else is there to do but to participate in and enjoy who I am and what I am coming to be." And another remarked, "I don't need an outside guru anymore. My experiences are my teacher." It is not that these people have closed themselves off from the overwhelmingly incredible amount of experience that seems to be dumped on us. We have eight to ten times the amount of experiences our great grandfathers did. It is precisely the opposite. It is by being open to the present that we are able to open ourselves to our experiences. In fact, the impact of the present, tends to call up the experiences of the past to meet and inform them.

Over the years people have a multitude of experiences. They have been subjected to the "Life is one damned thing after another." awareness. These experiences range from the highest ecstasy and joy to the deepest pit of suffering and pain, they involve the hard knocks of adversity as well as the pleasures of success, they involve broken promises and unjust acts as well as faithful and selfless responses both on the part of others and one's self,

Life's experiences seem to force the elder into seeing that "not-this, not-that" is what all life is about. Ordering

life into goods and bads, hanging on to ideals, manipulating objects and people, accumulating wealth, getting people to honor you, becoming a great person, creating a dynasty, career or vocation, all these pale, wane and finally disappear as one grows old. One's ego has tried and failed at everything it seems.

This is true even when one attempts to overcome the ego's claim. For example, as I sit here writing this paper I forget the great gift it is to me as an opportunity and discipline to pull my thoughts together on the role of the elder. I find that I get consumed with whether the paper will be good or not. Or again, for the last few weeks I have had chronic stomach pains. Instead of seeing the opportunity to intensify my awareness of what is going on in my body and happening around me, I get caught up in the anxiety of whether I have a simple stomach ache, ulcer, colitis or cancer.

This type process goes on and on until one is forced into seeing that we take many great opportunities and twist ourselves around into negative reactions to them. Many times we move from thinking that we are going to change the world for better, to seeing that the world goes on pretty much as it does without any help from us, to "My God, with my negative responses I'm part of the negative swirl in life."

These experiences move from the quantitative to the qualitative. For example, I used to think of my shadow as connected to several failures earlier in life that lead to a tremendous drive to excel. I'm sure I will have to continually take this into myself in the future. But as my experiences keep pounding away at me I saw that I had no idea of the depth of my shadow. When I see that as a white, male, Westerner I am participating in negations that go to the roots of history and the bowels of the archetypal world my experiences have forced upon me the burden of the world. It is with the myriad type of archetypal depth responses such as these, that lead the elder into the state of humility.

Oedipus' life, in the great Greek Tragedies, was one of continuous suffering caused by himself and others. By the time he became an elder his life, as Jean Houston loves to say, was so shot through with holes that he was holy. People of all realms would seek him out for in him they saw one who would understand their sufferings.

Practical results from their life experiences take place as one arrives at being an elder. They have been led to an attitude of openness. Having painfully learned that their own perspective is limited and biased they can honor the perspective of others. They no longer tend to separate everything into goods and bads. Their experience has forced them to abandon such dichotomous thinking and see many shades of grey. These experiences allow them to hold many conflicting positions at the same time without having to simplify matters. They have learned

to tolerated the anxiety of uncertainty and, for example, to surrender however painfully, youthful dreams of perfection. Instead of preoccupation with things and manipulating objects and accumulating possessions they move to a more empathic understanding of human nature. They tend to become free from personal ambitions and dreams which occupy youth, learn how to shift from the pragmatic rationality that dominate middle years, and release themselves from social convention.

Death

As people grow older they are forced to look at death. Its signs appear in the waning of their physical and mental prowess. It can be seen in the eyes of others and society by the way they image who elders are by judging what they can do in life. In addition, as age increases elders usually position themselves economically and environmentally to weather the final "declining" years. This could mean an increased fear grasps the elder. However, surveys of older adults documents that fear of death subsides. Also there are suggestions that equanimity toward death correlates with increased mental health.

Most youth tend to think they will "live forever" as the common saying goes. Albert Camus suggests that we go over the hill at 30. Then, we see life after that constantly approaching death usually as a nagging anxiety carried just below the surface of consciousness. This tends to break into the conscious level in the elder's life. Death is a problem only if the elder clings to an egocentric viewpoint and values his or her life above the life of all life.

Death, when seen as not "put off until tomorrow" but now, as constantly present, invigorates life. Death becomes a resource that breaks the illusion of time to spare and gives back the intensity of life itself. When life is lived where avoidance of death is paramount we live constantly within our limits, for to push to the limits risk death. But to face death openly allows pushing beyond the levels of practical rationality, social convention, cultural presupposition, precluded human perceptions, arbitrary limits to the future and opens up an exhilarating, free, vibrant and living now, with open possibilities for the future that explode all prior imaginations. Listen to one woman's description as she describes, "My Last Wonderful Days".

In a few weeks -- or maybe a few days -- I shall die. ... Every relentless tick of the clock measures off what remains of my life. Yet I am a happy woman. .. If anyone had told me, even a year ago, that the verdict "incurable cancer" would leave a trace of happiness for me, I would not have believed it. Because of this -- and because death comes to every family -- I am writing my experiences of these last days, when my life is in sharp focus. For I am one of the

lucky ones who is granted the opportunity to prepare for death. (A p31)

In the Tibetan Book of the Dead there is a presentation of readings that are made to those who are dying or just died. It is called the Bardo Thodol (Liberation by Hearing on the After-Death Plane). Bar-do literally means "between (Bar) two (do)", i. e., "between two states". It concerns one's journey in the after death state. The readings were originally conceived by the Tibetans to serve as a guide not only for the dying and the dead, but for the living as well. One could refer to the Book as "The Tibetan Book of Birth". The fundamental principle of birth and death recurs constantly in this life. The book is not based on death as we usually think of it, but on a completely different concept of death. It is a "Book of Space". Space contains birth and death; space creates the environment in which to behave, breathe and act, it is the fundamental environment which provides the inspiration for the book.

Listen to what a Tibetan, says to explain this to Western ears:

The bardo experience is part of our basic psychological makeup. There are all kinds of bardo experiences happening to us all the time, experiences of paranoia and uncertainty in everyday life; it is like not being sure of our ground, not knowing quite what we have asked for or what we are getting into. So the book is not only a message for those who are going to die and those who are already dead, but it is also a message for those who are already born; birth and death apply to everybody constantly, at this moment. (F&T p. 2)

The message for them is clear. If we learn to cope with the death and births in our everyday life, then what we usually call death has already been appropriated and has no fear for us. Indeed, it provides a solace.

Reminiscence

The radical affirmation of one's experiences in life including being constantly humbled, releases her or him to reminisce and thus to utilize all experiences as a reservoir of wisdom with which to respond to every day life in the present moment. One can bring to consciousness what is unconscious. Indeed, confronting one's own life in depth is probably a major task of the elder.

The reminiscing elder is thus more capable of dealing with unpleasant and conflictual issues and so has no need to repress them. One elderly man put it like this: "When I was 20, I hated my father. I couldn't bear to even think about him. Now that I am 75, what does matter? And ironically, I see how much I am like him."

The affirmation of the self -- the larger Self as including the individual and all relationships -- allows one to turn to an understanding of human nature rather than new gadgets - relying on wisdom growing out of experiences rather than technology. Listen to the Statesman Adlai Stevenson as he talks about the reminiscing elder: "The knowledge he has acquired with age is not a knowledge of formula or words, but of people, places, and actions ... the human experiences and emotions of this world, and of oneself and other men."

Psychoanalysts from various school have commented on how old age reverses the sequence Freud used to show the development of children through distinct stages from the oral to the genital. This reversal indicates that the older individual moves backward from the mature genital stage to the phallic, anal, and thence to the oral. More systematic research tends to confirm this observation. Older persons make more oral references in response to the Rorshach Inkblot Test, for instance.

More careful research in the psychology of aging suggests that what seems on first appearances to be regression in old age is actually conscious choice. What appears to be regression is actually a conscious affirmation of a more mythic, intuitive variety of reasoning. As Chinen put it:

The return to earlier modes of consciousness frequently takes the form of reminiscing in later life. As the French novelist Charles Nodier observed, "The kindest privilege that Nature grants the aging man is that of reclaiming the impressions of his childhood with extraordinary ease." And modern studies confirm the observation: reminiscence becomes increasingly important to individuals as they age. In remembering the past, though, older adults transform it. The reflective individual comes to terms with the mistakes and opportunities missed, ideally learning to forgive himself -- and others. Events and actions that once seemed inexplicable make sense in retrospect. The return to the past in memories transfigures the effect of the past on the present. (C pp 135,6)

Regained Innocence

Affirming one's life just as it is liberates one from the cultural mores of the adult world. This in turn results in the reclamation of childhood innocence and spontaneity. In abandoning social convention one does not eliminate adult rationality or become naive, but adds spontaneity and innocence to mature judgment and skill. Innocence and judgment, and spontaneity with skill, is what Chinen calls emancipated innocence and it is the task of later life. He elaborates this with cultural illustrations:

In Japan childhood and old age are the two times when an individual is exempted from rigid social conventions.

When a person turns 60, friends and family celebrate with a ceremony in which the 60-year-old dons a special red garment. The robe signifies the elder's emancipation from social obligations, and a return to the freedom of childhood. At the same time, the elder is expected to be wise and spiritually advanced. In a similar vein, the Balinese say that young children and old people are the closest to divinity because the children have only recently left the innocence and magic of Heaven, while elders will soon return to it. (C pp. 80,81)

Because adults are expected to conform to social norms, the inner child remains unconscious for the most part in daily life. For the elder reclamation of the inner child is an important task for maturity. Old age gives the individual a socially accepted "excuse" to ignore normal conventions to do so. However, this does not mean license for dishonoring others, and becoming selfish, opinionated, and rude. Emancipated innocence implies that the individual first comes to terms with his or her own egocentricity. This is the difference between childlike innocence and childishness. Chinen illustrates this from the research of Maslow:

A more systematic investigation of emancipated innocence comes from the psychologist Abraham Maslow, who studied unusually mature individuals. Although not specifically researching the psychology of aging, Maslow found that the individuals meeting his criteria for extraordinary psychological health were all over 50. This in itself is noteworthy. But what is more important are the characteristics these individuals shared. They were what Maslow called "self-actualizing" -- realizing their full personal potential. These men and women typically broke from cultural norms to pursue their own creative insights, emancipating themselves from convention and ordinary "rationality." But they also transcended their own egocentric concerns. They could absorb themselves in their work, for instances, and pursue projects, irrespective of public reward for their efforts. Personal recognition mattered less than the creative work itself. And these self-actualizing individuals acted in a spontaneous, expressive way that recalled the innocence and liveliness of children. Maslow emphasized the paradox of this innocence, because it integrated naivete with mature judgment. "If children are "naive," Maslow wrote, "then my subjects had attained a second naivete" as Santayana called it. Their innocence of perception and experience was combined with sophisticated minds." Others have since corroborated Maslow's findings, underscoring the importance of emancipated innocence as a task of maturity. (C pp. 82,83)

Awakened Wonder

When emancipated innocence is restored to a world that has forgotten it then there is infused the magic of myth and wonder into real life. The reclaiming of wonder is also one of delight. The world is no longer taken for granted, and each object becomes an occasion for delight in life. The adult returns to a mature form of animism and mythic experience, seemingly mystical in nature. This return of wonder resembles what many spiritual traditions call enlightenment, and though rare, it is one of the highest forms in which magic returns.

Early researchers in aging noted just such animism in later life. Older adults treat inanimate objects as if they were living thing much more often than young adults do. In addition, older individuals more frequently see magical qualities in events, and appeal to supernatural explanations, a finding that has been quantified using the Thematic Apperception Test. This animism of older adults is usually interpreted as a regression in intellectual capacity, the loss of logical capacities.... However, a growing number of psychologists have recently challenged the simple regression model of aging. This raises an important question: is there perhaps a mature form of animism and mythic consciousness? There is a precedent for this in emancipated innocence, which is the mature reclamation of childlike innocence. (C p. 98)

Chinen goes on to say that Martin Buber, a 20th century philosopher, provides an affirmative, if theoretical, answer in his book I and Thou. What Buber calls the Thou or "you-attitude" is a mature form of animism. We use this attitude with close friends and loved ones whom we treat with affection and sensitivity. On the other hand, Buber's "It-attitude" is used for inanimate objects, animals, etc. which we treat as things or objects, although we often treat humans with the same attitude. The traditional ideal of universal love is the You-attitude applied mostly to people. But Buber argues that we can extend such love to animals, plants and inanimate objects too. The central element if this experience is wonder -- an appreciation of mystery.

The crucial question is whether this mature spirit of wonder and mystery occurs in real life. Empirical observations answer, "Yes." Numinous experience, bordering on the mystical, seem to increase in the second half of life. Such experiences can -- and must -- be distinguished from regressive, or pathological, experiences. Statements from real people, however, are the most convincing evidence for a mature form of wonder. Flor Arnstein, a retired teacher, wrote the following poem in her 90's:

That it can never be known
Makes it all the more alluring,
Enticing, too, so that one goes on trying.

Every morning is an invitation
The sun friendly as an unafraid child,
Each trifle enjoyable: the shoe-horn
Emerging from the shoe-heel,
The tooth-brush rinsed of paste;
All small delectables; the brewing coffee,
Even the charred toast,
And the thrust of cool air
As one reaches the street.
This is no euphoria, just an aura
Of good feeling.

In her verse a spirit of mythic delight emerges. She celebrates the present, very ordinary moment, apprehending the mystery and divinity in it. Wonder returns -- the marvel a child might feel when first encountering toothpaste or coffee. And the greatest magic is that this delight returns on the ten thousandth time around. (C pp. 99,100) (Emphasis mine.)

Central to this attitude of wonder is one's affirmation of life just as it is in the present. The person neither longs after a lost past, nor yearns for a future still to come. Whereas in Reminiscence we talked about self affirmation of the past, the return of wonder involves a similar affirmation of the present, down to its small, ordinary events.

Role Shift

As we have seen from the above remarks something happens to a person when they become an elder. All of this creates a role shift in one's life. That happening then demands a creation of a new role. What is the possible role of the elder today? The following is an attempt to take the insights above and focus them into sign posts suggesting directions that a new role may take in our time.

a. Sharing of Wisdom. This would include primarily those who continue in the same vocation they have been in up to the so-called point of retirement. Traditionally the elder accumulated knowledge needed for civilization. Today raw data or facts are available to everyone and there are myriad interpretations yielding knowledge. The elder on the other hand has always been seen as a reservoir of wisdom. This cannot be replaced with an accumulation of facts or even knowledge. This wisdom comes about only with the deep experience of life at its most profound levels. This seems to take place only after years of meticulous presence to life and deep suffering. The elder learns to listen to all perspectives beyond his or her own, be open to all facts and interpretations, and look through all these to the patterns that flow in and out of the weave of life. When these patterns are seen to rise and fall out of the no-pattern, or the void itself, true wisdom is born. This wisdom is then shared in the domain in which the elder has lived his vocational life.

b. Being a Grandparent to Mother Earth and all Her Children. Elders, whether as grandparents or aunts and uncles, have found themselves mediating squabbles between parents and their children, and between the children themselves. They see the perspective of each side. They may even see the humor in which both have staged their emotions, recalling their own type of attached involvement. Now as elders they can stand back and view the "struggle of the opposites".

Perhaps the elder is in a better position than any other age group to see that if we are completely in touch with these dualistic feelings, then the absolute experience of duality is itself the experience of non-duality. This is seen from a perfectly open and clear point of view in which there is no conflict. One of the gifts of old age is that it partially removes a traditional role pointing to a dualism that many ancients declared was the primal symbol of the Fall from the state of Bliss -- the dualism of male - female. Old women can no longer bear children and old men can no longer earn a living. This may be used as a sign that finally there is no conflict that cannot be dealt with if there is the tremendous encompassing vision of oneness.

Conflict arises because duality is not seen as it is. It is seen only in a biased way. We talk about a dualistic world as confusion. But that confusion is not the complete dualistic world. If life is seen as expanded to include all or to the whole (or to turn it around and say non-dual), then all dualism is seen and transcended. However, this transcendence entails a death or a letting go of all boundaries. This awareness is not a luminous mush of indifferentiated jelly, so that the universe melts down into one huge monistic lump of clay. Indeed, the universe exists exactly as we perceive it (where our sensibilities are still non-dual), but not necessarily as we name and divide it into separate things extended in space and time. This "seeing", before it is divided up, it seems, is what the elder can convey.

c. Preparing to Die: Preparing to Live. One of life's gifts to the elder is that she or he prepares in various ways to die. As we remarked above the the insights that come from reading of the Tibetan Book of the Dead indicates that a space may be created in which the various stages of the journey of life is articulated. The more one prepares to die the more one is able to participate in responding to the journey in everyday life, and finally the journey taken up at physical death. However, the activity of the elder in preparing to die then becomes a role that contributes to the preparation of the rest of society for daily living. The preparation to die is at the same time the preparation to live. Any one of any age, if they listen to that preparation, discovers the deep meaning of living their own life. This will be further discussed in Part II.

d. Building a Morphogenetic Field of Transcendence. The elders actions and presence conveys to others in some dimension

of awareness the final relationship out of which the elder is living. This can become crucial for the elder's role as we will see later. The fact that this happens is no different than any other age group. However, the elder has time, or can take the time, to build up the patterns of the unconscious or the morphogenetic fields of resonance to directly impact society.

From experience we see that what we do at the unconscious level is transmitted to the unconscious of people around us and involuntarily affects them. Even when we are not around them physically, what we do in imagination sends out vibrations through the collective unconscious that are felt by other people in their unconscious. Or to put it another way, we find that the unconscious connects us to other people and to our entire environment. When we focus a great deal of energy within the inner world, a parallel energy often arises in the people or situations around us. This understanding coupled with the expanded techniques of visualization are a tremendous tool for healing and change.

Perhaps even more important is the direct participation in the evolutionary process through meditation and contemplation. Transcendence through self-realization is a continuous process in humankind. As the elder participates in the evolution of his own consciousness, he sets up a morphogenetic field that resonates to all others immediately. As more and more people throughout the world live to a longer age, this means more and more people can be added to building up this type of field in the revolution of consciousness going on in society.

e. Living the Shamanic Life. As we noticed above one of the trends in the elder's life is that of becoming more animistic. This role, called the Shaman, has been a cherished role of the elder in almost every culture. At this stage of the evolutionary journey it would seem that such a role is key to the process. The shaman journeys into the far regions of the cosmic mystery and brings back the vision and the power needed by the human community at the most elementary level. In addition, the shaman speaks and best understands the language of the various creatures of the earth. This is crucial also for the creation of the new story.

f. Creating the New Story. This may be one of the most important facets of the role of the elder. However, it is an activity that probably should rest on the shoulders of every human being.

It's all a question of story. We are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in-between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story. (B p. 123)

The old story we told our children was the story of a universe in its awesome and numinous aspects. That story faded

with the rise of a mechanistic universe. However today, through empirical insights into the mysteries of the universe and its functioning, a deeper understanding of its spiritual dynamics is being revealed through the growing awareness of the integral physical-psyche dimension of reality.

From what has been proposed concerning the way in which the elder can view his new archetypal role, many ingredients for weaving a new story are already given. In many ways they seem to parallel the worldview of the ancients. All the forms of the earth were living parts of a living whole in which the cosmos was alive and conscious, partaking of the same intelligent force by which we ourselves are animated. Human beings are the link between Heaven and Earth, between the inner dimension of spirit and the outer world of form. Every event is meaningful, every individual knew that his or her life was the embodiment of principle and purpose. Even the most mundane activities had an overarching significance. These acts, however personal and private were part of a cosmic drama. Time and space were sacred, and every atom of creation was part of one joyful chorus. Human beings had a specific responsibility in the whole of Nature, which was to provide a living bridge between levels of being, and realize their understanding of sacredness by coordinating traffic between Heaven and Earth. (H p 11, 12)

The new story includes the story of the universe, that is, the emergence of a galactic system in which each new level of expression emerges through the urgency of self-transcendence. The human emerges not only as an earthling, but also as a worldling. We bear the universe in our beings as the universe bears us in its being. The two have a total presence to each other and to that deeper mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged. It might be a new revelatory experience. It seems that we are moving into a new mythic age, and it is little wonder that a kind of mutation is taking place in the entire earth-human order. A new paradigm of what it is to be human emerges.

The new story is not just a telling the story of life evolving from the big bang however important part that may be. It will not be just about the transformation of contemporary culture. It must go to the roots of our genetic imperative from which human cultures emerge originally, and from which they can never be separated without losing their integrity and their survival capacity. These roots, arising from the same spontaneous source as the great archetypes, have to be re-examined to determine the new patterns to be reweaved for a new earth civilization. These patterns honor the grandeur of all its species as they harmoniously work for their own and others recreation. In this is the journey of the new earth beings as their nervous system expands throughout the universe.

In addition to these parts of the new story, but not separate from it, is the articulation of the "old, old, story that is ever new." When one steps through a door into the

vastness of life, into its wholeness, then one's life becomes radiantly alive. It is transparent to the radiance of the source of all things. This is offensive to most since it requires a death to the boundaries that we use to define our lives. But at the moment of death the boundaries fall away and the vision in its vastness is radiant. And the moment of death is now -- the ever now.

You are whole. That which you feel and sense, that which you offer others as you experience whatever it is that you are experiencing as part of the psyche of humanity, integrates with the whole. It is not your great accomplishments that count. It is your being. Even if you have reached the point where arthritis freezes your activities, cancer eats your insides away, or a stroke incapacitates you so that the only activity you have is to be wheeled into the visitor's room of a nursing home, you present yourself in your wholeness. For those who have eyes to see the message is clear -- your presence has expanded their mind to an understanding of the radiance of wholeness. You live this experience of who you are on its terms. You are right as you are, perfect as you are. Your life -- and death -- is radiantly alive.

Creation has given you to be part of the magnificence and glory of this its Being. What greater gift can you give yourself and others than to be the magnificence and glory of your Being. Or recall the story of Gautama. You as one who is sick, old and death are a symbol of suffering. If you, representing that, live the magnificence and glory of your being, then anyone in society with eyes to see can see the magnificence and glory of their own Being.

An Afterword

These are the gifts of the elder and the trends in aging which perhaps could lead toward a new archetypal role. But some reading this might respond, "Are not these attitudes, characteristic, and life stance available for people other than elders?" Certainly, all such traits are available and all roles are available to all people. How many elders have had to be mother or father to grandchildren, nieces, nephews, orphans, etc. If the situation demands, anyone may pick up a role and respond. However, what is being indicated here is that old age especially conditions old people to take upon themselves the archetype, the promise held in the Elder.

Or again, someone might question, "I see many old people who are mean, ill tempered, closed, opinionated, given over to nothing but prattle, and only care for their own ways and comfort." Surely, and cultures throughout the world have always distinguished between the elder and the elderly, between those who grow and develop and those who stagnate. But the gifts of old age to the elder contain a promise, or a challenge if you like, that says their life is in a unique position to

recreate a new archetype of the elder for the new world which is being born today. That is why being sick, old, and death contains the promise, "The old people give you life."

PART II: TOWARD A FOUNDATIONAL VISION

A Journey to the Promised Land.

...the golden age, the most improbable of all dreams that ever existed, but the one for which men gave their lives and all their strength, for which prophets died and were slain, without which peoples do not wish to live and cannot even die!

--Fyodor Dostoevsky

Everybody has a vision out of which they operate probably more unconscious than conscious. Many in the Western world for the last part of the 19th Century and the first part of the 20th lived out of a vision of progress. Many today in North America still operate in a form of that vision but recast as the American Dream.

Recently I talked with a young executive who was just promoted to a vice president position in parent corporation of his company which had 20 other companies under it. What thrilled him most was what he called the "flaming vision" of the executives with whom he would be working. In further discussion it became apparent these visions were forms of the American Dream although neither he, nor I imagine the other executives, would have worded it as such. Their vision's roots are in the Paradise Myth of the Garden of Eden for the Hebraic tradition, and the Golden Age Myth from the Greek tradition.

My friend and his executive colleagues were not alone for all the great enterprises of history are in some way rooted in the soil of the original mythic Garden: the Crusades, the millenarian revolts of the Middle Ages, the search for the Grail, the discovery and colonization of the New World, utopian movements in literature and politics, Marxism, and the cult of progress.

But it is not just the Western World that has a Paradise myth. All traditions and cultures have them. It may be that Paradise is the most popular and intensely meaningful idea ever to have gripped the human imagination. It is found everywhere. As Mircea Eliade put it, "In more or less complex forms, the paradisiac myth occurs here and there all over the world."

The impact of the paradisaic image on the collective human consciousness is as deep as it is broad. In no tradition is it a recent or peripheral theme; rather, it is at the very core of the perennial spiritual impulse, reemerging in every generations' literature, art, and social ideals. Indeed, if one were seeking a motif on which to base an outline summary of human culture, one might well begin with our collective memories of a lost Golden Age and our longings for its return. (H pp. 3,4)

The image of Paradise is in some respect timeless. However, the most familiar and potent expressions are to be found in the

myths carried by oral traditions and ancient religious scriptures. In every tradition, the image of Paradise is derived from a myth which dates back to the beginning of its culture.

Myth

But what are myths? What and how do they convey something as potent and enduring as the Paradise image to all the cultures? Jung saw myths as pathways to and from the collective unconscious, and the characters and actions of myth simply expressions of universal archetypes. Like Jung, Eliade saw mythic themes as unconscious archetypes. Going further he identified the two core themes of world myth. First the nostalgia for Paradise that has been lost because of the primordial tragedy of the fall, and second the initiatory scenario of a journey whereby the original golden world is partially restored.

The question arises how closely are the mythic events tied to historical happenings. We can see illustrations of this today. People such as Washington and Lincoln are historical. However, their lives have been mythologized into many different stories. If some historical happenings were used in the primal myths the collective memory may preserve an impression of such an event; however, it tends to do so in an "archetypal" manner. It disregards specifics that do not enhance the preexistent universal pattern. Jung and Campbell especially tended to see myths not necessarily as a collective memory of real characters and events. They saw them as allegories for inner processes of spiritual transformation. That is, the stories are symbolically true.

If we are going to take advantage of these true stories we need to be awake to more than one level of discourse. Everyday language using items of this world are used to describe the other world. Listen to a Dogon wise man telling a myth about a celestial granary, on each step of which many large animals were supposedly perched. When asked how all the animals could find room to stand on the step the wise man responded, "All of this has to be said in words, but everything on the step is a symbol -- symbolic antelopes, symbolic vultures, symbolic hyenas ... Any number of symbols could find room on one .. step." The ethnologist reporting this said, "for the word "symbol" he used a compound expression, the literal meaning of which is "word of this lower world."" (H p 15) Myths are seen then to connect the two realities of the visible and invisible, Earth and Heaven. The process of bringing these two worlds into relation is accomplished through metaphor, symbol, and allegory.

As already implied myths everywhere tend to follow a common pattern. Joseph Campbell has written that myths of the world "resemble each other as dialects of a single language. (H p. 17). One one level the variety in the various myths are

astonishingly and uniquely enhancing. However, underneath even the most divergent traditions their lies underlying thematic similarities.

As Campbell and Eliade have shown, there is really only one story, translated into the traditions and circumstances of myriad peoples. It is the myth of a lost idyllic Time of Beginnings, and of a hero's journey to restore the world to its pristine condition of paradisaal splendor. (H p. 18).

Paradise

As mentioned the biblical Eden narrative and the Greek Golden Age legend are the two Paradise stories that have had the greatest impact upon the Western World. The classical Roman author Ovid's Metamorphoses was for centuries standard fare in all European schools. In addition, his description of the Golden Age was definitive form of the myth for the Middle Ages and the Renaissance:

The first age was golden. In it faith and righteousness were cherished by men of their own free will without judges or laws. Penalties and fears there were none, nor were threatening words inscribed on unchanging bronze; nor did the suppliant crowd fear the words of its judge, but they were safe without protectors. .. Without the use of soldiers the peoples in safety enjoyed their sweet repose. Earth herself, unburdened and untouched by the hoe and unwounded by the plough share, gave all things freely ... Spring was eternal ... untilld the earth bore its fruits and the unploughed field grew hoary with heavy ears of wheat.

In other writings Ovid speaks of the peaceful amity of Nature herself, before the degeneration of human kind.

That ancient age ... to which we have given the name of Golden, was blessed with the fruit of trees and the herbs which the soil brings forth, and it did not pollute its mouth with gore. Then the birds in safety winged their way through the air and the hare fearlessly wandered through the fields, nor was the fish caught through its witlessness. There were no snares, and none feared treachery, but all was full of peace. (H p. 49)

But in all the myths of ancient peoples evil that is unique to humanity entered in, resulting from the Fall. This tragic event brought the Golden Age to an end. Every religion has this recognition that human consciousness has been separated from the divine Source, that a former sense of oneness with the Ground of Being has been lost, and that we can only return to it through the resolution of some profound inner discord.

This discord is a basic mode of being consisting of the assumption of individual autonomy from God and Nature, and it is

expressed in the attitudes of want, fear, arrogance, domination, and blame. In other words, this mode of consciousness identifies with the ego.

The myths of Paradise and Fall seem to be telling us that the primal tragedy consisted of the transfer of the focus of the collective human consciousness from the condition of oneness and participation to that of separateness, greed, and fear. The Fall, in short, was the initial appearance of the human ego. (H p. 211).

A basic thrust in the history of humankind every since then has been to return to the Garden, to Paradise. As a force in human culture it can be seen in manifold forms. In literature the subject is vast through the world. In the West such writers as Dante Alighieri, John Milton, John Bunyan, Defoe, Dickens, Melville, Fyodor Dostoevsky to name a few all penned a picture of the return to Paradise. In our day, movies, novels and especially science fiction offers unlimited scope for the rehearsal of the mythic theme.

But it is not seen only in literature, but in the response in the lives of people. To attain Paradise was interpreted in various ways: as the Other World which is present now or in the future in this world, as only accessible after death, or attainable as an earthly Paradise. This latter mode appears in other cultures as well as the West. Throughout the West's history many believed they had found or were in close proximity to the gates of Eden, e.g. Columbus, the new world, the Protestant Reformation, and America as the place of Christ's Second Coming or the land of unending progress.

Utopia was a heady longing for Paradise, a yearning for a state of individual and collective happiness, purpose, and harmony. This drove people to revolution, reform, or bold social experiments, which unfortunately also resulted at times in a drive for stability, power, and domination. The belief that a perfect society can be built by human beings, has been present since the early Greeks. Plato's Republic, Zeno, Republic, Thomas More's Utopia, Francis Bacon's New Atlantis, Comte Henri de Sant-Simon's socialism, and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' communism were all utopian in goals. On the other hand George Orwells' Nineteen Eighty-Four was a backlash to the idea that the potential of technology could be humanity's savior.

In America the utopian thrust was also manifest in scores of communal experiments. In the beginning most were religious in nature, such as the Bruderhofs, Mennonites and offshoots, Quakers, Shakers, and Mormons. However, not all had a religious basis. Over 150 communities were founded to prove social or educational theories. The early twentieth century saw a lull in the formation of these communities. But by 1960 came the greatest burgeoning of visionary social experiments in history. Many of them, products of the drugs-and-revolution

counterculture, were formed with little serious forethought. Some were purely economic cooperatives. On the other hand others sprang from a universalist spiritual philosophy whose lineage could be traced back to the transcendentalism of the early 19th century. Newsweek in a 1989 issue estimated that there are currently some 3000 cooperative intentional communities in the U.S. If you look at past statistics most of these experiments will not last over a few years. What makes some communities thrive and others dissolve? Whatever the crucial issues are over which communities struggle:

The communities that survive the longest are those in which members are somehow motivated to transcend their own wants and fears for the good of the whole. In the great majority of cases, that motivation arises from a shared paradisaical vision and a shared sense of the sacred. Every sociological study of cooperative communities has come to essentially the same conclusion: when the vision dies, the community dies. (H p.157)

Return to Paradise

Mystics, prophets, and saints of every tradition tell of realms of experience that seem to describe Paradise. They are magical, peaceful, and joyous and are characterized by oneness, knowingness, and light. In Eliades's books one of the recurring themes is that the religious experience is a window into a reality that is "higher" than the physical, mental, and emotional world in which we as a society spend our everyday lives. The subjective qualities of that higher reality seem to be that of Paradise, e. g. peace, creativity, power, and ecstatic union with the divine. Eliade goes to say that modern humanity is asleep and unconscious and that their "private mythologies"

never rise to the ontological status of myths, precisely because they are not experienced by the whole man and therefore do not transform a particular situation into a situation that is paradigmatic. In the same way, modern man's anxieties, his experiences in dream or imagination ... do not ... provide the basis for a system of behavior. (H p.199)

Although the modern "rational" person is still nourished to some extent by the activity of the unconscious, he or she is still unable to attain "a properly religious experience and vision of the world."

Joseph Campbell also thought of Paradise as a natural fulfilling mode of consciousness that is alien to modern humanity, and that the aim of spiritual practice is to regain the pristine condition of awareness. According to Campbell, Paradise is immediately available to all human beings whenever they have allowed themselves to be fully awake in the present moment.

The difference between everyday living and living in those

moments of ecstasy is the difference between being outside and inside the garden. You go past fear and desire, past the pair of opposites ... into transcendence. (H200)

Up to this point we have noted that innumerable traditions place Paradise not only at the beginning of history, but also in another, still-existing dimension of existence called by many the Otherworld. This is the place people may go after death. Originally, the earthly Paradise and otherworldly Paradise were joined by a rainbow bridge. At first, people being immortal, were said to be able to ascend to Heaven at will. Later, the rainbow bridge (or a primordial rope or ladder that served to connect the two worlds) was severed or withdrawn. Since then only mystics or saintly people seem to gain access to the heavenly Paradise while still physically alive.

Near Death Experiences

Recently, due to new techniques in emergency health care, there has been a significance increase in the number of people who have been rescued from the verge of death. Many of them recalled a telepathic communion with beings of light and an experience of peace and joy. Such a happening was termed Near Death Experience or NDE by Dr. Raymond Moody, a philosopher and psychiatrist, who first published studies of these experiences. The accounts tend to resemble the following generalized description:

A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor ... and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long tunnel. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body ... and sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator ...

After a while, he collects himself and becomes more accustomed to his odd condition. He notices that he still has a "body," but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind. Soon other things begin to happen. Other come to meet and to help him. He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving, warm spirit of a kind he has never encountered before -- a being of light -- appears before him. This being asks him a question, non-verbally, to make him evaluate his life, and helps him along by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events of his life. At some point he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life. Yet, he finds that he must go back to earth, that the time for his death has not yet come. At this point he resists, for by now he is taken up with the experiences in the afterlife and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feeling of joy, love, and peace. Despite this attitude, though, he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives. (H pp.226,7)

From another person's experience the strength of the parallel with the myths of otherworldly Paradise become more apparent:

Without reflection or words, I knew them [people in the other world] as completely as they knew me, and finally understood why poets cite eyes as the entrance to the soul ... I also knew that the illuminating light would never cease: no one had the need to sleep. .. I also understood that everyone present was in a state of perfect compassion with everyone else and everything else ... We were freed from all those contrivances historians often claim to be the causes of war and other conflicts, including land, food, and shelter. Love was the only axiom. These ideal conditions produced a phenomenal state, for neither hate nor any other disturbing passion was present -- only the total presence of love. .. (H p.228)

You could rephrase the above only slightly and it would seem to come from some ancient source. It is almost like reading another Paradise Myth.

Today hundreds of thousands of people have had NDEs and made the journey to the otherworldly Paradise and returned. In a Gallop poll it was found that nearly 5% of the adult population in North America had a NDE. However more striking than this is the effect it has had on the participants. When asked to compare it to a dream the subjects emphasized the distinctly undreamlike quality of the experience. Many reported that ordinary waking reality seemed like a dream in comparison to their NDE. "I felt as though I was awake for the first time in my life." In addition Kenneth Ring in a survey he made found drastic and immediate reorientation of values:

After NDEs individuals tend to show greater appreciation for life and more concern and love for their fellow humans while their interest in personal status and material possessions wanes. Most NDEers also state that they live afterward with a heightened sense of spiritual purpose and, in some cases, that they seek a deeper understanding of life's essential meaning. Furthermore, these self-reports tend to be corroborated by others in a position to observe the behavior of NDEers. (H p.230)

Dr. Moody reported on a study of suicide attempts. The study found that not only having a NDE, abut also having knowledge of the existence of NDEs practically erases the desire for suicide. The study also, finds that:

if you compare a group of people who have had NDEs as a result of attempting suicide with a group who didn't have NDEs while attempting suicide, you will find that almost none of the NDEers attempt to kill themselves again. On the other hand, a high percentage of the people who didn't have an NDE will try again to commit suicide. So having an NDE tends to resolve suicidal inclinations. (M88 p. 99)

On the other hand in another study a researcher give the case studies of NDEers to patients who had attempted suicide. He found that this made the idea of suicide as a solution go away. This experiment has been repeated several times with the same result: exposure to the near-death experience actually kept people from committing suicide. This would seem to indicate that whereas before these people felt that life led nowhere, they now feel a rich and fulfilling afterlife awaits them. (M88, p. 99, 100)

Whether one is religious or not seems to have no bearing on whether they will have a NDE or not. However, one's cultural background does appear to color the person's interpretation of the experience. Each will describe it according to their cultural or religious presuppositions. For example a Christian may view the Being of Light as Jesus, and a Moslem may see it as a messenger of Allah.

Paradise myths seem to be saying that at one time human beings while in the flesh knew a "golden" consciousness of love and telepathic union. It is as if the entire population shared something like a continuous, waking near-death experience without the physical trauma. Heinberg asks, Is such a condition possible? Is there something apart from myths that would lead us to assume that the Paradisal Otherworld is accessible to people who are alive, well and conscious? Heinberg then states that toward the end of Kenneth Ring's description and interpretation of NDEs he makes the following bold statement:

What occurs during an NDE has nothing inherently to do with death or the transition into death ... The NDE ... should be regarded as one of a family of related mystical experiences that have always been with us, rather than as a recent discovery of modern researchers who have come to investigate the phenomenon of dying.

Ring is drawn to this conclusion by the similarity of all aspects of the NDE to the experiences of prophets, mystics, and saints throughout history. (H p. 234)

If Ring is correct then we can conclude that both mystical experiences and NDE are members of a family of related experiences.

Whether the NDE is evidence of survival beyond physical death is debatable, but it unquestionably a kind of experience that is potentially available to everyone. If we are to call the transcendental light and the celestial landscape evidence of Paradise, then it is possible for human beings in the present to know the experience of Paradise, as described in the ancient myths, while still alive on Earth. (H p. 235)

When the veil of illusion maintained by (our present) states of emotion and thought thins -- as in moments of extremity -- we may catch a glimpse of a Being of Light, which is that ultimate inner Source. In that moment of oneness with Source

there is peace, assurance, radiance, and ineffable knowing.
And that is Paradise. (H p. 237)

The Journey back to Paradise

What kind of journey is required to take us through the transformational process needed to return to Paradise? How does one overcome the social conditioning that continually tends to divide us both from one another and from the very ground of our own being? What spiritual quest is there that allows us to cut through the guises of the ego that prevents us from experiencing and revealing our own innate paradisaical character. "This quest is neither new nor unprecedented. It is neither more no less than the archetypal hero's journey, identified by Joseph Campbell as being central to every mythic tradition." (H p. 249)

There are many ways to articulate this one quest and part of the struggle with our mythic consciousness today is to find ways to articulate the one quest so as to address the spiritual depths of all people. I will use the journey as it is articulated in the Tibetan Book of the Dead, or the "Bardol Thodol" (Liberation by Hearing on the After-Death Plane).

The instruction given in the book serves to recall to the dead person the experiences of initiation and the teachings he or she has received. The instruction is an initiation of the dead into the Bardo life, just as the initiation of the living was a preparation for the Beyond. However, this "Beyond" is not a world beyond death, but a reversal of the mind's intentions and outlook. It is a psychological Beyond, or a redemption from an earlier condition of darkness and unconsciousness; and leads to a condition of illumination and releasedness, to victory and transcendence over everything "given". The book, as its editor feels, is an initiation process whose purpose is to restore to the soul the divinity it lost at birth. (EW p. xli)

Jung in his introduction to the book states that it is a characteristic of Oriental religious literature that the teaching invariably begins with the most important item. In the book the initiation is a series of diminishing climaxes ending with rebirth in the womb. For the purpose of understanding it as Westerners and our work in psychology Jung suggests that we ought to read the book backwards. (EW p. xliii)

The journey in the book at the time of death begins with meeting the clear light, then moves through two more stages until rebirth into a new state of being in the earthly flesh. For this paper this process will be reversed. In addition other forms of talking about the states and gods of the stages will be used. This is in perfect keeping with the book itself which states that people will bring their own traditional symbols to grasp the bardo experience.

First Stage. Jung states that this stage is one of

neuroticism or the tendency of wanting to live and to be born. We can see its activities in the six states, lower dimensions, or "worlds" into which one may be born.

There is a young man in his twenties who has had AIDS only a short time but it quickly took its toll and he seems to be only a month or two from death. Every since he was a teenager he has abused people. Now he refuses to see what has and is happening to him. His anger grows more intense. Whereas he always seemed to project his anger outward onto others he abused, it now is all turned in upon himself. He is locked into his own anger. Which ones of us have not seen ourselves in a similar situation even though it may not have been so dramatic. It is called in the Bardo the Hell realm or world.

This is the most intense realm. There is a build up of energies, of emotions, to a crescendo, so that at some stage we find it very confusing whether the energies are controlling us or we are controlling them. An intense temptation to fight begins to develop, and that paranoia also brings terror. Then it begins to turn against itself. When one tries to strike out, instead of fighting the projection one is striking inward. We try to run away, but it is too late; you are the anger itself, so there is nowhere to run. You are haunting yourself constantly. That is the development of hell.

Or perhaps we are caught up in the consumer society's image of itself. We buy, buy, and then buy some more. We immediately lose appreciation of what we have and still want to buy more. This is the hungry ghost realm. This realm has a sense of poverty and at the same time a sense of richness operating simultaneously. The joy of possessing does not bring us pleasure any more once we already possess something. We are constantly looking for more possession, but it turns out to be the same process all over. This results in a constant intense hunger which is based not on a sense of poverty but on the realization that what we already have we cannot enjoy.

As I mentioned earlier, I am a white, male, Westerner. I live in a culture that suggests superiority in each of these characteristics and enforces it through laws and cultural mores in the case of the first two and through economic tyranny as well as arrogance in relation to other cultures. I hate to be called into question about this. It is more comfortable just to associate with a small group of like minded friends, give to the political party that keeps it like it is, and not to pay attention to what is going on otherwise. This is the brute or animal realm. We begin to play deaf and dumb, intelligently playing ignorant which means one is completely concealing another area, the area of detachment and a sense of humor. It is symbolized by animals which cannot laugh or smile. Although they many have joy or pain the sense of irony or humor is not known to them. This attitude is developed by setting up things as secure, practical and solid. Such a person may be efficient and highly mechanical at the same time. Anything unpredictable fundamentally threatens the basic pattern.

Much of the time, however, I seem to get along pretty well. I try to be a solid citizen. I have trained myself well and am skilled in the practical reason of our culture that can get things done and bring about the good things in life. All in all I do well. I try to be a good human being. In fact this is called the human realm or world. It is based on passion, the tendency to explore and enjoy. It is the area of development and constantly trying to enrich. One invents all sorts of tools and builds up his or her world with tremendous success and achievement. This in turn produces more sources of passion and intrigue. Our egoism is strengthened and pride develops.

As my work develops I find that I am running to stay ahead. If I am to climb the ladder of success then I have to find more and more ways to stay ahead of those who are trying to get my job or the next promotion. I run faster and faster and begin to be envious of others. In fact my jealousy begins to seek ways I can put others down who are ahead of me or seem to get in my way. This is the realm of the jealous gods. It is the realm of jealousy and envy, not as we generally think of them, but based on survival and winning. It is to function within the realm of intrigue. There is always a tendency to look back and suspect your own shadow whether it a a real shadow or someone's strategy. It embraces a form of paranoia that picks up all sorts of faint and tiny objects, suspecting each one of them. Every experience in life is regarded as something threatening. Intrigue is one's life style and whole livelihood. It can be based on any kind of relationship: emotional, business, family, friends, social, etc.

After all is said and done though I have been doing well. I am a good provider, husband and father. I support my community, go to church and give to charities. I try to be a good person and have begun to get somewhat of a reputation for taking upon myself civic duties. We have just moved to a new section of town which sort of symbolizes our success. I play it low key though. I allow neither I nor my family to put on airs. The other day I was introduced as a saintly kind of person. This is the realm of the gods. This is the final realm. One begins to realize one's individuality, and individuality brings a sense of responsibility, of maintaining oneself. This is not without pleasure and gives a sense of peace. It is a realm of pride. It is pride in the sense of building one's own centralized body, preserving one's own health; in other words, it is intoxication with the existence of ego. You begin to give thanks that you "are" somebody, and this of course, leads to maintaining yourself which in turn brings a natural state of comfort and pleasure, complete absorption into oneself.

Sometimes things go well. At other times, I seem to go back and forth from one realm to another. This continuous change in posture begins to produce great anxiety in me. The term "rat race", "pressure", "stress" all seem to describe my feelings. The swirl build up, the claims mount, people won't let me alone, I jump from one thing to another, there seems to be no rest. I can't even get away from it all. Even if I take a break or a few

days off the pressure still mounts. The furies seem to have hold of me. I took some sessions with a therapist and that seemed to settle me down a little. I hope it lasts.

At this point something may happen. The furies may grab me again so to speak, I may go into deep despair or despondency, or I may become completely exhausted with it all and not be able to go on. I may even think I am losing my mind. The happening may come as a cataclysmic event or a slow erosion in my life that eats all defenses away. In either case finally a dam breaks. Awareness bursts into my being that all the six realms or any other type realm I might dream up cannot be a final base for my life, that none of the relationships I create to make my life meaningful is adequate. My the walls around my ego have collapsed. This is not to say that these are passing thoughts. The happening is so total that it is as if the whole cosmos itself stands in judgment that all my attempts have been futile and what I have been searching for does not lie within the supremacy of the ego.

If I accept this judgment then I am facing the Light. From then on Paradise becomes the predominate vision in my life no matter how dim it may seem at times. I can never exist seriously in the six realms again even though they may still taunt me as we will see later in the paper. The death at the end of this stage is confirmed by resurrection as the second stage is entered.

Second Stage. Either the unconscious has burst open for me or I have delved into the unconscious, or perhaps better, both. We have entered the stage which the Bardo Thodol calls one of karmic illusion, that is, illusions which result from the psychic residue of humanity. Just as the physical heredity gives us certain characteristics, so psychic heredity does the same. We can see these in traits of character, special gifts, etc. But psychic heredity includes more. It includes forms or categories of the imagination which are organs, so to speak, of the pre-rational psyche. This psychic structure gives a form and direction to all experience. Specific content only appears in the course of an individual's life. These inherited archetypes, then, only emerge into consciousness when personal experiences have rendered them visible, that is, personal experience is taken up in precisely these forms.

From the standpoint of the ordinary realms of life, moving into the second state is the end of all conscious, rational, morally responsible conduct of life. It is a dangerous reversal of the aims and intentions of the conscious mind. From the standpoint of the one on the journey it is a voluntary surrender to karmic illusion. It is a sacrifice of the ego's stability and a surrender to the extreme uncertainty of what must seem like a chaotic riot of phantasmal forms. As Jung puts it:

Fear of self-sacrifice lurks deep in every ego, and this fear is often only the precariously controlled demand of the unconscious forces to burst out in full strength. No one who strives for selfhood (individuation) is spared this dangerous

passage, for that which is feared also belongs to the wholeness of the self - sub-human, or supra-human, world of psychic "dominants" [archetypes]. (EW p. xlvii)

Karmic illusion springs from belief in a visionary world of an extremely irrational nature, which neither accords with nor derives from our rational judgment but is the exclusive product of uninhibited imagination. It is no wonder then that this stage is entitled, "The Bardo of the Experiencing of Reality". The reality experienced is the reality of thought. The "thought-forms" appear as realities, fantasy takes on real form, and the terrifying dream evoked by karmic illusions and played out by the unconscious archetypes begins. The divinities appearing in the Bardo are so numerous and their symbolism so complex that it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them. Only a few key deities will be discussed.

The first to appear is the all-destroying God of Death, the epitome of all terrors; he is followed by 28 "power-holding" and sinister goddesses and the 58 "blood-drinking" goddesses. In spite of their demonic aspect, which appears as a confusing chaos of terrifying attributes and monstrosities, a certain order is already discernible. We find that there are companies of gods and goddesses who are arranged with the mystic colors and light-paths of the wisdom deities.

These are symbols of the Bardo. We are perfectly free to substitute for the gods of this stage our own culture's symbols, religious or otherwise, as well as psychological descriptions of the happening. There are many descriptions of this happening. When our lives are turned completely inside out we are in total disarray. When the hold of the ego is broken and our center is expanded freely beyond, confusion reigns and fears stalks us from every side. There is no way out. One has to completely die to the old way of life. To accept this new dimension of the unconscious to which one has been exposed, is symbolically called a rebirth, or a death and resurrection.

When the unconscious releases these images, insight into the pure light allows us to see that these thought-forms all come out of oneself. Both the demonic forms and the light-paths of wisdom are the radiations of one's own psychic faculties. This allows us to move on through the "Wrathful Deities" and "Knowledge Holding Deities". These deities are visions that appear out of the intellect and throat center respectively. You know you have seen the collapse of the ego's tyrannical attempt to reduce life to meet circumscribed limits. You know that life cannot finally be lived in fragments. And you know that it is impossible to return to that state. Even though you will continue to try to return, you will know.

We now move to the vision of the five "Peaceful Deities" which are the same but different forms of the Wrathful Deities. They are manifestations of the light-paths of wisdom. (Deities, as used here, are personifications of archetypal forms of primordial

and universal forces, laws, or spiritual influences of our basic nature, which sustain us and finally make our emancipation possible.) This is the last part of stage two just before one moves into stage three, which is the clear light, Paradise regained.

In walking the five light-paths of wisdom one is taking steps toward the light. It would seem this is the continuous journey of any individual person -- always on the journey. In it he or she holds the paradox of uniting this world and the otherworld. This is the plane of existence to which we are called, so to speak. When we are called to live continuously in the clear light without any lapse in consciousness then "grace" has allowed us a glory beyond comparison. However, until then we are always on a journey. Our vision is clear, our steps are firm, and our goal achieved. It would seem this is illustrated by those who have had a NDE. They have seen the Otherworld and they returned to live out their lives in this world. They remain in a state of peace for they know their goal in their daily life's activities -- living in the otherworld in the midst of this world.

All five Peaceful deities, four guaridans of the gates, and four goddesses, along with the six realms of the world now appear simultaneously. The five deities fill up all the space, all direction, as well as any corner of an emotional situation. There is no gap, so escape, no sidetrack. They completely surround you with compassion. In addition, all the lessor divinities and guardians have many ways to block your attempts to escape. At the same time you are reduced to facing the six realms of the world. All these visions appear from you heart center, which is associated with emotion, passion and pleasure.

New life has been given to me. I have been shown the way. Yet I cling to unconscious tendencies due to the power of habituation and find myself under the influence of the emotion of envy. At this point the radiant green light path of all performing wisdom will come, together with the light path of the realm of the jealous gods. This first light-path, symbolized by the first peaceful deity, (again, if we read the text backwards) is the wisdom that accomplishes all actions. It is filled with high energy, is in contact with the actual living situation, sweeps away all hindrances, and has the power to fulfill the actions undertaken. As such it is unerring action and perseverance especially in all things spiritual.

How many times have you in attempting to accomplish something have become rattled, stunned, overwhelmed or confused. In one sense such experiences and the experience of wisdom have the same quality; they occupy or take over the living situation. The difference is that wisdom completely covers the ground of all possibilities, seeing all possible ways of dealing with the situation in terms of subject and object, energy, texture, temperament, speed, space, etc. calling on the play of spontaneity. On the other hand, confusion, etc. can only deal with the situation in a very limited way. Again in situations

such as confusion we become frustrated, judgmental, argumentative, and envious of the wise.

Do not be afraid of the radiant green light. It will burn away the poison (refusal to come to terms with the shadow) of your jealousy and envy. Recognize it as the wisdom light. Take refuge in it and do not try to escape. Even if you escape it will stay with you inseparably. If you do not follow the light-path of all performing wisdom the realm of the jealous gods takes over your life, and you experience unbearable misery from fighting and quarreling. Feel longing for the luminous, brilliant, green light, and say this inspiration prayer with one-point concentration on the symbol that holds the wisdom for you:

When through intense envy I wander in old habit patterns,
On the radiant light path of action accomplishing wisdom,
May I be led by the guide of my higher Self;
Help me cross the bardo's dangerous pathway,
And bring me to the state of perfect humanness.

If I concentrate my attention in this way, I will walk on the rainbow bridge into the heart of my Highest Self and become one with the Source of All.

Yet even after being shown this before, I am distorted by the unconscious tendencies accumulated by my intense desire and try to escape. Along with the light path of the realm of the hungry ghosts, the radiant red light path of discriminative wisdom appears. It is also called discriminating awareness wisdom. Its basic quality is magnetizing, seductive, invitingly warm, open and compassionate. It is a compassion that is very detailed and precise, and sees in all directions. Discriminative does not mean acceptance and rejection but in coolness and detachment simply seeing things as they are. It enables compassion for each thing separately yet all things as one.

Do not be afraid of the radiant red light for it burns away the poison (refusal to take the shadow into my wholeness) of your intense desire, attachment or lust. Recognize it as your own natural radiance and merge with it and accept it as your own. Even if you escape it will stay with you inseparably. If you finds your compassion pulling you toward one object disregarding others with the tendency to play deaf and dumb and sneak away from the complete picture into the sidetracks of ordinary passions, then the realm of the hungry ghosts begins to take over, and you will experience unbearable misery from hunger and thirst. It is an obstacle blocking your freedom. Do not yearn for it. Feel longing for the luminous, brilliant red light and say this inspiration prayer with intense one-pointed concentration on the symbol that holds the wisdom for you;

When through intense desire I wander in old habit pttterns,
On the radiant light-path of discriminating wisdom,
May I be led by the guide of my Essential Self;
Help me to cross the space between dead habits and new life,

And bring me to a peaceful state of complete acceptance.

By saying this inspiration prayer with deep devotion, I will dissolve into the rainbow path and merge into the heart of my Essential Self and attain at-one-ment or completion in life.

Yet even after being shown the way again, I am afraid of the light rays of compassion, and being trapped by pride and neurotic veils I try to escape. At this point along with the light path of the human realm comes the radiant yellow light path of the wisdom of equality, or of equanimity, a non-discriminating light. The quality of richness, wealth and space yield to all realms that of equality. This space gives perspective on the wealth of each. One can observe objectively. At the same time the light wisdom of equanimity does not grasp after the attractions of the pleasant, nor push away the discomforts of the unpleasant. Instead of trying to keep one experience and to avoid another, to pull this close, to push that away, one responds to every moment with equanimity, with a balanced mind. We continue to observe ours and other actions objectively and with detachment. Thus acting in this wisdom is non-action in the light of every day world, that is, it is not motivated with attraction or aversion. At the same time it develops sensitivity to what is taking place in both the inside and outside actions of people including ourselves.

Recognize this light as the natural radiance of your own mind. Let it relax in a state of non-action and be drawn to the light with longing. Let its yellow brilliance burn away your illusion holding your intense pride and egoism. If you find yourself succumbing to desires and reactions there is the possibility that you would rather run into very simple and self-satisfied little routines, and that little area is pride, the dim light of the human world. Do not be attracted to it. Do not yearn for it. Feel longing for the luminous, brilliant yellow light, and say this inspiration prayer with intense one-pointed concentration on the symbol that holds the wisdom for you:

When through intense pride I wander in unconscious tendencies,
On the radiant light-path of wisdom of equality,
May I be guided by my beloved, my protector;
Help me to cross the dangerous pathway between dying and being
 reborn,
And bring me to a perfect state of the pure and shining Void.

If I concentrate my attention in this way, with humility and faith, I will walk the rainbow bridge and merge into the heart of the Beloved and attain liberation within the Voidness of the Void.

Yet again, even after being shown the way I am afraid of the lights and rays because of my aggression and old habit patterns I try to escape. At this time along with the dim light of the hell world comes the luminous white light-path of mirror-like wisdom, the radiant white light that reflects everything calmly and uncritically. Everything I come in contact with serves as a mirror to shine back reality as it is. At first it appears in the

form of my own responses to life. I see someone perform a stupid act. Obviously it is not one I would do, so I am highly critical of them and their actions. Yet, the mirror's reflection shines through that ruse into my inner most being. I see there, maybe on a deeper level or dimension of life, the place where I manifest even greater stupidity. The mirror goes on until I am completely naked, so to speak, exposed to all my faults, evils, rebellions and hidings. But the mirror does not stop there. I identify with those people I like and agree with. The mirror won't let me stop with that. It reflects my identity with those others which I do not acknowledge: enemies, sufferings ones, great ones, evil ones, alienated peoples, and on and on. There is no stopping the expansion it seems. I finally see what J. Krishnamurti often said: "You are the world."

Recognize this luminous white light as wisdom that burns away the obscuring passion of violence, anger, hatred and pride. If this becomes too big a burden to carry and you become defensive, argumentative and aggressive toward anyone or thing that uncovers the mirror, the dim light of the hell world will appear in your terror. Do not be attracted to this light, do not yearn for it. Feel longing for the luminous, brilliant, white light, and say this inspiration prayer with one-point concentration on the symbol that holds the wisdom for you:

When through intense aggression I wander in old habit patterns
On the radiant light-path of the mirror-like wisdom,
May I be guided and led by the guide of my higher Self;
Help me to cross the dangerous pathway between dread and
bliss,
And place me in the state of the perfect ecstasy.

If I concentrate my attention in this way, with humility and faith, I will walk on the rainbow bridge into the heart of the Beloved and attain completion in blissful happiness.

You have journeyed in the light-path of the four great wisdoms. If you put these evenly spaced on the circumference of a circle there is another light-path leading to the greatest wisdom and that is in the center of the circle. At this point you will begin to have second thoughts. You may be terrified by the brilliant, radiant lights that have appeared. These may even be accompanied by sounds like the great roar of thunder. You have been cautioned not to be afraid, for these are but your own projections, the natural radiance and sound of your own higher Self or the basic essence of reality. Do not be dulled and play ignorant that this is as such. Instead the whole of space will shine with a radiant blue light out of the Center Realm, the All-pervading Circle.

This is the light-path of Divine wisdom or Right Knowledge which shines in one's consciousness the all pervading wisdom born of voidness, limitless, clear space in which every thing exists as it really is. It knows that all things rise out of the void and return to the void, that everything of this world passes away. It

gives full and perfect freedom. Here one acts only out of compassion knowing no boundary or limitation either in perception or sphere of activities.

Recognize this light-path as the wisdom of Voidness and let its brilliant blue light rays burn away the old dead patterns of stupidity and ignorance. But if the old habit patters begin to pull at you and you feel an emotion of pleasure toward the dim light of the realm of the gods, do not be frightened by the light-path of the all pervading wisdom, but feel longing for the brilliant blue light, and repeat this inspiration prayer with intense concentration on your higher self:

When through intense ignorance I wander in the six lower
dimensions,
Bathing in the radiant blue of the light-path of Supreme
Wisdom,
May my essential Self be guided by the inexorable wisdom of
Reality;
Help me to cross the bardo's dangerous pathway between death
and resurrection,
And bring me to the liberation of the pure Clear Light.

By saying this inspiration prayer with deep devotion you will walk the rainbow bridge into the heart of the Beloved, the seed of all universal forces, and attain complete union in the pure Clear Light.

Third Stage. With this final vision the karmic illusions cease. Consciousness is weaned away from all form and from all attachment to objects, and returns to the timeless, inchoate state of the Void. Thus, at this point one passes into the pure clear Light. It is without form or color, for color would mean that it has form. It is the symbol for the radiation of the Void. One's nature is that of the Clear Light, the endless Void which has no qualities or characteristics. One in the pure light could be interpreted to say: My

deepest nature is the Clear Light itself; I am one; there is no other. I am the voidness of the void, the eternal unborn, the uncreated, neither real nor unreal. All that I have been conscious of is my own play of consciousness, a dance of light, the swirling pattern of light in infinite extension, endless endlessness, the Absolute beyond change, existence, reality. I am inseparable from the Clear Light; I cannot be born, die, exist, or change. I know now this is true. (G p. 77)

The Void is a term strange to us. It is the ultimate nature of Reality. It is sometimes translated as "emptiness," "voidness," or "nothingness". It is also sometimes called "the Godhead", "stillness", "silence", "the final mystery", the unknown unknown." It is alogical, to which no categories drawn from the world of name and form apply. But the Void is neither blankness, featureless or vacant absence; nor is it nihilism. It

is simply Reality before we slice it up with conceptualism. It is beyond all mental concepts including form and color. However, at the same time, "Being" and "Is-ness" is applicable even in the case of the Void, which is experienced as "is". Thus Reality is referred to as "suchness" or "thusness" -- the real world "as it is", not as it is classified or described. The Void has been referred to as "seamless", the "seamless coat of the universe." (Whitehead) All things and events in the universe are aspects of one fundamental Whole, the very source and suchness which is the Real itself. The Void transcends but includes all manifestations. As such Jung can say in psychological language it represents the Collective Unconscious, as being the matrix of everything. In poetic language it is Paradise, the final resting place. It is that place that is the final resting place for all beings, sometimes called the Heavenly Home.

A Recapitulation of the Journey

Our journey has taken us through three stages. Each is a different dynamic and a different aspect of life. Stage One through to the Wrathful Deities is the fundamental collapse of the ego's attempt to delimit our lives. It symbolically has been called a death and resurrection, for if we embrace the happening as exactly what should happen -- a reaffirmation of it -- we have new life of openness. This is a once-and-for-all experience. We know what happened and the kind of exiliration and freedom it has given us, and how it has changed our lives from dread to bliss. We have turned to Facing the Light. We know we can never go back to the old ways.

And yet we do. But life is different now, for we indeed know that we cannot live the old life, and we know what the new life can be. So we enter Stage Two. This is the stage where the same happening happens over and over again. Life is one of continually dying and being reborn. This is poetically the path of the rainbow bridge. We are taking Steps toward the Light. Each step on the path is one of rebirth.

The five peaceful deities or wisdoms do not necessarily come one after another in our daily life. Rather particular wisdoms come when needed to meet the specific habit patterns to which one is succumbing. Each wisdom is different and yet not dissimilar, for each has the quality of reflecting or opening the door to the others. Perhaps the last picture of the five is more appropriate for a holding image -- the four wisdoms surrounding the fifth of Divine Wisdom which in one respect is the culmination or center of the swirl of the others.

Each step on the rainbow path of Stage Two is a recapitulation of Stage One. At the same time it is sustained by the vision of Stage Three. That is, entrance into Stage Three or Paradise happens in the rebirth dimension of Stage One. But Stage Three or Paradise is always coming in the future. It isn't a linear extension from Stage Two nor is it a static state in which one

exists. It comes both now and is always coming again. It is a promise but a promise that is over and over again retasted. In Stage One, Paradise enters our life, in Stage Two that happening is continually reappropriated, and in Stage Three it is completed. The full realization of this dynamic is all that matters -- the canopy in which all else takes place. So the journey goes on across the rainbow path which bridges this world and Paradise. We walk Stage One, Two and Three in their dynamic relationship.

The question comes up, "Can we measure how far we have gone on the path?" The answer is both yes and no. It is "Yes" in that we can see signs of the journey. Perhaps the first awareness is how far we have failed to come on the journey. All ways we have had of measuring a journey is turned up side down. Our morality has been blown into a thousand parts. As life is moved beyond one boundary after another we see the fragments of the self raising up conflicting values. Ambiguity becomes almost unbearable as we attempt to embrace the opposites. All this blows our ego's morality apart, but points toward the foundation of a genuine ethic. Yet, after a time we do begin to see that we are responding more and more to wisdom's searing lights. And, in Stage Two's call, to die again and again in order to be reborn, we see that our dread of dying becomes the bliss of rebirth. Our willing increases to follow our bliss.

On the other hand the answer is "No". From the standpoint of studying how the great ones have responded to the visions and final no-vision, phenomenological descriptions have been laid out. But these are maps of the journey and not the journey itself. All people have to walk their own path. No one else can walk it for them. And perhaps when we think we have gone far down the path it is precisely to discover that maybe we have to start all over. But to walk the path is to be delivered from this kind of judgment and its anxiety. No one can finally judge another's path, or even their own. We have only one task and it is to walk the rainbow path, and our only goal is to walk the rainbow path. And by doing so we find our peace and comfort, we find our strength and sustenance, and we find our bliss and ecstasy.

But what if we stumble on the path? If we do, is Paradise lost then? This is to misunderstand the dynamic of the stages and the rainbow bridge. Yet the "stumble" itself is a gift of the path. It jars our awareness to see again that Paradise, depending on one's way of expressing it, is only a step away, a breath away, a reaffirmation away, a decision away, a return to our center. But this is to continue on the journey -- to walk the rainbow path -- to live in the otherworld in the midst of this world.

CONCLUSION

A Journey to the Now. Facing the Light and Steps toward the Light

The view of the world as expressed in Part I and II can be seen as a globally interconnected world, in which biological, psychological, social and environmental phenomena are all interdependent. The view is ecological in nature. However, it goes far beyond concerns with environmental protection to an intuitive awareness of the oneness of life, the interdependence of its multiple manifestations and its cycles of change and transformation. The human spirit is understood in a transpersonal sense, that is as the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels connected to the cosmos as a whole.

Modern physics lays the basis for the holistic and ecological world view. It emphasizes the fundamental interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena, and the intrinsically dynamic nature of the physical reality. However, to move to describe living organisms we have to move beyond physics. One such framework which seems to be a natural extension of the concepts of modern physics is general systems theory. It is not a well defined theory, but more a particular approach, a language and a particular perspective.

The systems view sees the world in terms of relationships and integrations. Systems are integrated wholes. Their properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units. The systems approach emphasizes basic principles of organization such as in nature where every organism is seen as an integrated whole and thus a living system. This same aspect of wholeness is exhibited by social systems of all varieties. Living systems tend to form multi-leveled structures of systems within systems.

Living systems have a dynamic nature and all structure is seen as a manifestation of underlying processes, and these systems are described as patterns of organization. These patterns include a variety of processes and phenomena which can be seen as different aspects of the same dynamic principle, i.e. of self-organization. Or putting it another way, a living organism is a self-organizing system. Its order in structure and function is established by the system itself. These systems are always at work, that is, they have to maintain a continuous exchange of energy and matter with their environment to stay alive. They are in the process of continuous self-renewal. During all this the pattern of organization remains stable. In addition, the phenomena of self-healing, regeneration, and adaptation to environmental changes are closely related to the self-renewal aspect of self organization.

In self-renewal the living systems break down and build up their structures in continual cycles. However, the structures that are continually being replaced are themselves living organisms. Birth and death now appear as a central aspect of

self-organization, the very essence of life. Death, then is not the opposite of life but an essential aspect of it. Prigogine's thesis can be seen from this aspect. Whenever the old breaks down and everything goes into chaos, that is, a death occurs, there is a "jump" into new forms of living systems

Erich Jantsch stated that in dealing with matters of human design for a human world there were three level in a hierarchy of knowledge for human purpose. They are "know-how" of ordering, and implementing well perceived, goal oriented action; "know-what", the setting of goals in a systemic context; and "know-where-to" the level of highest guidance "at which we strive for an overall sense of movement and direction, of the dynamics of our individual lives as well as the lives of human systems of all scopes and sizes, and of humanity in general." (J p.xiii)

This paper proposes that Facing the Light (Paradise) is the basic "know-where-to". It is the ultimate motivating vision. This vision has been expressed in many ways and metaphors that meets the need of the times and the expression of the age in which it is devised. There may be levels of expressions like "progress" as a canopy image, and "increased growth" as an economic sub-image have been in the past. However, these expressions of the vision need to be molded in harmony with a one's view of reality such as that described throughout the paper.

Along with the motivating vision is a sustaining vision, Steps toward the Light. There are many miscalculations, wrong turns, inadequate approaches, and failures -- that is many deaths -- in the life of every person and social organization. The "steps toward the Light" continually releases one to continue joyfully on the journey.

It would seem that what these two metaphors point to allows individuals and organizations to create goals that temporally embodies the vision they have forged out of the master vision. It infuses in those goals a sense of high purpose and destiny. At the same time it knows that the sociological embodiment has built in seeds of its own demise. Tomorrow demands a death, a letting go of the old models. Then in facing the unknown a freedom is given to "jump" into recreating temporal models to embody the vision anew.

Everyone and every organization operates out of some presupposition(s) both unconsciously and consciously. It would seem that the more consciousness brought to those presupposition(s) is a vital necessity for creating and maintaining proper visions. No one can devise or demand of anyone else what their presuppositions should be. However, in active and open dialogue, individuals and organizations can clarify their own presuppositions and revise them in light of the best wisdom they may determine at that time. In the meantime, behind all our feeble and grand attempts, there lies the call for Facing the Light, and continuously taking Steps toward the Light -- living in the Otherworld in the midst of this world.

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