

# **You Are the Hero**

by Sanfrid E. Odhner

Copyright © 2001 Aubrey C. Odhner

# Preface

This book, a labor of love for many years, was close to completion when the author Sanfrid Odhner died. Since then there have been a number of attempts to prepare the book for publication, but the work has not been completed. Thanks to Nils Odhner, the bulk of the text has been converted to computer text. Thanks to the General Church Office of Education and Oula Synnestvedt, the graphics have been scanned. I have taken their work, done some formatting and minor editing, and converted it to a format that can be accessed through the Internet.

Yet the work is not complete. The conclusion of the book needs to be sorted out, with perhaps some further writing. The figures are scans of rough drafts, and need to be recreated and typeset. Many of the footnotes are currently missing, and they need to be found and inserted. I am uncertain about how some parts at the end of the book fit together. Yet I felt that it is better to present the ideas in a preliminary form rather than to allow this valuable synthesis to gather dust. My hope is that making this book available in this format may inspire someone else to bring the work to completion.

John Odhner, February 2001

# **YOU ARE THE HERO**

Myth, Mind, and Meaning  
in Emanuel Swedenborg's  
New Christian Age

By Sanfrid E. Odhner

# **PART I: THE PATH OF THE HERO**

# INTRODUCTION TO PART I

## *Myth and mind*

You are the hero of the myths.

Yours are the labors of Hercules, and Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece. You are Osiris, Gautama Sakyamuni, Gilgamesh, Noah, Arthur, Robin Hood. Since the turn of the century, mythologists have found in the vast variety of names and episodes by which the mythical adventure is told a single story. In every time and every culture that a legendary hero has been celebrated, his biography exhibits a basic structure which, beneath its relatively superficial cultural differences, tells just the story that is told by all the rest.

That story is your story.

It wasn't long ago that scholars dismissed the myths as naive superstition. But a revolution began with Sigmund Freud's exploration of an unconscious level of the mind. Freud found that our dreams speak for that hidden realm of feelings, welling up into our thoughts when consciousness sleeps. He discovered that dreams are not literal, but allegorical: they seize on the objects of conscious experience, combining them in strange and unreal ways to impress on consciousness the needs and desires of the inner man.

In other words, dreams speak in symbols. And Freud soon came to realize that there is a striking similarity between dream imagery and the eerie events and fabulous creatures of the myths. Dreams are more individual and spontaneous; myth has been subject to the refinements of cultural tradition. But both have in them urgent messages for waking man, similarly and invariably expressed in symbols.

Striking off from Freud's initial insights, psychologists have come to see that through dream and myth the secret level of the mind paints their own portrait and reveals the manner of their working. And far from dismissing myth as childish or primitive nonsense they are examining the myths today with an almost awed respect for the intuitive self-knowledge of our early ancestors.

Dreams come to us in fragments. The myths, from cultural influence, have been shaped to more continuous or narrative form. From the analysis of myth we can discover how dream-fragments fit into the larger mythic patterns, and see what the process of the mind is taking place in the unconscious. Most dream episodes seize on symbols from the dreamer's own experience, but in their underlying theme of motif present some aspect of the mythical adventure.

These remarkable studies have revealed the mind to be a vaster wonderland than we can grasp, reaching beyond the boundaries of time and space, a kingdom ruled by mythic laws. The conscious you, its rightful heir and destined hero, has been exiled from this realm: it is this which makes it an unconscious kingdom. And your hero-consciousness cannot return to it until the completion of his quest.

The task of consciousness is to be shaped by the adventure of life itself that—as the hero—"he" may be reconciled to the lost lands of feeling that he left in our infancy. Through the enigmatic messages of dream and reverie the gods of unconscious seek to guide him, and its tyrant powers place the monsters of illusion in his waking path. The hero's challenge is to hear and heed the former, dare and defeat the latter, and so restore the wholeness and integrity of all the countries of the mind.

Not all psychologists accept the relevance of myth, nor all mythologists the psychoanalytic interpretation of it. Scholars in any field tend to resist broad correlations with an unfamiliar discipline. But even the unaccepting have produced evidence which—viewed, as we will review it, within the context of the whole—suggests that the role of the hero in you has an immediate significance and far meaning that make it the most important single fact of your existence.

You, your ego—the “I” you mean when you think of yourself as you\*—<sup>1</sup>you are Dionysus and Apollo, Moses and Elijah, Romulus and Siegfried. You are the Norse god Odin, the Celtic hero Llew Llawgyffes, Watu Ganung of Java. If you feel your life to be less challenging or adventurous than theirs, you may simply not have heard your summons to the quest.

But if you find yourself despairing of your failed potentials, sensible of a prize that is rightly yours but beyond your reach, perhaps an understanding of the path trod by these mythic heroes will call you to your own unique adventure.

### ***Fact or fantasy?***

What we are undertaking here is a search for that path. But it is also and primarily a search for a genuine meaning in the adventure which shows it to be the most pressing reality of our seemingly disenchanted lives.

Our first explorations will be of the scientists’ discoveries about myth and mind, to find the allegorical dimensions of the hero’s story. There is ample evidence of meaningful analogies. The makers of the myths spoke not of mundane confrontations and itineraries, but the mind’s own journey to fulfillment. And the modern shaman—the psychoanalyst—has unmasked the personifications and read the symbols, and affirmed the astonishing accuracy of myth as a description of our mental processes.

But there is a grievous loss in these reconstructions. The modern theories restore to the hero in us his lost pantheons, but stripped of meaning and purpose. From empirical traditions and mechanistic axioms, they present our most intimate and immediate experience—that which occurs within our minds—as a wonderfully spun illusion. Our visions of ideals and destinies, of values and a beckoning perfection, are “fantasies”: shimmerings on the waves of mindless instinct. We misread, they say, the universal physics, and ascribe to ourselves and our fortuitous existence a meaning not really to be found in this cosmic accident of blind chance.

Even if the hero you would be seeking only a psychological accommodation with such futility, you still may find some satisfaction in Part I of this book. In it we will try to bring together the more credited findings of mythologist and psychoanalyst, to see what objective model of “reality” we can build from them. Although purged of any “spiritual taint,” their correlations of the mythic motifs and the workings of the mind are graphic and impressive.

But the goal of this exploration, and the subject of its later parts, is an affirmation of the palpable reality of those things we see and touch with our inner senses, and the world discovered for us by their evidence.

I hope to show that ancient man knew mind to be a gift which could be shaped into the image of the Giver. Man’s imitations of perfection in the use of his sublime endowment, creativity, have accounted for his every great achievement. An aspiring credence has been the essential

---

1. .This informal definition of the ego will serve for the present. The concept of component aspects of the psyche will be further developed as we go along.

human impetus for more millennia than there have been decades of “scientific detachment” and spiritual denial.

A rational affirmation is more demanding than a blanket incredulity. Doubt can deny, or dismiss as fantasy, whatever evidence it will. Affirmation must accept as real and show the unity of all the evidence of both realities. The hero in you can no more refuse the testimony of your physical senses than the skeptic; but you must also accept those of your inward kingdom—the intimate sensations of goodness, verity, and purpose.

The hero’s choice is not which senses or which values to accept as real and valid, but to credit or not the one within the other. Psychologists know the choice is up to the hero in you. “Since it is the point of reference for the field of consciousness,” Carl Jung observed, “the ego is the subject of all successful attempts at adaptation so far as these are achieved by the will”<sup>1</sup>—or by conscious, voluntary negotiation of the path.

The call to the hero originates in the inner realms of mind where feeling reigns. The challenge to the hero in you, your conscious self, is to find in the things and events of the sensate, time-space world—in the objective evidence as symbol—the presence of those values which your spiritual senses feel and hear and see within.

### ***Emanuel Swedenborg***

Because the world is vast, and our experiences of it so brief and circumscribed, we credit as evidence of our physical environment the reports of whole armies of investigators.

Our lonely searches within ourselves are similarly limited. Each of us has but one hero to explore his seemingly private universe of mind. None of us can hope to understand the common features of our inner environment, unless he is prepared to credit the adventures and discoveries of other spiritual explorers who have more deeply penetrated the farther searches of the mind and have observed more carefully the wonders of it.

Modern researchers into subjective phenomena have given us statistical criteria for judging the credibility even of alleged explorations that go far beyond the experiences of most of us. Ironically it is often the researchers—those who gather the reports of others—who tend to ascribe such experiences to “fantasy.” The researchers’ subjects have little doubt that the phenomena they have encountered are real and meaningful. The cartographers, in effect, have drawn exquisite maps from the similar reports of a thousand travelers, but discount their sources. Their skepticism carries less force than the first-hand accounts of the travelers themselves. It does not detract from the value of their charts.

Our first endeavor will be to develop a composite charting of the lands of myth and mind, from these modern findings, that we can agree is objectively faithful to the evidence. Our authorities will include mythologists Lord Raglan, Mercia Eliade, and Joseph Campbell, and such credited psychologists as Freud, Jung, Erik Erikson, and Jean Piaget.

To discover the spiritual realities implicit in the model that these scholars will help us to build, we will then turn to the 18th-century Swedish scientist-philosopher, Emanuel Swedenborg, whose spiritual system is the theme and thesis of this study. Emerson contended that to understand the genius of Swedenborg “requires almost a genius equal to his own.”<sup>2</sup> That is no longer true.

---

1.

Swedenborg's anticipation of the modern discoveries about the form and functioning of the mind has made his penetrating insights far easier to understand today than in his own or even Emerson's time.

Certainly Swedenborg's comprehensive and profoundly analytical accounts of his more than twenty years of exploration in the worlds of the mind and spirit—largely discounted for two centuries—gain new credibility from the contemporary findings. His inner topography of mind accords not only with the psychoanalysts' unconscious, but in its hierarchical structure with their several levels of relatively unconscious thought and feeling. His system defines the allegorical nature of myth and dream, and the symbolism through which their deeper meaning is expressed. His descriptions of the nature and causes of extracorporeal experiences are entirely consistent with the findings of recent research into temporary "clinical death" phenomena.

Swedenborg will be more properly introduced when we begin our exploration of his thought. But the reader should not have to wait until then to know in general what lies ahead. Essentially, Swedenborg presents a rational affirmation of mankind's religious heritage. His system is a universal synthesis which attests to the validity of all spiritual experience, and reconciles the conflict between faith and reason.

He identifies the great belief-systems of the past and present as evolving variations within the single thrust of a collective human mind. Like the emerging attitudes of the individual mind through its developmental stages, each religion has made its unique contribution toward what eventually will be a spiritual "rebirth" of humanity. From this sweeping overview, Swedenborg shows primitive animism, ancient mythopoeia, oriental mysticism, and the historically oriented faiths of Jew and Christian, to have had within them the same divine authority of a benign and guiding purpose.

### ***The heroic metaphor***

This view of mankind's spiritual development gives a special significance to its mythological beginnings. Swedenborg himself does not particularly stress the story of the hero. That is my choice, and was dictated by the fact that secular scholars have singled out the hero for statistical analysis and psychological correlations.

Our reduction of the countless hero myths to a single biographical composite (Chapter 1) is essentially the development of a graphic metaphor. Our identification of its structure in contemporary psychology (Chapter 3) is primarily intended to validate and increase our understanding of that mythic formula. But the service of the metaphor itself will be as a common referent by which Swedenborg's spiritual concepts—with their systematic demonstration of a meaningful and guiding purpose within the creative process that the hero's path describes—may be found entirely consonant with the modern findings.

That exploration will begin Part II with our demonstration that the single source from which Swedenborg drew his insights and his spiritual system, the Judeo-Christian Testaments, is grandly structured to the mythic metaphor: all the myths, legends, accounts, and prophesies of the Bible—from the garden myth through to the Advent and the coming of the holy city—are in their sequence and their symbolism the counterparts of the successive episodes in the life-adventure of the hero.



Swedenborg shows this epic narrative to be an allegory, couched in the symbolic imagery of myth, of astonishing internal unity and depths of meaning. The remarkable harmony of structure between the Bible and the hero myth will allow us to relate—almost point for point—the psychological interpretations of the myths with the affirmations of man's spiritual heritage and destiny derived, two hundred years before, by Swedenborg from Scripture.

The relevance of psychology to Swedenborg's spiritual system lies in the fact that he sees the mind or psyche to be the spirit, of essential man, interacting with and governing the body. It is especially, therefore, in the area of psychological development—which Swedenborg called the “internal history” of the individual—that his exegetic derivations are susceptible to direct correlations with the empirical discoveries of modern investigators.

But Swedenborg's discoveries of meanings in the Testaments go well beyond their psychological implications, to present a unified philosophy which makes every field of human knowledge a valid consideration in the exploration of our spiritual realities. We will find the same growth—pattern that shapes our psychological development—as it is described in the heroic and the Biblical metaphors—also present in mankind's collective spiritual development, or the evolution of religious thought. Because Swedenborg sees God as the Original Creative Mind, of which each created mind is an image-in-small, the metaphors by which the mind and its creative functioning are described will also provide a graphic insight into Swedenborg's theology. Because creation is the product or projection of Divine Mind, we will find that Swedenborg's cosmogony and cosmology present a universal image of the mind as represented in the mythic formula.

Each of these discoveries sheds its light upon the Path by which the Creator, in whose image we are collectively and individually made, invites us to become of this study, is to search out that way to liberation, restoration, and spiritual fulfillment.

# Chapter 1: The Hero Cycle

## *Life of the hero*

What is the path to which heroic consciousness is called?

The myths are allegory, and they are legion. If we are to discover what message there is in them, we must sort out the essential from the frivolous in the tales themselves. Each hero story has been vulnerable to change, omission, and embellishment. But there are readily discernible common or generic elements.

“The prominent civilized nations,” mythologist Otto Rank wrote early in this century, “—the Babylonians and Egyptians, the Hebrews and the Hindus, the Persians, the Greeks and Romans, as well as the Teutons and others—all began at an early stage to glorify their national heroes—mythical princes or kings, founders of religions, dynasties, empires, or cities—in a number of poetic tales and legends. The history of the birth and of the early life of these personalities came to be especially invested with fantastic features, which in different nations—even though widely separated by space and entirely independent of each other—present a baffling similarity or, in part, a literal correspondence.”<sup>1</sup>

Rank was aware that these features were found also in the early and primitive mythologies: among the Eskimos, the aborigines of Africa, the Caribs, the natives of Polynesia.

“From the mass of chiefly biographic hero myths, we have selected those that are best known,” said Rank, “and some that are especially characteristic.” By seeking the common elements of these, Rank formulated “the standard saga itself...according to the following outline:

“The hero is the child of most distinguished parents, usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties, such as continence, or prolonged barrenness, or secret intercourse of the parents due to external prohibitions or obstacles. During or before the pregnancy, there is a prophesy, in the form of a dream or oracle, cautioning against his birth, and usually threatening danger to the father (or his representative). As a rule, he is surrendered to the water, in a box. He is then saved by the animals, or by lowly people (shepherds), and is suckled by the female animal or by a humble woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents, in a highly versatile fashion. He takes revenge on the father, on the one hand, and is acknowledged, on the other. Finally he achieves ranks and honors.”

Because his interest was specifically in the hero’s birth and early life, Rank’s attention to the quest and reign of the hero is sketchy. But a quarter of a century later, England’s Lord Raglan developed a fuller analysis.

Raglan, like Rank, began with a selection of hero legends of his own choice, “a dozen heroes whose stories are narrated in sufficient detail.” He then proceeded “to tabulate the incidents in their careers, and to regard as typical such incidents as occur in the majority of the stories....I have then fitted the pattern back on my dozen heroes, and finding that it fits, have extended it to a number of heroes from outside the classic area, with what have been to me surprising results....The pattern, then,” said Raglan, “is as follows:

1. The hero of the mother is a royal virgin;

---

1.

2. His father is a king, and
3. Often a near relative of his mother, but
4. The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
5. He is reputed to be the son of a god.
6. At birth an attempt is made, usually by his father or his maternal grandfather to kill him, but
7. He is spirited away, and
8. Reared by foster-parents in a far country.
9. We are told nothing of his childhood, but
10. On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
11. After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,
12. He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
13. Becomes king.
14. For a time he reigns uneventfully, and
15. Prescribes law, but
16. Later he loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and
17. Is driven from the throne and city, after which
18. He meets with a mysterious death,
19. Often at the top of a hill.
20. His children, if any, do not succeed him.
21. His body is not buried, but nevertheless
22. He has one or more holy sepulchres.”<sup>1</sup>

It is uncanny how these features—fifteen, eighteen, twenty of them—will be discovered even in the hero myths of remote and aboriginal tribes just newly found and studied. And each will have its place and meaning in the composite formula that we will find to be a graphic metaphor of psychological processes.\*<sup>2</sup>

But in neither of these statistical reductions, Rank’s or Raglan’s, do we find the most important feature of the heroic quest.

## ***The adventure***

What makes the hero a hero?

It is the pursuit and winning of the *prize* by which his kingdom may be saved or restored. Rank’s observation that the grown hero “finds his parents in a *highly versatile fashion*” suggests why neither he nor Raglan includes the quest, or its objective, in this outline.

Statistical method, to which Raglan’s list especially owes its strength of detail, tends to erase those features which—even if symbolically present—differ to greatly in the symbols used. And in the hero’s deeply allegorical adventure there is a particularly varied wealth of symbolism in that critical episode which yields the prize.

---

1.

2. .Our study begins with the mythologists’ conclusion. For the reader interested in the individual myths, Raglan’s application of his formula to several specific mythological heroes of various cultures is provided as a chapter supplement to be found on page .

But Joseph Campbell, from the cumulative studies of an increasingly broad range of hero myths, gives this episode a pivotal significance:

“The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero,” Campbell writes, “is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: *separation—initiation—return*: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth.

“A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.”<sup>1</sup>

Campbell’s graphics are especially helpful in their cyclic representation of the adventure. Fig. 1 depicts his “nuclear unit,” with *x* the point of separation, *y* locating initiation, and *z*, return.

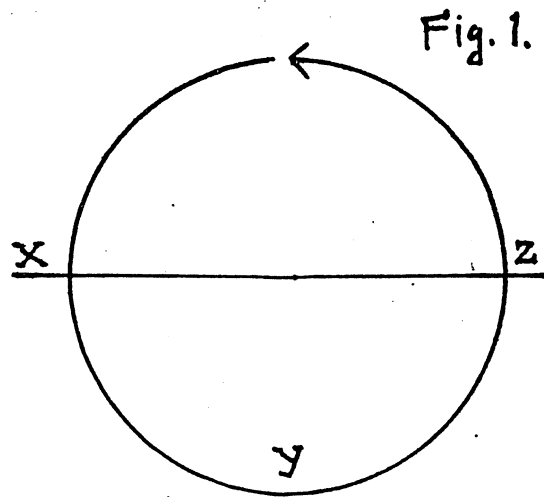
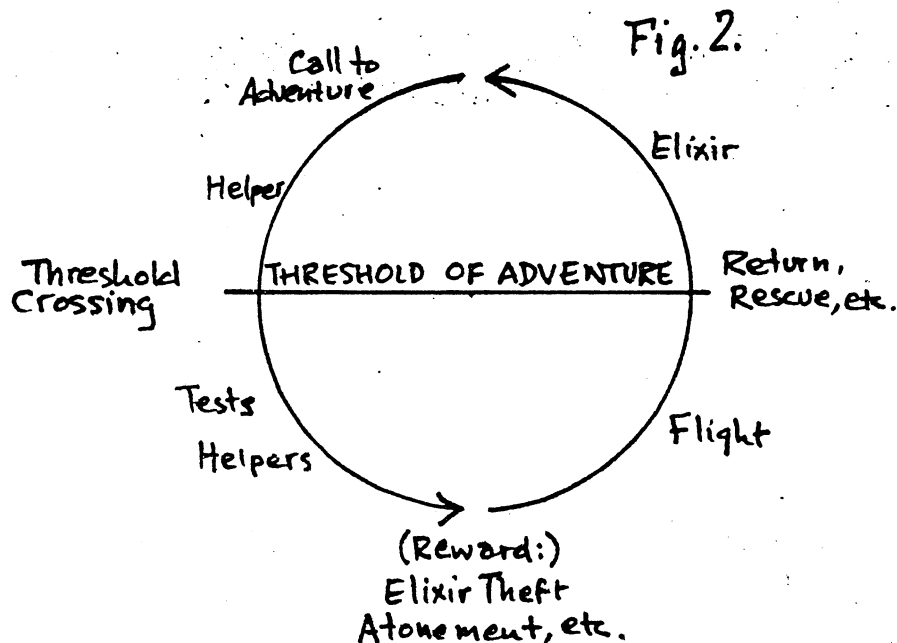


Fig. 2 is a simplification of another Campbell diagram for which he gives this fuller explanation:



“The mythological hero, setting forth from his everyday hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend into death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero’s sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage), his recognition by the father creator (father-atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again—if the powers have remained unfriendly to him—his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not, he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir).”

We should remember that the hero stories range from profundity implied by Campbell to the seemingly frivolous. Even the mythic content of the fairy tales is affirmed by their passage down through the generations. Jack’s quest up the magical beanstalk, and his thefts from the giant’s castle in the clouds, are surely on a different level than the tests by which Gautama Sakyamuni became the Buddha. But despite the disparity of symbolism, both address the hunger in us for fulfillment and issue a call to the hero in us.

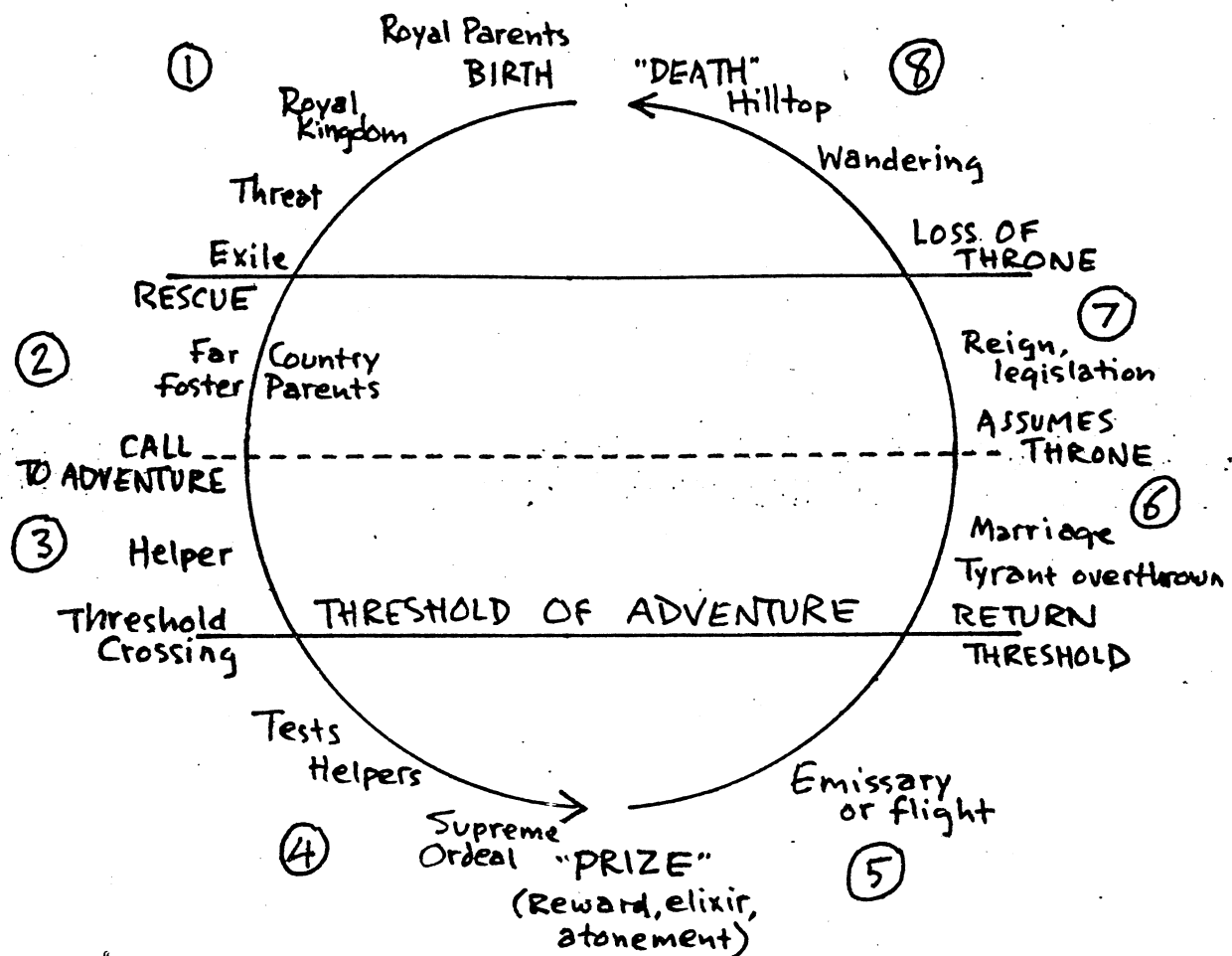
## A composite biography

If the hero's lifetime journey traces a path which we may follow, and in following be renewed, it would indeed be helpful for us to have a map of it.

A literal map won't do, of course, because each hero traverses different lands in different ways, and each at his own pace. We need a map that describes the common features of all the many hero's travels.

Rank, Raglan, and Campbell have given us an abundance of those features, and an idea of their normal sequence. Let us see what happens when we bring their more important elements together in an expanded representation (Fig. 3) of Campbell's graphic cycle. If we keep the win-

Fig. 3.



ning of the prize at the nadir of the round, we find ourselves with four distinct stages in the descent and four matching stages of ascent:

1. The first stage of the hero's journey is from his birth in the royal kingdom to exile. It includes the attempt on his life and his removal from danger, often by being "surrounded to the water in a box" (Rank).

2. Spirited to a “far country,” the hero is rescued by animals and raised by humble foster-parents. This stage is largely without incident, although Raglan overstates the case in saying that we hear “nothing about his childhood.”

3. A new stage begins with the hero’s call to the quest, and his departure (whether he “is lured, carried away, or voluntarily proceeds”) from his foster-parents’ modest home. The youthful hero’s subsequent wandering is frequently guided by a helper in humble guise who speaks in riddles which the hero nonetheless obeys.

4. The threshold crossing into “a world of supernatural wonders” is clearly a transition into a new stage of commitment: a period of trials and tests which culminate in the “supreme ordeal.”

5. The gift or capture of the prize at the nadir of the round not only begins a new stage but initiates (and makes possible) “the final work...of return.” This phase of it is the struggle back through the arena of the quest, usually by different route, and to the threshold of return.

6. Properly the subthreshold quest (stages 4 and 5) may be identified with the initiation; the “true” return starts with the hero’s re-emergence. This sixth stage of the hero-life begins with the defeat of the tyrant or his representative at the threshold, and includes the hero’s marriage to the princess.

7. The assumption to the throne and the reign of the hero-king comprise the stage in which the kingdom is restored, although this period is characterized by Raglan as “uneventful.” It ends with the hero’s loss of favor with the gods or with his subjects.

8. The final stage of the heroic lifetime is peculiarly unheroic: the wandering of a deposed exile until he is taken up, in a mysterious death, from a hill or high place. Other sources note that in addition to his sepulchres he leaves behind him the belief that he will return again in time of need.<sup>1</sup>

Our graph introduces no new elements. The symmetry of the model—an extension of Campbell’s circular form to include the full life-story—is dictated by the pivotal episodes and the character of each stage.

The equation of the hero’s birth with his death, at the apex, is simply a logical “closing of the circle.” The far country of the hero’s childhood and his period of reign as king, which share a common level in the cycle, also share the quality of uneventfulness—a fact that Raglan noted even without discerning the circular quality of the biography: “I would compare the blank which occurs during childhood,” he said, “with the blank which occurs after his installation as king has been completed.”<sup>2</sup>

The hero’s call looks to and anticipates his assumption of the throne, and these events properly “face each other” at mid-level. The entry into and return from the adventure clearly occur at the same threshold level. And our positioning of the prize at the nadir not only accords with

---

1.

2. .There is an additional parallel between these stages that Raglan fails to bring out. Before his call, the child-hero indulges an impatience with his foster-parents’ modest station, and from a premature sense of his future destiny *performs an inflated act* for which he is punished or rebuked. The hero-king’s downfall is similarly brought on by an *inflation of his role*. These parallel events are vitally important to our search for the *meaning* or myth.

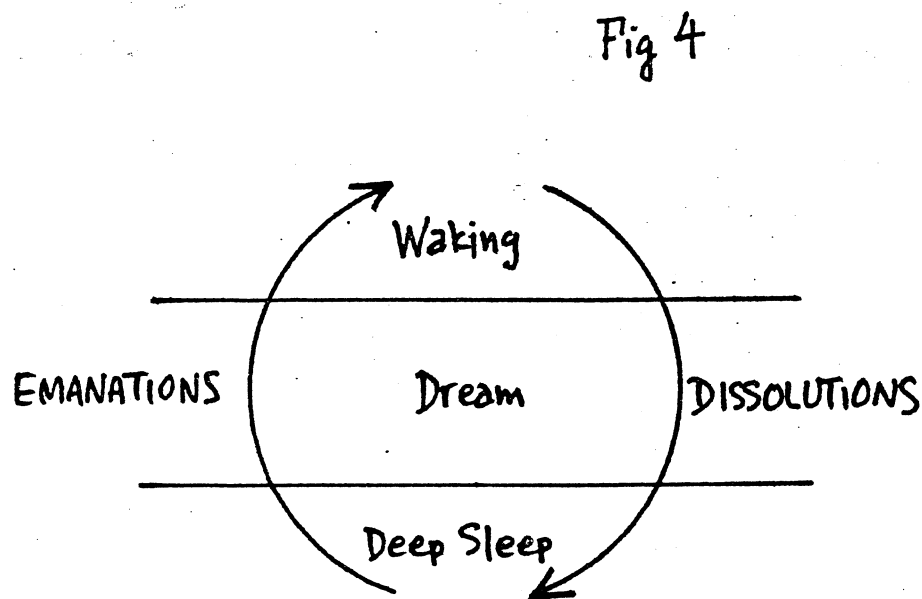
Campbell's round, but reflects the fact that the prize is won at the hero's farthest remove from his land of origin.

Symmetry and simplicity are persuasive but not compelling virtues. But where we find an ordered structuring, we may properly expect to find echoes of it in other patterned phenomena. In this case, the structure proves not only to have a universal echo, but a vital psychological significance.

### ***The cosmogonic round***

The hero travels his same mythic path in virtually all the cultural traditions of mankind. The myths of the universal creation are not only similarly kindred to each other, but describe a staged and cyclic movement that, in different symbolism, seems to express precisely the same process as the hero round.

Again we are indebted to Campbell, for a graphic representation of the underlying structure of this creation cycle of "cosmogonic round" (Fig. 4), and his fine description of it:



“As the consciousness of the individual rests on a sea of night into which it descends in slumber, so, in the imagery of myth, the universe is precipitated out of, and reposes upon, a timelessness back into which it again dissolves....

“The philosophical formula illustrated by the cosmogonic cycle is that of the circulation of consciousness through the three planes of being. The first plane is that of waking experience: cognitive of the hard, gross, facts of an outer universe, illuminated by the light of the sun, common to all. The second plane is that of dream experience: cognitive of the fluid, subtle, forms of a private interior world, self-luminous and of one substance with the dreamer. The third plane is that of deep sleep....

“The cosmogonic cycle is to be understood as the passage of universal consciousness from the deep sleep zone of the unmanifest, through dream, to the full day of waking; then back again through the dream to the timeless dark. As in the actual experience of every living being, so in the grandiose figure of the living cos-

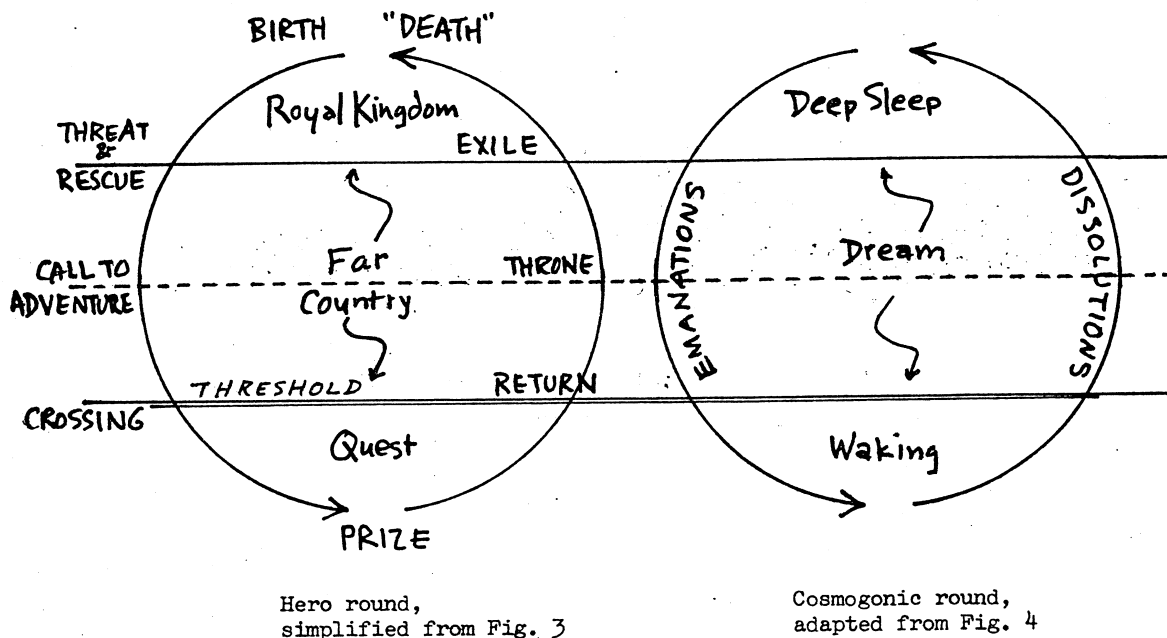


mos: in the abyss of sleep the energies are refreshed, in the work of day they are exhausted; the life of the universe runs down and must be renewed."

I suggested that this process parallels the hero round. But Campbell's diagram—except in its circular form—shows little likeness to his "nuclear unit" of the monomyth (Fig. 1) or his adventure diagram based on it (Fig. 2). Our fuller charting of the hero-life, however (Fig. 3), which accommodates the hero's early life and old age, repositions the threshold to match the lower dividing line of the cosmogonic round; and it also adds the border—equivalent to the upper division in the cosmogonic cycle—across which the infant hero is "spirited away to a far country."

The *full* life-story of the hero, then, is inescapably congruent in structure to the process by which—according to the creation myths—the universe is fashioned (Fig. 5). My inversion of

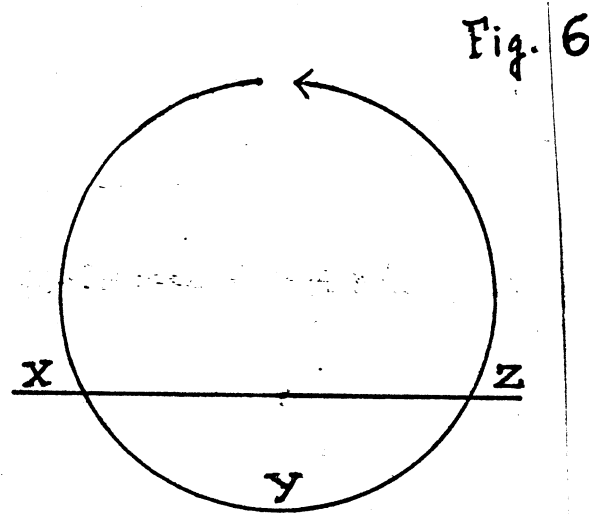
Fig. 5.



Campbell's "sleep" and "waking" planes (cf. Fig. 4) is done simply to equate the points of origin for both cycles: *birth* for the hero, and *sleep* for the cosmos. (Whether that "deep sleep" is not in fact a higher awareness to which the "waking" state is insensible is a subtle question we will reserve for later, although it would further justify the inversion. We will also save discussion of the implied duality of the "dream" plane, echoing the hero figure, for a later context.)

At the risk of a diagrammatic overkill, it seems worth noting that the equation of the hero's subthreshold arena of the quest with the cosmogonic plane of the waking manifest invites us to attribute to the universal creative process that same trine of *separation—initiation—return* to which Campbell refers as the "nuclear unit" of the heroic formula. In lowering the threshold (Fig.

6), we have made these phases of the cycle to be three equal arcs. Applied to the cosmogonic



round, *separation* is the descent through the planes of deep sleep and dream, *initiation* occurs in the waking experience of the outer universe, and the *return* is back through the plane of dream to deep sleep. There is the converse implication also: that the qualities of deep sleep, dream emanations and dissolutions, and the waking manifest are the countries—the “states” of mind—through which the hero’s (ego’s) lifetime journey takes him.

The indications are very strong that we are dealing in a single cycle, and that the hero transformation is one with the creation or the creative act. In our search for mythic insights into the path of a personal renewal—even on the psychotherapeutic level—the implications of this hypothesis are profound.

The ancient worship rituals from which the myths derived were, as Mircea Eliade and other students of the myths have demonstrated, the effort to find harmony with the universe through imitations of “the Beginning,” the original creative act or event.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps not so naive as we think in a genuinely creative activity remains the most effective therapy for many a malaise. And if in this continuing universe the same creative process underlies all we know and are and do, we may be alive in just the measure that we put ourselves in harmony with the creative rhythms of our universe. When William Blake invites us “To see the world in a grain of sand, And a heaven in a wild flower,/Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, And eternity in an hour,” he speaks from a special insight that recognizes everything of nature to be an image of the cosmos and an echo of the universal creativity.

Nature, in fact, presents at every turn hard evidence of creation’s cyclic transformations. Even the physical sciences, scalpel in hand, have been cutting through the underbelly of this universe to discoveries no less esoteric than those learned from the myth about mind, and quite analogous to them.

### ***Breaking new ground***

Some of the more dramatic discoveries of science in the past several years have been prompted by the very persistence of “irrational” beliefs.

---

1.

If convictions survive without apparent substantiation, what gives them their survival value? Why have certain superstitions proved so indestructible? These intriguing questions have led some investigators to reexamine beliefs that had been logically discredited or dismissed as wishful thinking. In a surprising number of cases the reason that has been found for the survival of “disproved” popular conviction is quite simple: it was true after all.

It required an archaeologist convinced of the historicity of Homer to dig for—and discover—a Troy that no sane colleagues in his day would concede might ever have existed. Medical science, having classes folk remedies as superstition, needed years to “discover” the same effective chemical agents in its laboratories; then, more years still to find that these were generally more efficacious in their natural than in synthetic forms. Witch-doctors? What is the difference between ritual cures of warts by posthypnotic suggestion, a ritual the effectiveness of which is a puzzle even to those who practice it in the dignity of a medical suite?

Lunar influences on human behavior, and the wisdom of planting seed according to the phases of the moon, were disdainfully dismissed by the very sciences which now proudly exhibit statistical confirmations of them: as though the statistics constitute a better explanation than the cumulative experience of “primitive” shamans and countless generations of “superstitious” planters.

While the parapsychological experiments of J.B. Rhine and others may be suspect as to methodology, probabilities cannot account for many of the findings. And traditional controls impose conditions that would numb the keenest of psychic sensibilities. There has developed in the sciences a reflex or knee-jerk rejection of several classes of phenomena; and of course a summary disbelief makes no demands of proof upon itself. At mid-century, French statistician Michel Guaquelin, to his own dismay—for he was seeking *disproofs*—discovered that there was a strong correlation (against odds of 1,000,000:1) between the professions of more than a thousand men and the positions of certain planets at their birth.<sup>1</sup> And analyst John Nelson, working for a major electronics corporation, found that the disposition of the planets relative to the sun affects the quality of radio communication.<sup>2</sup>

Doctors Raymond Moody, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and others have found in the “clinical death” experiences of hundreds of people astonishing parallels to the afterlife descriptions of Plato, the Tibetan Book of the Dead, the Bible, and other—mainly ancient—sources.\*<sup>3</sup> The catalog of new discoveries that affirm the substance of discredited beliefs (if not their terminologies or explanations) becomes longer almost daily. There have been some scholarly refutations of prejudiced “disproofs” accorded, for example, to the purely factual discoveries of Gauquelin; unfortunately the original attack tends to survive all efforts to correct it, and the reasoned vindication of many such finds is lost in the plethora of irresponsible defenses by crank apologists.

What has brought some of these subject-areas within the legitimate purview of science is first of all the application of statistical method. In given circumstances, chance cannot account for a given result in only so many cases. If the result appears with a greater than can be accounted for by chance, the presence of some other operative factor must be recognized. Because this method

---

1.

2.

3. .We will explore Moody’s studies further in connection with Swedenborg’s accounts of his experiences.

may be used wherever sufficient data can be gathered, it makes even subjective experience a valid field for systemized study.

A second liberating influence has been the readiness of some modern investigators to examine the phenomena themselves without prejudice or expectations by which their findings might be influenced or colored, and without concern about the cause of the phenomena. As Noam Chomsky observed, “the whole issue of whether there’s a physical basis for mental structures is a rather empty issue,” because, in the development of modern science, “the concept ‘physical’ has been extended step by step to cover anything we understand,” properties of mind, we shall simply...extend the notion ‘physical’ to cover these properties as well.”<sup>1</sup>

If science were to hold consistently to that view, the field of its investigations would be freed of prejudicial taboos, and its findings would be more truly scientific—rather than, as the case has been, contaminated by a zeal of dogmatic negation. Whatever broadens the scientific arena and enhances the validity of its offerings cannot but help to make our spiritual or value judgments *about* our world and about ourselves potentially better informed and more intelligently applied to life.

### ***Universal rhythms***

Since the physical sciences have bared the soul of matter and found only energy; since energy has been revealed as wave-form, pulsing, cyclic; since these energies have been found instrumental in sensation, thought, emotion—in all subjective experience—the connections between our inner and outer realities are, however little understood, intimate.

And the common shape of reality revealed in laboratory and in mind appears to be a complex interweave of pulsing forces.

Our first act at birth, by which we set out upon our life adventure, was cyclic: we began to breathe. Since then our world has revealed itself in countless rhythms. Our moods and march of mind have taken up those cadences we first experienced, of darkness/light, discomfort/ease, attention/absence, repletion/hunger.

Except to speculate that they may be universal (that all reality consists in cycles), there is no calculating the influence of imposed and internal rhythms on us, throughout our lives.

“Many cycles in nature seem to have the same wavelength as cycles in human affairs,” says Edward Dewey, director of the Foundation for the Study of Cycles at the University of Pittsburgh, “and some cycles on earth seem to have the same wavelengths as the sun. The other planets many even be involved....” The Foundation’s files hold evidence of the cyclic nature of thousands of phenomena, including “data about earthquakes, tree-ring thickness, geological deposits, rainfall,

---

1.

temperature, barometric pressure, auroras, sunspots, planetary positions, wars, animal abundance, disease, prices, production, crops, transportation, trade.”<sup>1</sup>

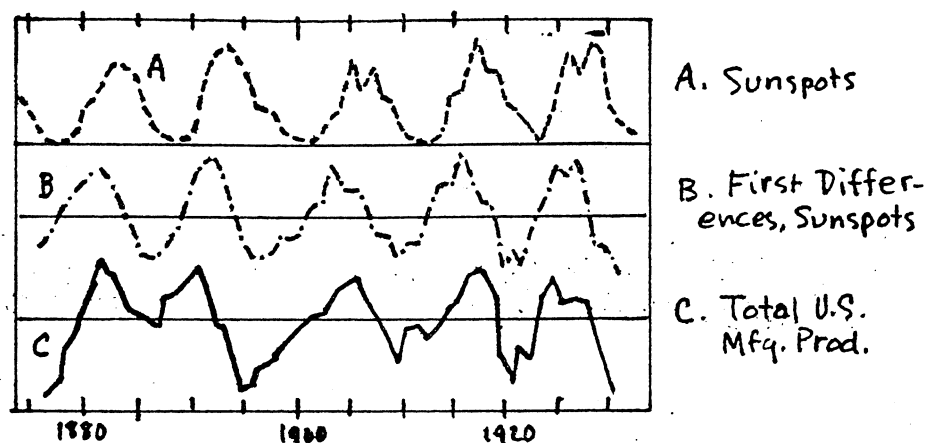


Fig. 7 "Many cycles in nature seem to have the same wavelength as cycles in human affairs."

Rhythms, Dewey shows, are present everywhere: in the creativity of poets, in the fluctuations of church memberships, in the amorousness (*sic*) of women and the emotions of men, in the consumption of cheese, advertising effectiveness, political landslides, marriages, births, the incidence of cancer. The frequencies of cycles range from the electromagnetic wave's billionths of a second to the millions of years the sun requires to skirt the galaxy.

Completely unrelated phenomena have been found not only to share the same wavelengths for no apparent reason, but to peak and dip together as though riding the same bus. After even violent interruptions (collisions with other cyclic movements?), cycles mysteriously pick up the same inaudible drumbeat, quite as if they'd never fallen out of step. Nor is every frequency found evident in cycles: Dewey's phenomena tend to march, from seemingly capricious choice, to certain drummers more than others.

The oscilloscope displays our heartbeat as if it were an up-and-down wave. It is not. Few cycles really are, except from the subjective meanings we assign to "up" and "down" as representations of *more* and *less*. Light, and other electromagnetic waves; sound and shock waves; the pulse of the blood—these are alternating bands of positive and negative pressures in their various fluid media. The moon-tides manifest the pressures of lunar gravitation. But in many more cases of cyclic phenomena recorded in Dewey's files than not, we have no clues to what the causal pressures may be.

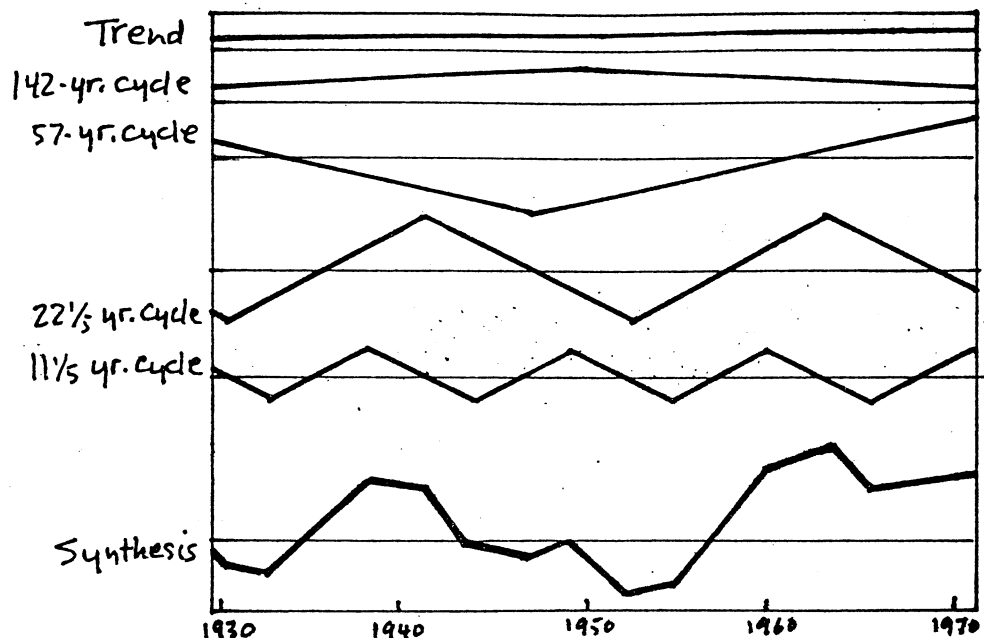
What pressures of the full moon influence the emotions of man and animal? On what common carrier of alternating pressures is the flood-stage of the Nile a fellow passenger of marriages in the United States, as both fall and rise together every 18 years? What great swells of recurrent pressures, and from where, account for such long-range periodicities as the 142-year fluctuations

---

1.

in international battles, or the 54-year rhythm that has regulated the price of wheat for more than seven centuries?

Breath, pulse, day, and year are closely recognizable cycles. Most periodic influences are not, because a single phenomenon may have cyclic components of many different frequencies which obscure each other and produce a graph with no apparent pattern (Fig. 8). Logic suggests



### THE WAR CYCLES 1930-1970

Fig. 8

Any phenomenon may be the product of a number of regular cyclic rhythms, yet have no apparent pattern because the component cycles "camouflage" each other (bottom curve or synthesis).

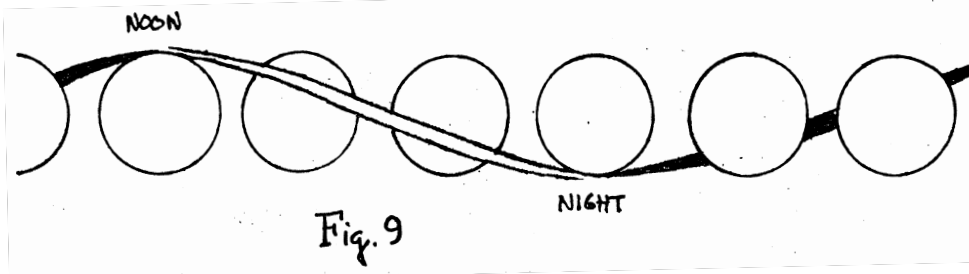
that where we fail to find the ordered regularity of a rhythmic cycle, we have simply not yet identified the component frequencies. If matter is a state of energy, and energy itself is cyclic, of what other filaments can the fabric of the universe be woven?

### *The spiral path*

The chart we developed of the hero's path was circular. But no journey of the mind can return the hero in you to his starting point: time, growth, experience, change cannot be undone.

We circle the center of the earth each day, a journey of nearly 24,000 miles at the equator. In fact, however, we "return" to a point in orbit more than a million and a half miles from our start-

ing place. If we begin at high noon, we will in a day's time arrive again at noon, but a different noon that is one full turn of a spiral closer to whatever season we are approaching (Fig. 9).



All physical laws analogous to the laws of the mind. When we “turn things over in our minds” we are also moving them forward toward whatever purpose we have for thinking about them. This turning-while-advancing process, plotted graphically, describes a spiral whatever phenomena are involved. Psychologist Arnold Gesell, for example, observed that growth in the womb takes a spiral course.<sup>1</sup> All parts of the foetus do not grow simultaneously. Growth touches one part at a time, in a specific sequence—then the whole series over again, and again.

Our minds grow in the same way. The cyclic nature of our material reality confronts us with repeated opportunities to respond to similar situations in discoverable sequences. There is a most wonderful utility in this scheme of things, which undoubtedly helps to account for the presence of the spiral among the symbols of all sacred iconographies. It is the cyclic nature of experience which allows us to amend or refine our responses “each time around,” to reinforce our recognition of patterns and processes, to anticipate consequences...

Dewey, although his own charts do it, warns us not to envision cycles simply as “up and down lines.” He suggests instead that we picture a cycle as “a coil spring wound around a bent poker.” In other words, as a spiral. And this model is especially felicitous as an expression of the hero’s path. A cross-sectional view of a spiral appears, of course, as a circle, a path that has not really advanced but has merely returned to its beginning point. The spiral retains the sense of a completion or fulfillment (a “full turn”) represented by the circle, but adds the suggestion of a progress in condition: when the cycle is complete, something has become which had not been before.

---

1.

Significantly, the hero path shown as the side view of a spiral (Fig. 10) appears as that same

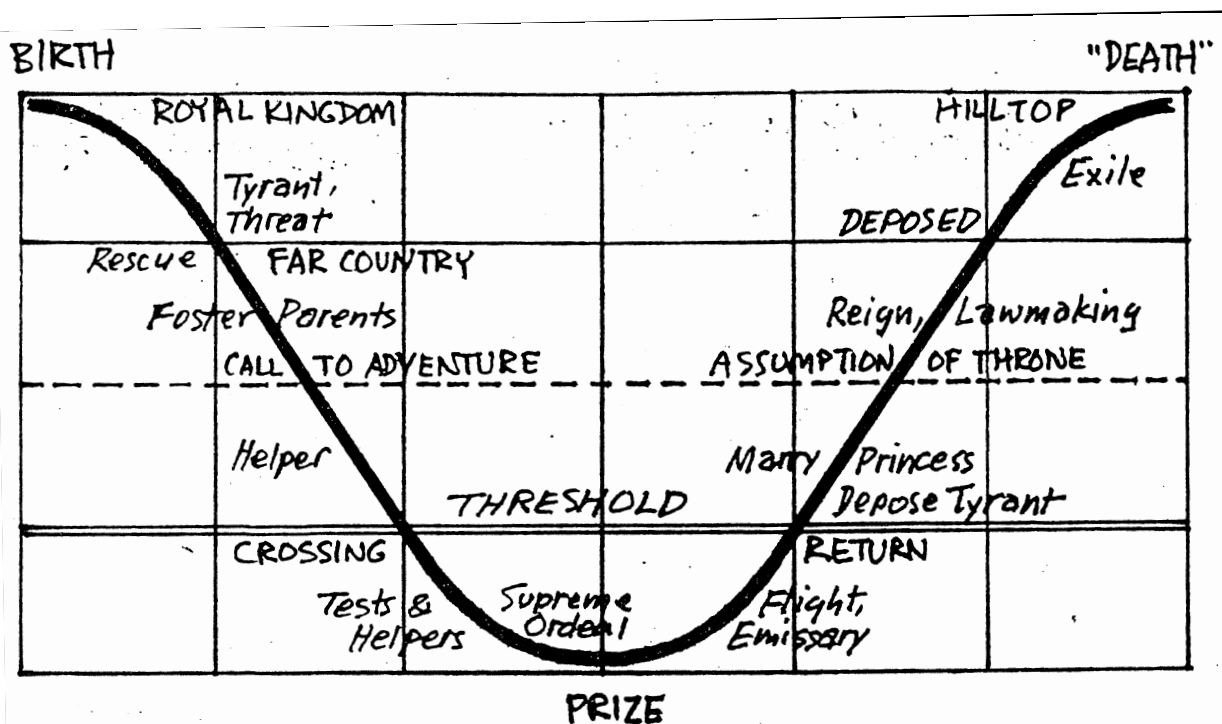


Fig. 10

pulse or wave-form with which the graphing of nature's transformations has made us so familiar. Virtually all of Dewey's charts describe the alternations of greater and lesser activity, or of death. That is obvious in such cases as the abundance or dearth of grasshopper or lynx, in the rates of marriages or births, in the yield of harvests. And while the rings of an old tree may be fixed or "dead," the story they tell is one of alternately flourishing and retarded growth.

These changes in level or state of activity are within all our statistically discovered cycles, rhythms, or pulses. In the case of electromagnetic and sound waves we noted an alternation of pressures. Pressure is created by a retardance or resistance. It is as though every creative impulse, each energy strand in the continuing creation, were spiraling through mediums of differing den-



sity (Fig. 11), including an “upper” layer whose density slows, quiets, solidifies, replenishes or recharges it.

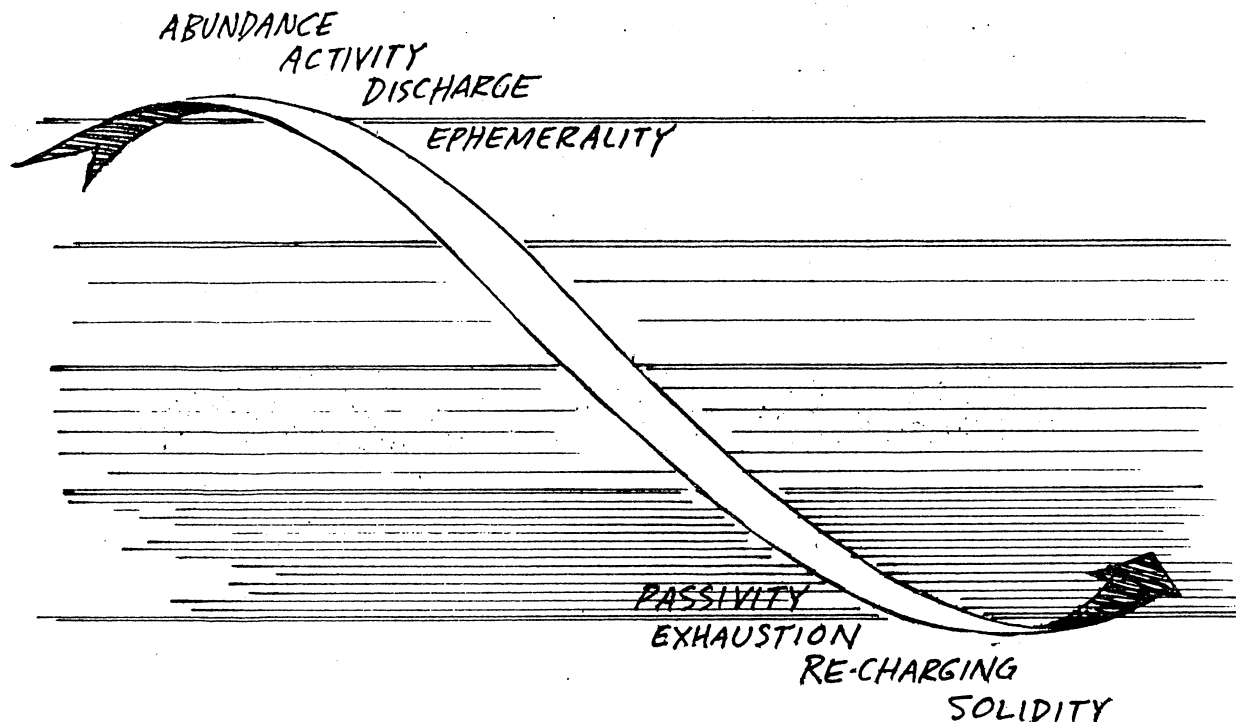


Fig. 11

Physicists have found light to possess the apparently contradictory qualities of wave (activity) and particle (solidity). The speculation is irresistible that the same alternation of state which is readily observed in nature's more leisurely rhythms accounts for this seeming paradox. why should high frequencies not obey what appears to be a universal principle?

Even our minds obey it. Jung points out that we are continually fluctuating in our thoughts between those flights of imagination which are so marvelously active and free from the constraints of time and space, and a “down-to-earth” concern with the hard facts and solid realities of this world. But for our flights into imagery we could not anticipate or aspire; yet it is the descent into “hard reality” that feeds imagination and makes possible its flight. For the most part we do not even have to intend—and seldom notice—these alternating states of mind: it is as though the one state brings about the need for the other.

But they can be mastered and more fully utilized; this is, in a sense, the challenge to the hero in you.

# Chapter 2 Psychological Correlations

## *Stages of growth*

If all investigators of the mind began with the same assumptions, gathered the same data, and arrived at the same conclusions, there would be one psychology. In fact, there are many schools of thought about what the human mind is, and how it grows and functions.

These differ widely in their terminology, the evidence they emphasize, the causal processes they subsume, their criteria or value measurements, their chronologies, their ideals or utopias of mental maturation by which progress may be recognized. It is common for a clinical psychologist or analyst to choose among these, and for an author of a psychological textbook either to serve as an apologist for one of them or to present a catalog of the various schools as though they were independent and unrelated alternatives.

Is one of these systems valid and the others not? Or is each of them—like the blind men's differing descriptions of an elephant after each had felt only one part of it, a trunk, tusk, ear, flank, leg, of tail—valid in so far as its premises and evidence flow?

Our effort in this chapter is to show that the mythic formula we developed from the heroic biography in Chapter 1 presents a graphic representation of the lifetime growth of the human mind. It would be arbitrary and restricting to make that comparison with only a single psychological system, and presumptuous to “endorse” any of them wholly or in part. When we discuss Freud's ego, id, and superego, or the archetypes of Jung, I am not assuming the “real” existence of any such “entities.” I am simply accepting any theorist's need to factor out from the melange whatever “set” of functions appears to him to satisfy the observed phenomena of mind. Each theorist has the same prerogative. Our use of the theoretic elements will be as clues to the developmental process which, each in his terms, all seek to describe—and that we must assume to be “the same elephant.”

Their disparity in terms, axioms, and data makes these systems deceptively easy to contrast with each other. To see through the differences and to reconcile their common substance is more difficult, and we would obviously benefit by recourse to a single pattern or model to which we could show that the heroic metaphor describes the course of mental growth, the use of our hero-model as such a structured referent will also serve to test that thesis.

We will not in this chapter attempt to unify the various psychologies, but rather to demonstrate that each is congruent in its underlying structure to the hero path. This will, however, lead to the discovery of critical points of transition in psychological development which, because they refer to the same heroic stage or episode, may also be equated with their counterparts in the other psychological systems. The product of this chapter will be a correlative chart which chronologically aligns the developmental stages of several psychologies and identifies them with the staged descent of the hero path through the four planes or levels established by the salient episodes. The systems we will examine all share the premise that there are specific stages through which the mind develops in an unvarying sequence (however differently they identify those stages), and that these growth patterns are as genetically “programmed” as the body's growth.\*<sup>1</sup>

“Behavior has pattern and shape just as does physical structure,” says Doctors Ilg and Ames of the Gesell Institute. “Our observations of child behavior have led us to believe that almost any kind of behavior...develops by means of remarkably patterned and largely predictable stages.”<sup>2</sup>

Their “patterns” are so detailed, however, and defined for such brief age-increments, that no real sense of meaningful progression is apparent in them. It is interesting that they do present, through the first 16 years of life, a spiral pattern that echoes Arnold Gesell’s assertion about prenatal development: a series of states (consolidated, breaking up, balanced, inwardized, expansive, and troubled) that repeats three times between the age two and puberty. Some of the Gesell material will be useful to us.

But for our correlations in this chapter, and for most of our later analysis, we will look to the psychologies of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Jean Piaget.

### ***Which way is up?***

“Sigmund Freud,” wrote Joseph Campbell, “stresses in his writings the passages and difficulties of the first half of the human cycle of life—those of our infancy and adolescence, when our sun is mounting toward its zenith. C. G. Jung, on the other hand, has emphasized the crises of the second portion—when, in order to advance, the shining sphere must submit to descend and disappear, at last, into the night-womb of the grave.”<sup>1</sup>

With this solar simile, Campbell inverts the model of the hero-life that we have developed—in which the hero descends through the first half of the cycle, and then again ascends in the second half.

We have already encountered this paradox (p. 22), in equating the points of origin of Campbell’s heroic and cosmogonic grounds. Specifically as regards the hero, however, Campbell identifies the halfway point in the adventure, and thus of the hero-life, not at the zenith but at the nadir of the round. He graphs his “nuclear unit of the monomyth,” separation—initiation—return, in the same way, as a descent followed by an ascent.

Which is the hero’s path?

We had the early hint that the hero in you is your conscious ego. His journey is from his origins in feeling, into outward consciousness, and—if successful in his quest—back again to a reconciliation with your forgotten realm of feeling. Whether we accept the descent-and-return graph or its reciprocal, the ascent-and-decline of the solar model, depends on whether we are measuring the hero’s capacity for feeling of his external consciousness.

If we view the development of consciousness as the basic triumph, then the last half of the cycle must be considered the unhappy deterioration of that vigor of mind and body which is attained through childhood and youth: the solar simile applies. But the myth has its origin in—and ascribes the greatest value to—our feelings. From the mythic view, the integration of identity and consciousness with feeling values is the essential challenge, and the high goal of the latter half of the life cycle.

Freud’s interest was the first half, the development of consciousness. His major contributions were to show the common course of physiological and psychological growth, to identify

---

1. .The exclusion from our correlations of behaviorist psychology, or any system that does not view psychological development as a sequence of stages, is due only to the fact that these offer no structural basis for comparisons.

2.

1.

early frustrations of instinctual drives that distorted later conscious responses to physical reality, and to suggest how the damage might be neutralized by clearing out from the subconscious mind archaic pressures or repressions born of those frustrations. The goal was thus to bask in the sun of consciousness at its glorious zenith.

Jung, on the other hand, found us at mid-life grievously removed from the zenith specifically because of an over-valuing of consciousness. “Modern man,” he said, “does not understand how much his ‘rationalism’...has put him at the mercy of the psychic ‘underworld.’”<sup>1</sup> Our ego has brought us, not to Olympus, but into that kingdom of dread which is the nadir of the adventure. The quest for a separate identity has divorced us from our primal sense of a whole belongingness in feeling.

Jung recognized the presence of benign forces in the unconscious which create monsters in our conscious life. But he asserted that the separation of consciousness from the unconscious realm of feeling has also denied us access to the powers that could save us. Wholeness is not in the fragmentary experience of outward reality, but in the shape of our inmost feelings. And to make our lives whole—the task of a heroic commitment in the last half of life’s cycle—requires not only the slaying of Freud’s monsters but a rediscovery of that inner world.

### ***The lifetime cycle***

We use charts because we cannot examine the details of a living process—the mechanics by which it is effected—without “stopping it dead” to look at them.

It would be easy to forget the dynamic essence of the process represented by the model. Our finished chart of the hero path is the single full turn of a spiral. We have it spread-eagled to a rigid grid of fixed coordinates: sex divisions laterally, four levels vertically, eight segments for the

---

1.

curve itself defined by nine especially marked episodes or passages (Fig. 12). This static represen-

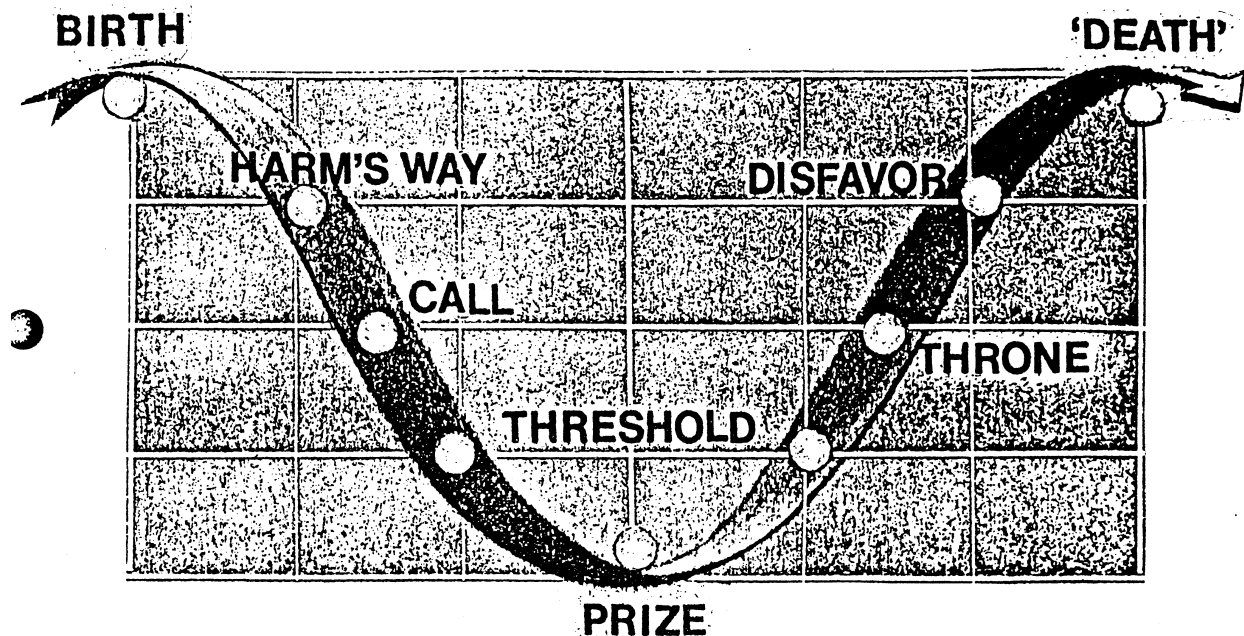


Fig. 12 (TEMPORARY)

tation will make possible the graphic demonstration of a congruence between a wide variety of transformational cycles, but the chart of course must not be mistaken for the processes.

Our first correlations will match the model to our own full lifetime span. Fortunately, while our life experience similarly exhibits a succession of states or stages inexorably linked to a chronological grid, we still are able to view our passage through life as a dynamic continuum of growth and change.

This process clearly shares with the hero round its beginning with birth and its culmination in death. But even Campbell, in giving “half” of the life-cycle to Freud and “half” to Jung, makes the end of adolescence his dividing point—far short of the halfway mark in the average life today. The indication is that the psychological states through which mankind passed earliest—and undoubtedly required millions of years to fulfill—are repeated by each of us in infancy most quickly. “It is important to note,” say Ilg and Ames, “that in early infancy salient changes are very rapid”<sup>1</sup>—changes at first discernible at weekly intervals come monthly after twelve weeks, every three months after a year, at six-month intervals after age two, and annually from age seven to puberty.

In other words, we appear to spend less time perfecting individually those psychological states that our ancestors tarried longest in accomplishing and building into our inheritance: the long racial infancy has translated into a proportionately brief infancy in our lives. This telescoping

1.

effect is evident in the chronology of our passage through the psychological stages suggested in the segments of the hero's life.

We have described the rudimentary structure of the lifetime psychological process as a descent of the ego into external consciousness, and then its ascent or reintegration with our deeper feelings. In the downward sweep, or first half of the cycle, the realm of feeling recedes and becomes the "unconscious" (or "deep sleep"), as the ego is increasingly involved with the outer environment, and in that matrix develops or "sets" into that defined image that we view as our individual identity.

Because of the rapidity of early development, that process is essentially completed by puberty. The effort to relate our discovered identity to the "outside" world begins with adolescence. The impetus to reintegration is sparked, or at least accompanied, by the glandular awakening of puberty, which from new and unfamiliar feelings creates a need for our *separate identity* to seek a new house of *identification with* our fellows (Fig. 13).

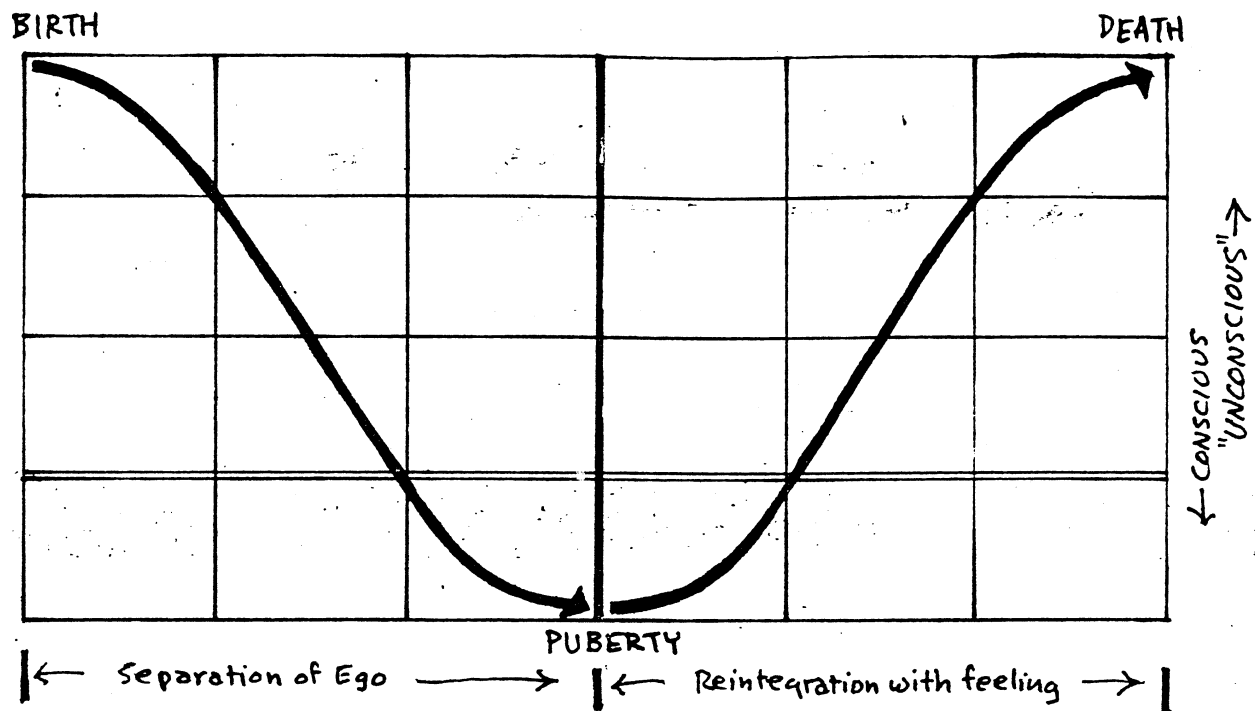


Fig. 13

Both the attainment of identity and the reintegration with feeling are staged progressions, to which the stages of the hero story are analogous. And the entire lifetime cycle, not only at puberty but at each stage-change, is linked to a physiological chronology. Maturation even directs a superficial adaptation of the ego to the successive emotional demands of the latter half of the cycle: a reconciliation toward our peer-society in adolescence, toward a transpersonal intimacy in young adulthood, toward our own inner world of feeling in adulthood, and—transcendentally—toward all reality as the end of life approaches.

As we will see when we consider Jung's psychology, this physiological linkage is saved from a desolate determinism by the fact that the later stages also offer us the means and opportu-

nity to undertake (or not) a deliberate and voluntary quest for fulfillment which can carry us far beyond the pre-programmed adaptations that the normal course of maturation imposes on us.

But that discussion belongs to the second half of the cycle. The ties of psychological development to physiological processes are strongest in infancy and strong through childhood. And to stress that aspect of the descent we could have no more devoted a guide than Sigmund Freud.

### ***“Psychosexual” stages***

The impact of outside stimuli on the tender sensors of the newborn would be overwhelming if they “hit him all at once.” Many psychologists agree that a high threshold of sensitivity protects the infant against such bombardment—that is, only the stronger stimuli are able to get through. Even so, like splashes of color on a bare canvas, those that do must be incalculably more vivid than our jaded adult senses can experience. “Infantile feelings,” Freud asserted, “are far more intense and inexhaustibly deep than those of adults.”<sup>1</sup>

How are these thresholds let down? Not simply on a general gradient, Freud concluded, but by the opening of successive sensory *zones*. These are the especially sensitive tissues that surround the body orifices—mouth, anus, and genitalia, the body’s gateways to the outer world. The flow of the pleasure-seeking “libido” thus is guided to where the stimuli are most keenly felt, and the infant is in effect invited to participate in the functions of those parts of his body.

Freud’s psychosexual theory of infantile development is unyieldingly physiological. The libido, of instinctual energy generated by the id, is exclusively erotic, and all pleasure (which is the equilibration of libidinous pressures) is sexual. By substitution of “sublimation,” even our highest drives or motives express this sexuality.

The single focus on libidinal drives is challenged by those who believe their ideals and aspirations to be more than sublimated lust, and those who find offensive Freud’s view (in Erikson’s terms) “of the infantile organism as a powerhouse of sexual and aggressive energies.”<sup>2</sup> Actually, what Freud did was as much to broaden the meaning of sexuality as to describe the drives he made the term to embrace; still, many psychologists—including Jung—find the emphasis an oversimplification.

Whatever the life-force or its origin, however, Freud’s theory presents a view of its mechanics which has the virtues of consistency and functionality. The first need of the infant shorn of his umbilical cord is for external nourishment. A physiology that pleasurably rewards the mouth for participating in the acquisition of food can hardly be faulted.

In all, Freud describes four stages that precede puberty. Following the *oral* stage, at about eighteen months, is the *anal* stage. With the infant’s increasing mobility, the control of its own wastes becomes an adaptive necessity; and in Freud’s scheme an increased (and rewarding) sensitivity in the relevant zone invites the infant’s attention to that function.

The significance of these stages in Freudian theory is in how the experience of pleasure or frustration with each zone or function influences psychological development. This gives relevance to his third or *phallic* stage, despite the fact that the sensitizing of the zone appears to have no immediate relation to true genitality. This stage begins at age three and lasts until about seven.

---

1.

2.

It is divided into two sub-stages at about the age of five by the very fact that its functional prematurity dooms it to frustration—the famous oedipal experience, which we will discuss later on.

The fourth stage, *latency*, sensitizes no new zone. Freud's belief that this moratorium from powerful drives involved an actual regression in sexual development has been generally refuted. But Freudian psychologists still hold that during latency—until puberty—the child's drives are channeled into substitute or sublimated activities, which shape the behavior patterns the child will need to withstand the later storms of puberty.

For our correlation of Freud's system with the hero model, I have chosen to use the interpretations of Erik Erikson. These are so firmly founded on the Freudian structure that to survey both would be redundant. At the same time, Erikson has developed further insights that are especially applicable to our metaphor. He has extended Freud's stages from the original four to a total of eight, embracing the full life span (Fig. 14). And, perhaps from his background as an artist before

VIII MATURITY								EGO INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR
VII ADULTHOOD							GENERA- TIVITY VS. STAGNATION	
VI YOUNG ADULTHOOD						INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION		
V PUBERTY & ADOLESCENCE					IDENTITY VS. ROLE CONFUSION			
IV LATENCY				INDUSTRY VS. INFERIORITY				
III LOCOMOTOR- GENITAL			INITIATIVE VS. GUILT					
II MUSCULAR- ANAL		AUTON- OMY VS. SHAME, DOUBT						
I ORAL SENSORY	BASIC TRUST VS. MISTRUST							

Fig. 14

Freud became his mentor, he describes sensitivity that makes comparison with the hero story clear and meaningful.



## *Erikson's epigenesis*

Erikson modified Freud's zone concept to emphasize what he called *modalities*. His view does not deny the importance of the physiological zone, but characterizes it as the focus of cultural variants—during each of the stages.

The newborn infant's need, for example, is not only for food. It is for the intake of profoundly important elements of "nourishment" by means of all of his sensory equipment—touch, warmth, sounds, and visual imagery. The governing modality of this first or oral stage Erikson therefore calls "incorporative," a general *taking in*.

For each stage Erikson also identifies a "nuclear conflict." In the oral stage this has to do with the development of an attitude on the infant's part toward the offerings of his environment, one of trust or one of mistrust. A crisis in each stage is most likely to be related to the relevant zone, and in the oral stage teething may occasion a crisis of lasting consequence; but normally the entire organism is involved in the resolution of the conflict.

The modality of the anal stage is "retentive-eliminative." The child is for the first time faced with alternative responses at the same focal point—to "hold on" or to "let go." Erikson shows that these alternatives are also present in the child's overall encounters with his environment at this stage. His experiences now—with toilet training a frequent cause of difficulty—can lay the basis for a healthy anatomy (self-regulation), or for shame and doubt, in his later responses to life.

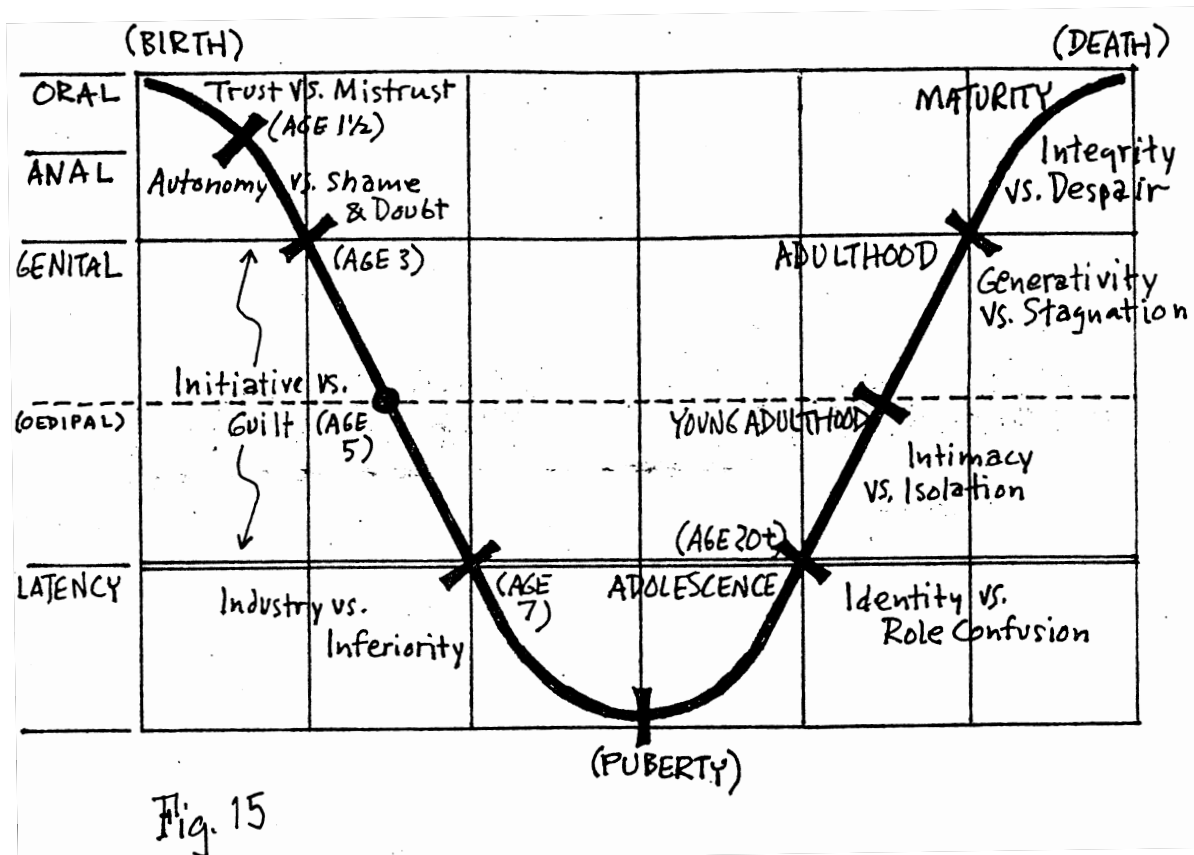
To the third stage—Erikson calls it *pregenital* rather than using Freud's term, phallic—he assigns the modality of "intrusiveness." There remains the implication of the phallic thrust, a matter we will consider later; but as a general mode of behavior, intrusiveness at this stage refers primarily to aggressively exploratory exuberance typical of both sexes at age three: butting into other people's bodies, conversations, things, affairs. The successful resolution of this intrusive stage lays the foundation for initiative. Difficulties—like the oedipal rivalry which "intrudes" the boy into his father's role—can produce lasting guilts.

The fourth stage, although called "latent," is not without its contest. Here the child gives up his dreams and play-roles, and directs his energies to the cultivation of competence. If successful, this effort lays the basis of a future industry; frustrated, it can introduce a sense of inferiority.

Erikson's "eight ages of man" each features its unique nuclear conflict and opportunity for the progressive development of a psychological maturity that satisfies the expectations of the culture by which it is nurtured. No single conflict is finally resolved during the stage Erikson identifies with it. Trust, for example, can continue to develop as autonomy or initiative emerge as the critical issues, and all the strengths (or weaknesses) enhance (or undermine) the final resolution of earlier and later nuclear conflicts. But Erikson holds the *sequence* in which these rudimentary psychological contests arise to be as fixed as the order in which, for example, the fetal organs emerge from the "Anlage" *in utero*.

We elected as our first task the correlation of the stages of the several psychologists with the hero model, in the hope that if this proved successful we would have the means of unifying their underlying patterns or processes. Does Erikson's overall epigenesis match up in structure with the stages of the hero life sufficiently to hold out the promise of later meaningful comparisons?

It clearly does so (Fig. 15) very well.



We have already identified puberty with the nadir of the cycle (Fig. 13). This almost requires us to assign four of Erikson's stages (those which constitute the etiology of Freudian psychology) to the descent, with the four stages following puberty then comprising the ascent. In some ways this arrangement satisfies Erikson's system better than his own upward-diagonal arrangement (Fig. 14). For example, he makes specific reference to the "life cycle"; and he also notes that "integrity"—the favorable solution to the final stage—is a mature resolution of the "trust/mistrust" stage that begins the cycle.

I have combined the first two Freudian stages (oral and anal) as companion phases of the first heroic stage, and made the third Freudian stage—which, as we have noted, is divided by the oedipal experience—two stages on the hero model. This adjustment does no injury to Erikson's sequence or chronology, and the reasons for it will become apparent as we pursue our correlations. As to his last four stages—following puberty—, their congruence with the hero model would appear to be inarguable.

### ***Piaget: moral development***

Jean Piaget is the most influential theorist in "cognitive development" today—that is, in how the ability to assimilate and understand is acquired. He showed that cognitive growth takes place by stages, each distinctly different in the *kind* of thinking is used by the child. These stages occur in an unvarying sequence.

One example: at a certain age, if water is poured from a squat glass into a tall, thin one, the child will “know” that there is more water in the thin one than there had been in the first glass because it rises to a higher level. Until, in the course of maturation, he can grasp the principle of “conservation”—that a change of shape cannot add to or subtract from quantity—, no amount of logic or demonstration can alter his conceptual mode. Piaget’s research defined the successive stages and identified their changing qualities of cognition or intelligence.

In a less known study, Piaget performed a similar research on the child’s development of moral judgment. The effort was to discover the sequence and chronology by which a child came to understand and practice the rules or laws imposed by his environment. Since in his native Switzerland the game of marbles is almost universally played from a very young age, Piaget based his study on how children of different ages interpreted and applied its rules.

His technique was a combination of “interrogatories” and observation of free play. He found that children’s *consciousness* of rules, or attitudes toward them, developed on a scale (or series of stages) that differed from their actual *practice* of them. The child expressed opinions or values about the rules—with an absolute conviction—which were generally quite at variance with his use of them in play.

In the practice or application of rules, Piaget was able to identify four successive modes or stages (Fig. 16, vertical scale):

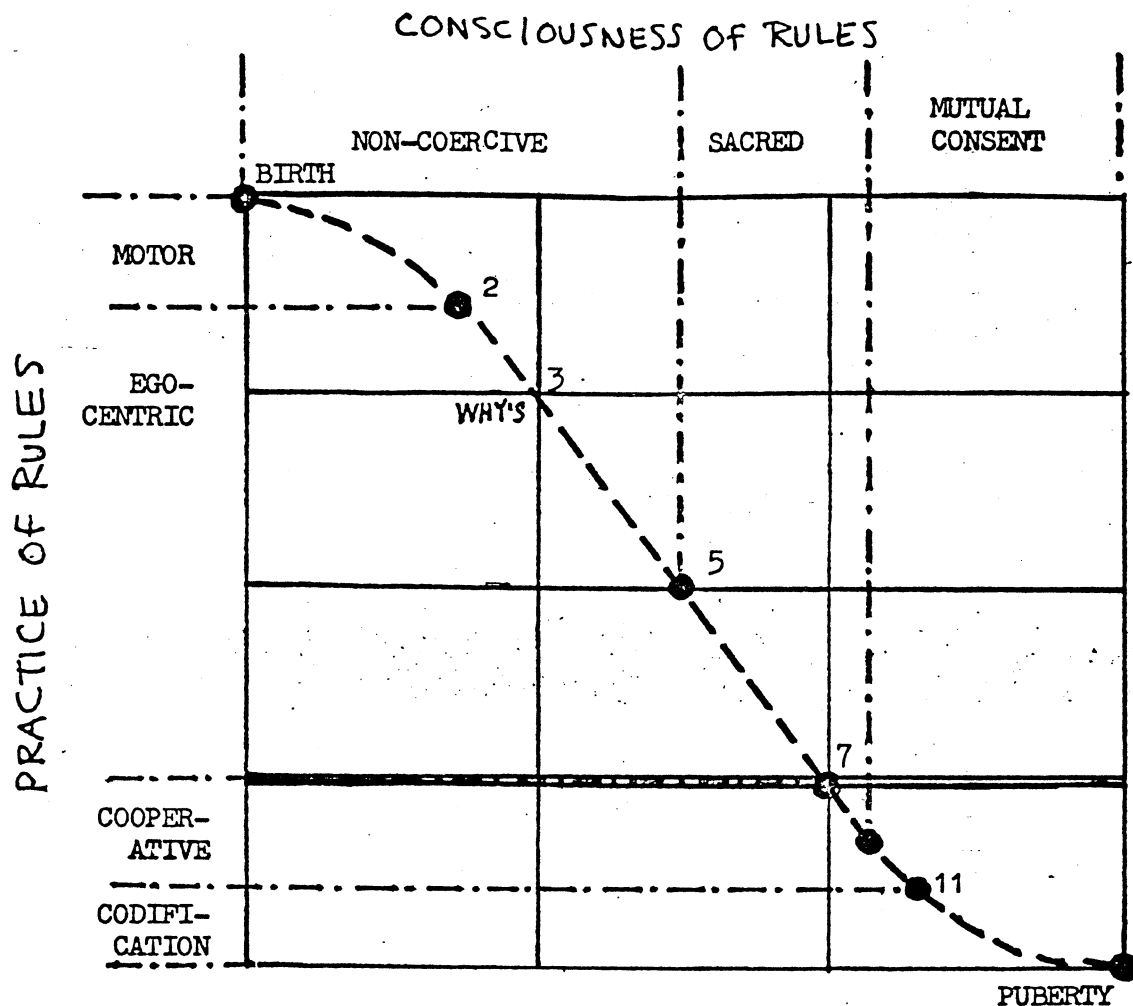


Fig. 16

“A first stage of a purely *motor* and *individual* character...at the dictation of his desires and motor habits...(leading) to the formation of more or less ritualized schemas.”

Next, an “*egocentric*” stage, which begins “when the child receives from outside the example of codified rules....But though the child imitates this example he continues to play either by himself...(or) without trying to win, and therefore without attempting to unify the different ways of playing.”

“The third stage (is one) of incipient *cooperation*. Each player now tries to win, and all...concern themselves with the...unification of rules. But...ideas of rules are still rather vague.”

In the fourth stage, there is “the *codification* of rules...every detail of procedure in the game is fixed, (and) the actual code...known to the whole society.”<sup>1</sup>

Piaget also discerned a staged progression in the child’s development of attitudes toward rules, or consciousness of them, which—with his application of the rules—contributes to the formation of his moral judgment (Fig. 16, horizontal scale):

“During the first stage rules are not yet coercive...either because they are purely motor, or...because they are received...as interesting examples rather than as obligatory rules.”

“During the second stage...rules are regarded as sacred and untouchable, emanating from adults and lasting forever.”

“During the third stage, a rule is looked upon as a law due to mutual consent...which it is permissible to alter” in agreement with the other children involved.

Again, it is not our objective in this chapter to analyze the meanings of the stages in each system, but to see if there is a sufficient congruence of structure—in terms of the hero model and chronology—to serve as a basis for a later meaningful search for a common psychodynamic process underlying all the systems.

How well do Piaget’s stages (from both the vertical and horizontal scales) agree with the heroic episodes—and with Erikson’s epigenesis?

His change from a motor to an egocentric practice of rules only approximates the Freudian transition from an oral to an anal mode, but both appear at about the point at which the hero’s life is threatened. The change from a non-coercive to a “sacred” view of rules coincides precisely with the Freudian oedipal experience (age 5\*<sup>2</sup>), and with the hero’s call to adventure. Piaget’s transition from egocentrism to cooperation also coincides with the onset of latency in Erikson’s system (age 7), and with the hero’s crossing of the adventure threshold.

Piaget notes an additional change which, while not included in either of his stage-scales, has a profound significance in the child’s development of moral judgment. It is the recognition in himself and those around him of motives or intentionality, and even the ascription of motives to the inanimate elements of his environment. This occurs at age 3—coincident with Erikson’s transition from anality to pregenitality, and with the hero’s removal to a “far country.”

Piaget’s other shifts occur during the latency period and are not reflected in Erikson’s charting, although we will find that they have correlates elsewhere within the framework of the hero structure. What is striking is that the episodes which *set off the stages* of the hero’s descent have their equivalents, at ages three, five, and seven, in the stage systems both of Erikson and Piaget.

### ***Jung’s “individuation”***

Freud and Piaget dealt mainly with the formative stages up to puberty. Erikson was principally interested in youth or adolescence, but within the framework of a full lifetime, including the ascending portion. Jung was mainly concerned with the adult mind. Between Erikson and Jung

- 
- 1.
  2. \*Piaget, Erikson, and the Gesell investigators all caution us not to interpret the age assignments too rigidly, since they are averages from which most individual cases vary.

we will have ample material to continue our psychological correlations through the latter half of the hero cycle.

Jung saw unconscious feelings as the director of mental growth; consciousness executes or acts it out. When our conscious lives lose touch with our inner feeling currents, conflicts or distortions interfere with the unfolding of our unique individuality. Jung the healer was fascinated by the unfulfilled potentials of the mature psyche, and his search was to discover techniques by which consciousness might be brought into harmony with that inner shaping thrust from which the phylogenetic and individual development of “reason” had diverted and estranged it.

This corrective psychotherapy, or *individuation*, is a deliberate and voluntary effort of “restoration” that can only be undertaken in adult life. But it is otherwise independent of the inexorable ties of the lifetime cycle to physical and chronological processes.

On the larger scale, especially through childhood, the ego is hardly more than a passenger. As Erikson stresses, and Jung also implies, the stages by which growth occurs—physiological, cognitive, and emotional—continue, however, throughout life. We do not simply grow up and then stop changing. Even the ripening of old age is only a “decline” by certain value-standards—or the failure to cultivate its rich potentials for the psyche.

If we divide the life-cycle according to Campbell’s formula of separation—initiation—return (Fig. 17), we have a context for the voluntary task of restoration and psychic fulfillment in

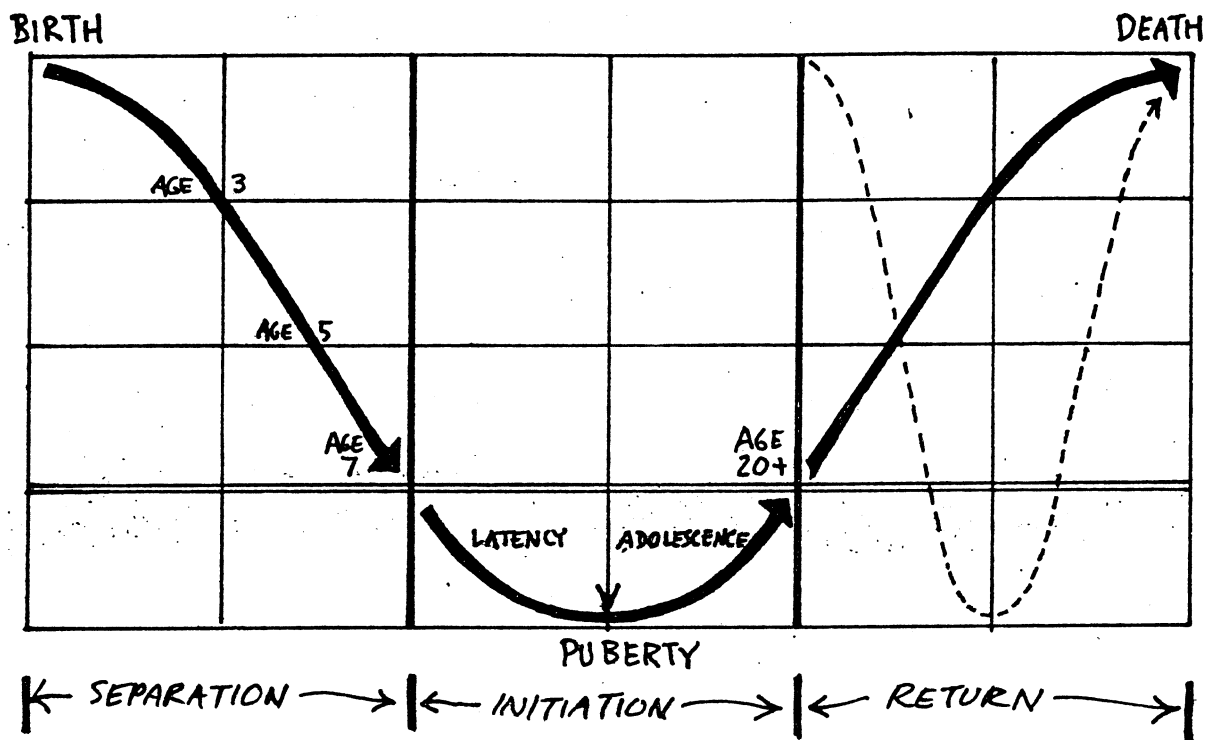


Fig.17

adulthood. The dotted curve—a cycle within the lifetime cycle—may be misleading. Because the task is a spiritual or psychic one, it is not definable in temporal terms: it may require the full span of the “return” stage, as indicated by the chart; it may be stalled or abandoned at any point; it may

not be begun until old age—or, if the hero fails us at the threshold and beyond, it may never be begun at all.

But it *cannot* begin until the start of the return stage—until, in Campbell’s terms, “the transcendental powers” have been left behind: until the gods of latency, disguised in sublimations, and the new and unfamiliar drives of adolescence, lose their powers of illusion with our crossing over into adult life.

Isaac Asimov, a leading interpreter of science for the layman, points out that every mammal lives at a pace that can be metered by its heartbeat. The tiny shrew’s heart beats at an incredible cadence through its brief life. The ponderous elephant’s heart pumps slowly, but for many years. Mammals of all sizes have heart-rates in inverse ratio to their sizes and longevities. And whether its life is measured in days or in decades, each mammal is allowed approximately *one billion heartbeats*, and then it dies.

Except man. Our hearts do beat at about the pace they should for the size we are. But we use up our allotment of one billion beats *in our twenties*, and then live on for almost *two billion more*.<sup>1</sup>

This trivial observation has an intriguing suggestion in it for us. No other creature separates its consciousness or thought processes from its feeling or its instincts. It is striking that in crossing into his adulthood, or his “age of reason,” the human also crosses into what amounts to a second slice of life which nature allows no other mammal; and that it is during this bonus period that we have the opportunity to bring our thoughts and feelings back together again.

Instinct fulfills the animal’s potential. Man in his unique adulthood is given to fulfill his own. In terms of our staged correlations, this period is clearly congruent with Erikson’s last three “ages of man,” in which the potential gains are intimacy, generativity, and integrity (Fig. 15), and with the stages in the mythic round in which the heroic ego weds the princess, gains the throne, and restores the kingdom.

Jung’s special interest in this restoration and fulfillment of the kingdom of the psyche led him to find in its realms that are dramatically analogous to the countries of the hero in our mythic model.

### ***Shape of the psyche***

Through his analysis of some 80,000 dreams, and his observations of the dreamers, Jung found that specific conflicts between the conscious life and the inner feelings of his patients were accompanied by the persistent appearance of certain mythical motifs in their dreams. He concluded that these were symbolic messages from the unconscious, about felt needs that were not finding suitable expression in the patient’s conscious attitudes and behavior.

And he learned to “read” them. He found that if the patient accepted the often uncomplimentary comments these messages made about his conscious life, and adjusted to them, the motif disappeared and his dream-life moved on to *another* mythic representation.

Jung’s course of treatment followed these dream-clues from at first relatively superficial conflicts to ever deeper ones. The objective was to make conscious life harmonious with the deep-

---

1.

est feeling level of the psyche from which the individuating motive energies flowed forth. We will return to the dream motifs in a moment.

From the study of his patients and their unconscious feelings as expressed especially in dream experience, Jung fashioned his concept of the psyche's structure. He suggested that we think of the whole self as a sphere. The ego is merely a "point of reference" on the surface. Consciousness he represented as a bright surface area extending from that point only as far as the "I" can see.

The sphere itself, in which he identified three levels, is unconscious. What he called the *personal unconscious* forms two outer, "union" layers. The one nearest to the surface contains material that was consciously assimilated (seen by the ego on its way in), but has been forgotten. This content can be voluntarily retrieved, or "remembered."

The inner onion-layer is the reservoir of material that was absorbed *subliminally*—that is, below the threshold of our conscious notice. This includes sensations too weak for our attention, or things we see or hear while our attention is on something else. Such material is the product of our personal experience and contributes to our individuality; but we cannot deliberately recall to consciousness what we didn't notice when it entered.

Below these layers of the personal unconscious is an inner core Jung calls the *collective unconscious*. He concedes that it is hypothetical, but concluded its existence from the fact that dreams produce a certain kind of mythic motif for which he could find no basis in the dreamer's individual life experience, subliminal or conscious.<sup>1</sup>

These themes are found in dreams independently of the dreamer's age or cultural surround. They are not *ideas*, and only "use" the images of individual experience in strange and unreal combinations which repeat the underlying motifs of the universal myths. Jung identifies them as inherited "shapes" of feeling, impressed on the primordial mind in mankind's infancy.

---

1.



This structure of the Self of psyche (given that what is most essential may be expressed by either inwardness or elevation) is readily equated with the hero model (Fig. 18). The *deep sleep*,

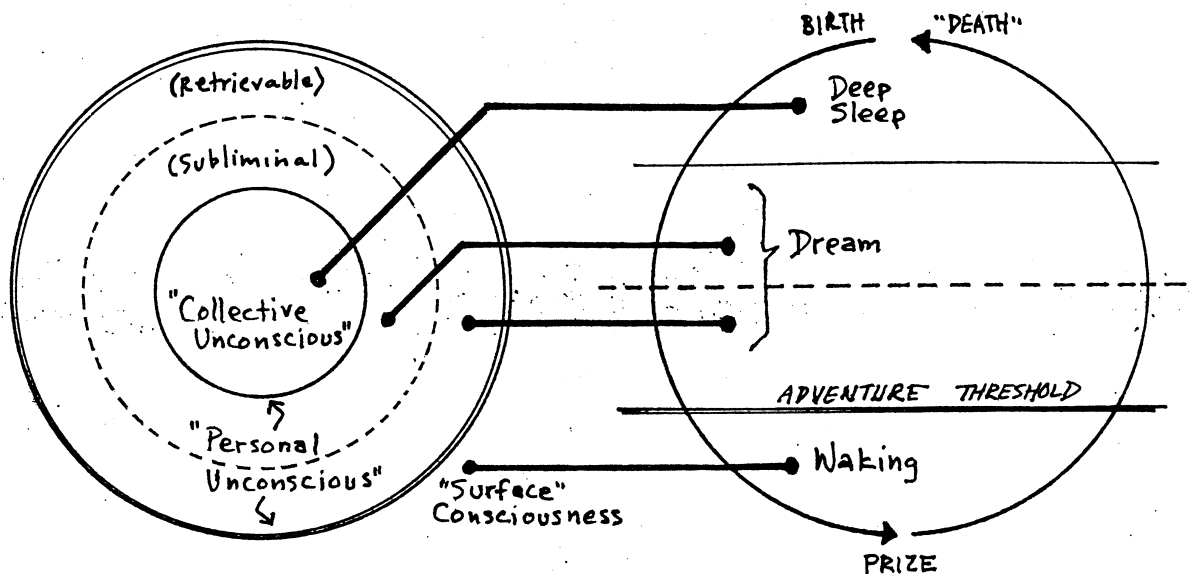


Fig. 18

*dream*, and *waking* levels of the cosmogonic round, which we have already identified with the levels of countries of the hero, help to point up the equivalence of Jung's model with ours.

Thus Jung's collective unconscious has its counterpart in the royal kingdom of the hero's genesis, and also in the deep-sleep plane of cosmic origins. His dual levels of the personal unconscious have their parallels in the mid-planes of the hero-cycle, and together constitute the dream-realm of the universal round. The conscious surface of Jung's spherical model, on which he has the exiled ego, is the hero's ultimate realm of the adventure—and the plane of Campbell's waking manifest.

What about process? Jung identifies three stages in a lifetime: childhood (until puberty), youth (which he takes to age 35 or 40), and the mature years. The points of shift have their obvious identity with the *prize* and *throne* in our heroic model; and Jung describes changes within these stages that seem to agree with the chronologies of Erikson and Piaget. His implications of a cycle are every bit as strong as those of Erikson: "Childhood and extreme old age are, of course, utterly different," he wrote, "and yet they have one thing in common: submersion in unconscious psychic happenings."<sup>1</sup>

But again, his emphasis is not upon the lifetime cycle, but on its latter portion, in which the need is to reconcile the residual (and apparently strong) values gained in the mythopoeia of childhood with those we acquire in consciously responding to "real" challenges. It is in that process of reconciliation—or "individuation"—that we find in Jung's work the strongest indications of parallels with the mythic path of the hero.

1.

## *The archetypes*

I am not aware of any identification on Jung's part of the principal mythic images in his patients' dreams with the structured levels of the psyche. It seems unlikely, since he holds the collective unconscious to be the origin of all these feeling patterns. Yet the sequence of mythic images that his course of individuation follows through his patients' dreams appear to have a definite relationship to the countries of the hero and the encounters of the hero in descending and returning through them.

Jung calls these motifs the "archetypes" of the unconscious. Normally the first to evidence itself in the patient's dreams—and so presumably the most superficial or consciousness-related—evokes dream figures that are the striking opposites in nature and behavior to the dreamer's conscious image of himself. Jung has named this archetype "The Shadow." The part may be played by different figures in different dreams (intimates, casual acquaintances, fictional or public persons). But if the dreamer is fastidious or punctual, for example, the Shadow will be slovenly or tardy. If the dreamer is diffident, the Shadow will be rashly confident—and so on. The Shadow is the dreamer's other or "dark side," with all those qualities that the dreamer in his conscious life has denied expression or repressed.

Jung makes the case that in conscious life we tend to project on others (whether they have them or not) the qualities we have hidden under pressure in ourselves. To acknowledge the Shadow is to accept these secret qualities and to find appropriate expression of them: there are times when neatness *should* yield to an easy tolerance for disarray.

The second archetype in Jung's individuation sequence is, for the male dreamer, a female figure who represents his feminine or feeling side, the "Anima." For the female dreamer it is a male or group of males, the "Animus." These are even more deeply repressed than the Shadow, more difficult to acknowledge, and harder to "correct for" in one's emotional relationships. The man who is uncertain of his masculinity will consciously assert it by a rigid adherence to prototypical masculine behaviors, denying his normal feminine or feeling tendencies expression; under pressure these tend to sour, and should they erupt—if the man is "possessed" by his Anima—he may exhibit a startling cattiness, sentimentality, resentment. The woman whose Animus is triggered becomes argumentative, invoking the "authority" or conventional (if misconstrued, opinionated, and inappropriate) views. In dream, these aspects—like the Shadow—appear as other people, but similarly caricatured.

If the Anima/Animus is dealt with, the next archetypal image to appear is that of the Wise Old Man or the Chthonic Woman—that is, a superior figure of the same sex as the dreamer—which Jung interprets as a representation of the "Self" or total psyche. This encounter may be richly rewarding one and release new creative energies; but it also presents the danger of an *ego*-identification with what is rather a personified image of the Cosmic Whole operating into the Individual Self. The consequence can be a disastrous inflation—the illusion that one has solved the riddle of the universe—and a loss of touch with human reality.<sup>1</sup>

The resolution of the ego-Self confusion is frequently represented in what Jungians call the "great dreams"—by the appearance of their wealth of symbolism and crucial effects—by the appearance of a geometric figure, the *mandala*. This a squared circle (Fig. 19), prominent in the symbolism of nearly all the world's mythologies and religions. In these dreams, its significance

---

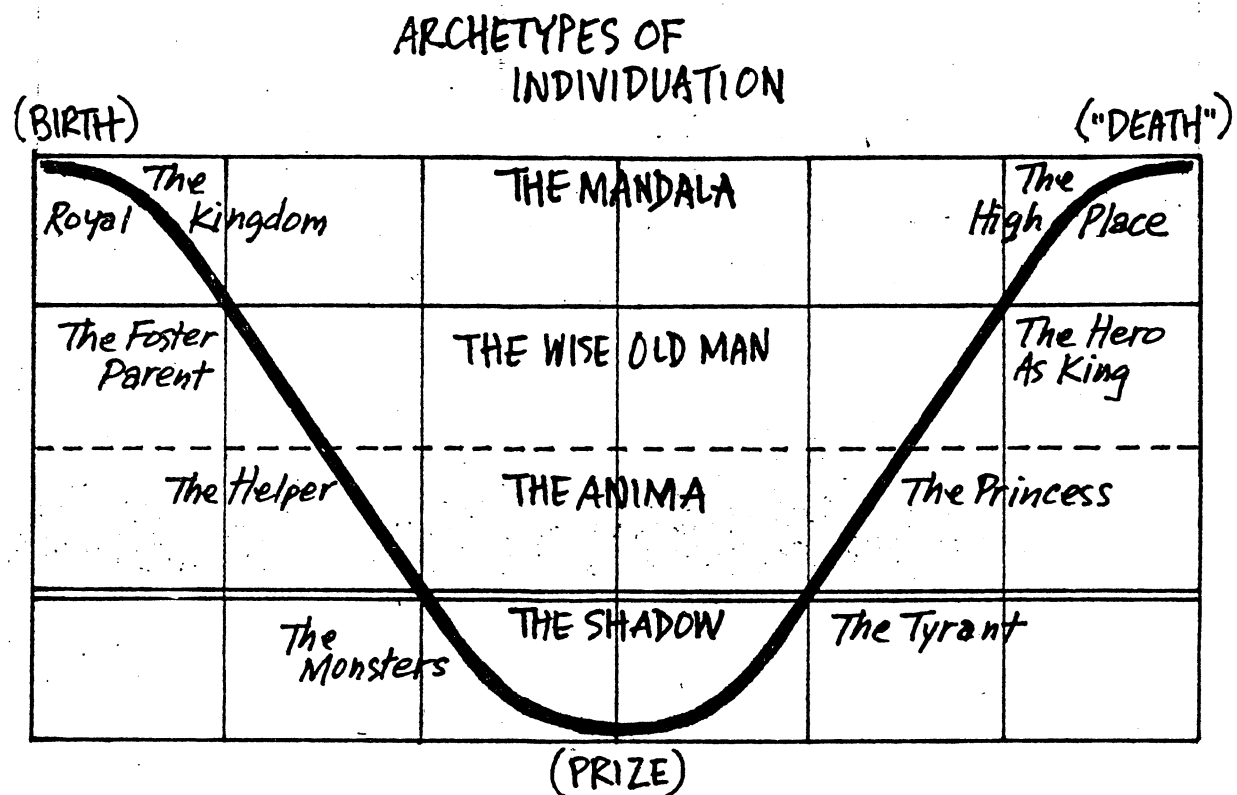
1.

lies in the merging of its two component forms, the circle and the square (or cross). The square is in ancient tradition symbolic of the earth; the circle, of heaven. "Hence," says J.E. Cirlot, "psychoanalysts have noted that the joining of the square with the circle...is symbolic of the final stage in the process of individuation"<sup>1</sup>—in other terms, the merging of four-square consciousness with the all-encompassing unconscious.

### *Archetypes and the adventure*

Again, these correlations of his archetypes with the levels of our heroic model and the hero's path are not to be ascribed to Jung. But since his therapy is the effort to heal the rift between conscious life and inner feeling, the proposition seems worth testing that the sequence in which the archetypes appear during the individuation process might be related to the upward or return portion of a path that seeks the same *coniunctio* or consummation.

Considering that the archetypes are derived empirically from dreams, and the hero model statistically from the myths, the parallels between the series (Fig. 20) are quite remarkable:



**Fig. 20**

*The Shadow* seems clearly to belong to the hero's kingdom of the dark. He may be identified with the "shadow presence that guards the threshold" (Campbell), and is the master of the monster-illusions—projections of one's "dark side"—with which the hero must do battle. It is this tyrant who must be defeated at the thresh-

old of return.

*The Anima* is found at the level above the threshold both in the descent and the ascent. As one's feminine or feeling side, she is the helper who guides the hero to his threshold of adventure (e.g., an old crone who speaks in riddles). On his return across the threshold, she is the princess whom the hero *must* wed if his is to assume the throne.

*The Wise Old Man* is the governing figure in the upper of the mid-levels, which we have associated with the mythopoeia (Piaget's "age of why's"), exuberant initiative and generativity (Erikson), and Jung's deeper level of the "personal unconscious." I would associate him with the foster-father of the hero's childhood. In the ascent, however, he is unmistakably the hero-king himself. This parallel is especially clear from the fact that the hero's eventual loss of favor, and the throne, is owing to his confusion of his *person* with *his role as agent* of the gods—an inflation like that to which the ego is vulnerable at this stage of individuation.

*The Mandala* archetype is a graphic representation of the hero's origins and mysterious death. It is the royal kingdom of his birth, with its invariably mentioned "four quarters of the realm." And it is finally the *high place* which centers him within the eternally circling horizon of universal meaning, orients him foursquare (front-back-right-left) to the cardinal directions, and enables him to transcend his own mortality.

The full return, beginning at puberty, appears to offer a series of challenges in which these archetypes reflect the "nuclear conflicts" assigned to the successive life-stages by Erikson. To deal with the Shadow in adolescence is to disentangle our projections of *our* hidden qualities onto our fellows from our "self-other" equation (Erikson's "identity vs. role confusion"). To deal with the Anima in young adulthood is to allow our feeling side its proper place in our commitments both to a marriage partner and to society ("intimacy vs. isolation"). To deal with the Wise Old Man during the years of full adult responsibility is to value care and creative nurture over a sterile tyranny of past experience ("generativity vs. stagnation"). And to square the circle and arrive at our Mandala in old age is to reconcile the personal center and dimensions of what we have become with the transcendent reality that only a humbled self can view from this summit of our mortal round, and be gratefully replete ("integrity vs. despair").

### ***A comparative chronology***

The purpose of this chapter—as stated at the start of it—was simply to demonstrate that each of the various psychologies we would examine is congruent in its underlying structure to the stages of the hero path as we developed that graphic formula in Chapter 1.

We did not expect to develop a unified psychology that embraced the diverse insights of these several systems and the evidence from which they were inferred. Our hope was only to show that the heroic representation of the full lifetime cycle would accommodate *the essential features of each system* to the stages of the cycle with which it dealt.

Are you the hero? Is the hero story, stripped of the wonderful narrative embellishments of its countless, rich retellings, reduced to a single spiral turn, and pinned to a four-level grip of six time-increments, a valid graphing of your life adventure?

To the extent that the psychologies themselves are empirically grounded and rationally developed, and that I have satisfactorily identified their salient elements, their congruence with the hero-life (as summarized in Fig. 21) would appear to justify our hypothesis.

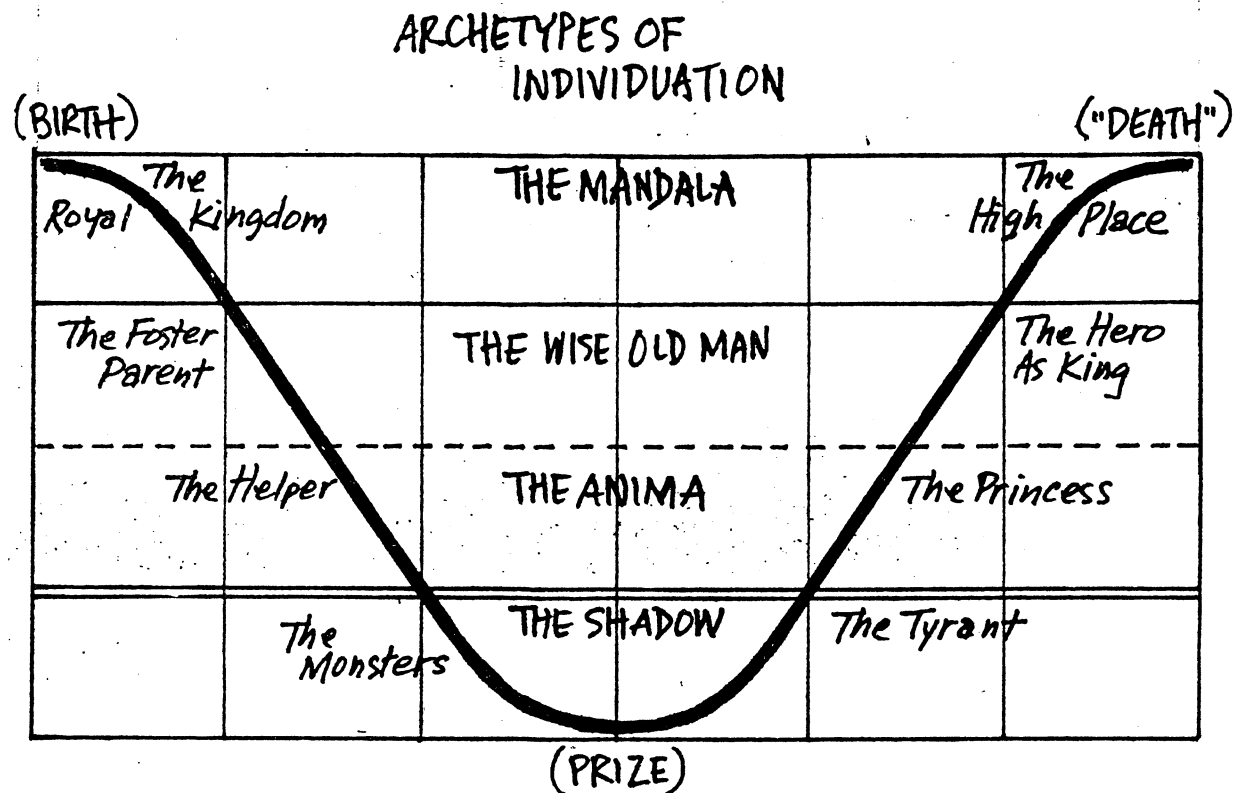


Fig. 20

The structural correlations suggest a common process of which the heroic formula is a valid, relatively simple, and satisfyingly symmetrical representation. But the same wealth of data and diversity of views that have affirmed the structural analogy tend to frustrate our effort to discern an underlying significance in the sequenced stages of our lifetime psychological development.

What meanings do the matching items in the columns of the table have in common with each other? How does the infant hero's passage into the far country correspond to the transition from Freud's "age of why's"? What relevance has "latency" to the strenuous underworld adventure of the hero? What does the oedipal crisis have to do with the five-year-old's new view of rules as "sacred"?

We will resolve these questions later. Our immediate problem is that the physiologically-linked or chronological life-cycle "as large as life"—is *too* large and complex to exhibit graphically and simply its process of meaningful, directed change and growth, unless we have an idea in advance of what creative or transformational process we are looking for. Our need is for a less complex example, in which the stages are discernible but the directed process still shines clearly through.

Who can provide it? Who else but the hero in you—and how else than in your everyday adventures in "creating"?

# Chapter 3 The Creative Cycle

## *How we “create”*

We found reason to view the cycle, or single pulse, as the basic unit of the universal rhythms that govern the creative processes of nature and the mind. With the help of Joseph Campbell we found an identity of process within the myth of universal creation and the life-cycle of the hero. With Mircea Eliade we recognized that the endeavor of mythic man was to regain the purity of The Beginning by reenacting the Original Creation as he found it repeating itself in his environment. We learned from Jung that the hero in you—quite apart from his lifelong adventure—is perpetually, creatively “cycling” between imagery and hard fact.

Can we conclude that every creation involves a cyclic transformation, and that the mythic cycle common to the hero and the cosmos is essentially descriptive of the creative process?

The duration and complexity of our lifetime adventure, and our involvement in it, make it difficult to identify an underlying sequence of significant transitions. But not all of our creative experiences are on this awesome scale. Do we also walk the hero’s way in our least creations—learning, solving problems, discovering ideas?

If we can first discern the path in these, will we then be able to recognize its landmarks in that larger journey?

We apply the term “creative” to the accomplishments of our artists, composers, authors, poets, and inventors. We call those persons *creative thinkers* who seek and find within the seeming chaos of life’s experience the ordered patterns of beauty, truth, utility.

A great deal has been written about creativity. Artists themselves, and innovative problem solvers of all kinds, describe their accomplishments, in similar ways. All of us have had sufficient experience in solving problems and discovering ideas that we can recognize the process to some extent.

Many of the greatest “idea people” trained themselves in the use of creative techniques they had found productive. Their formulas typically agree as to three central elements:

PERSPIRATION,  
INSPIRATION,  
APPLICATION.

Creative people insist that *getting ideas is hard work*. Thomas Edison said that “Genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration.” The raw material must be gathered, handled, sweated over *before* a pattern can appear in it; and even *afterward* there is the tedious need to resift and match and arrange the pieces in the testing and the application of the insight to the problem.

What is remarkable is the near-unanimity with which creative people give credit for their ideas or solutions not to their conscious, logical, thinking minds *but to their unconscious minds*. They will take credit for the earlier perspiration—the researching and experimenting that comes before the inspiration—, and for the drudgery of application that must follow it. But they insist that the idea itself, the inspiration, “came” to them—often in an unexpected way and sometimes in an astoundingly completed form.

The problem may be resolved by a dream, and the answer may present itself in allegory. The German physicist Kekule, after puzzling for some time over the molecular structure of benzene, dreamed of a serpent with its tail in its mouth (a common mythic symbol), and realized on waking that the benzene molecule was a closed carbon ring.<sup>1</sup> Many inspirations come in states of reverie, or in hypnogogic states (between sleep and waking). Especially in these cases, the insight may easily be lost when consciousness regains control. For this reason many creative people keep pencil and paper at bedside to jot down such ideas before they are forgotten.

In its simplest form, this process bears a likeness to the mythic formula of separation—initiation—return. In the perspiration stage there is essentially a *separation* (Fig. 22), during which

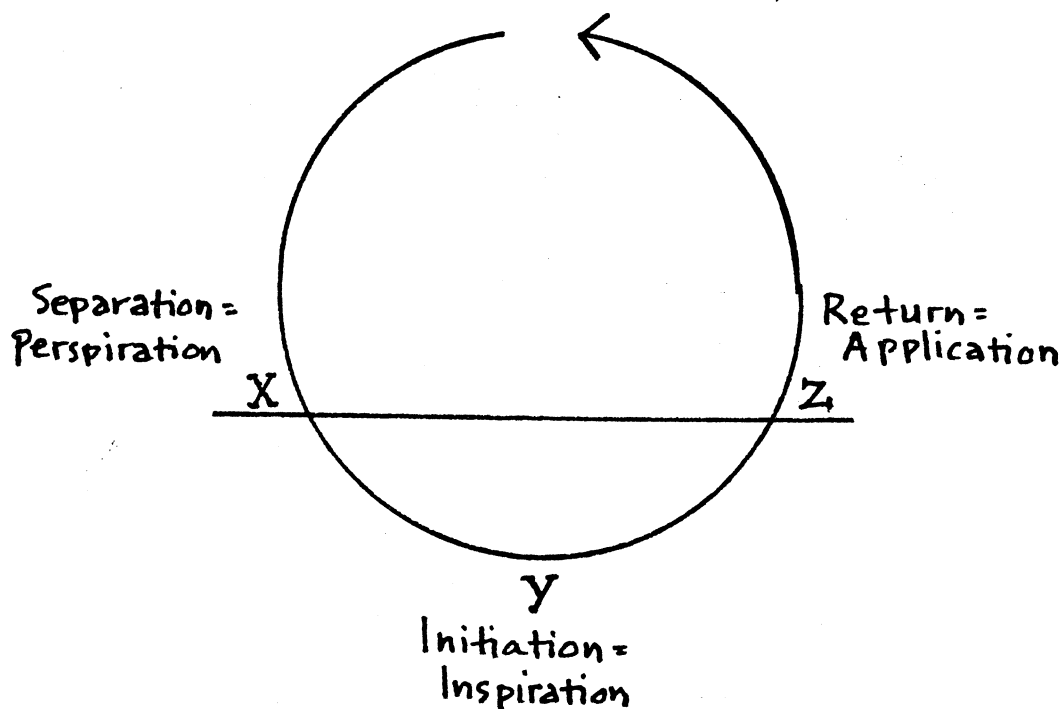


Fig. 22

the elements are gathered (like the “emanations” of the dream plane) and the problem isolated. Inspiration is the transformative phase in which the seeker is *initiated* into the secret which holds the key. Especially where the idea is embodied in a symbolic form (e.g., Kekule’s serpent), we may identify it with the hero’s prize (elixir = illumination: Campbell). Application is clearly the *return* phase: a retracing of the elements of the problem with the objective of using the idea (prize) to impose order upon chaos: to restore the kingdom.

But ideation does not begin with the gathering and analysis of facts or the development of skills. We commit ourselves to the hardships of the actual quest only after we have found that the solution will not come easily. And such a submission would be unthinkable without a prior purpose, vision, hope, and promise. Quite evidently, the beginning of the perspiration stage is the

---

1. .

equivalent of the threshold to the actual quest or adventure, in that kingdom of the dark which we have little wish to enter.

What stages of creativity lie above that threshold?

### ***“Discovery” learning***

Creativity or problem-solving is a form of learning. The solution is inherent in the problem—or there isn’t one. Our word “invent” derives from the Latin *invenire*, which means to come upon or discover, to find out or learn.

According to a leading cognitive psychologist, Jerome Bruner, the most effective kind of learning is “discovery learning,” as opposed to simple memorizing. We will remember and use better the answers and relationships that we find out through our own explorations. His concern was mainly with the teaching process, but his principles apply equally to our self-directed learning efforts.

Bruner identified four elements involved in discovery learning that seem to be relevant to creativity in general. Since they are given as a sequence of functions, we might reasonably hope to find them consistent with the stages of our hero-graph of the creative process, and expect them to offer clues for our better understanding of creativity.<sup>1</sup> And in fact his principles—*motivation*,

---

1. .



*structure, sequence, and reinforcement*—seem unmistakably harmonious with the meanings we have so far ascribed to the levels of the hero cycle (Fig. 23).

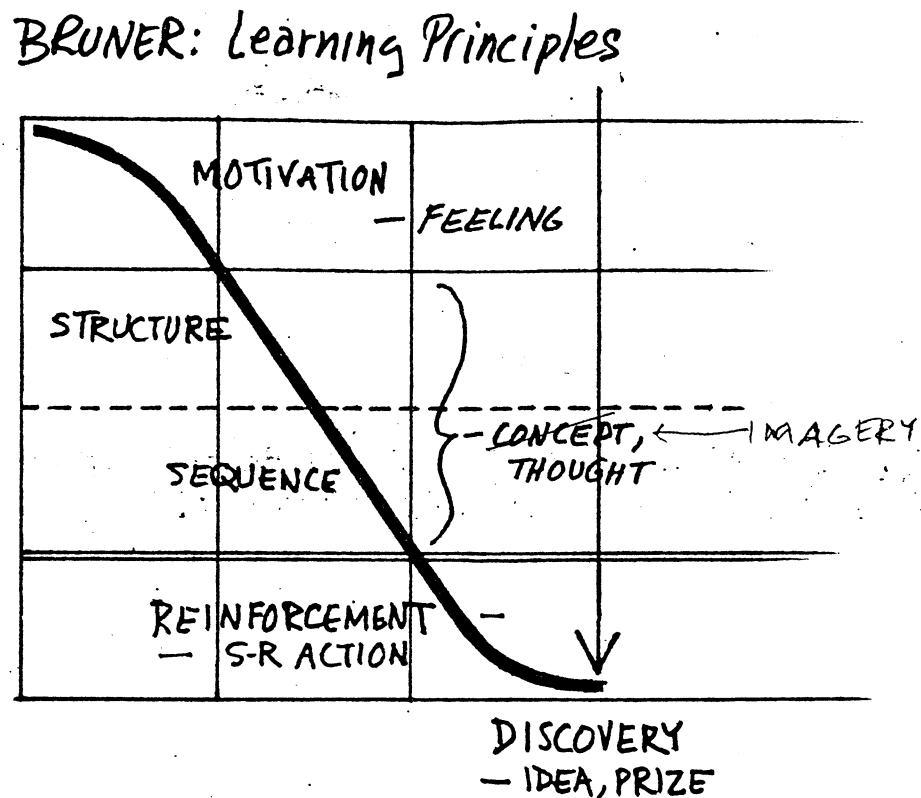


Fig. 23

The first principle, *motivation*, is obviously related to feeling. It is the will or wish to do, acquire, become. It is particularly significant that Bruner considers motivation *from within* to be what animates and sustains the will—not applied persuasion or external rewards. It is “intrinsic”—an original and sustaining inner source of motivation, the royal kingdom and the birthing-place of the questing drive or hero.

Bruner’s second principle, *structure*, relates to the recognition (from motive, which is characterized by what we call “curiosity”) or the *general* form, function, and intent of what is to be learned. The need at this stage is best satisfied by imagery, apt models, natural processes, which constellate or structure in imagination (and satisfy for the moment there) hopes that only in a distant future will be actually reified or *real-ized*. We have already equated this plane—the far country of the hero—with imagery, mythopoeia, intentionality.

*Sequence*, Bruner’s third principle, implies directed movement within a time-frame, or the recognition of necessary process. It is in this stage that the hero is called to start out on his journey; it is this level of the psyche—the lower plane of the personal unconscious—in which is the retrievable mnemonic record of how things have happened or *come to be* in the past. It is the stage in which rules are seen a “sacred” (Piaget, p. 48)—as the magic rituals of becoming, or reifying the structure that had been conjured up in the prior stage of imagery.

It is not until we come to Bruner's fourth principle, *reinforcement*, that we cross over a threshold into the realm of *perspiration*. This principle accepts the fact that as learning begins to require conscious effort the original intrinsic motivation encounters obstacles and resistance and is weakened or forgotten. The curiosity drive loses force in its descent through the initiatives of imagination and the romancing or memory. To acquire the facts and skills that a real competence requires, we now tackle each fragment challenge of rote-learning or skill-practice or fact-judgment separately, and need to be rewarded by a sense of approbation or encouragement for each accomplishment. This is *extrinsic* motivation. Here are some monsters and the helpers of the hero's groping progress through the kingdom of the dark.

Bruner's principles may be viewed as cognitive stages in our approach to unfamiliar or new concepts, repeating in each learning experience the stages of cognitive development we have ascribed to the growing child. It is interesting that his fourth stage, reinforcement, endorses the validity of behaviorist<sup>1</sup> or "stimulus-response" psychology, at the *lowest* of the learning stages where the more motivating and imaginative elements yield to a dogged pursuit of mastery over the "tools" of knowledge and technique. Yet it is in this phase of learning, where intrinsic motivation fails and reinforcement is required, that the *elements of the whole* are acquired within which the prize of meaning or "discovery" can be found.

### ***Learning and creativity***

The question before us in this chapter is whether the hero cycle expresses a process that governs even our simpler acts of creativity, in which the process—will be easier to grasp. We then should be able to seek out its equivalent transitions in the larger cycles of a lifetime and even of mankind's evolution.

Our application of Bruner's theory of learning to the heroic model has demonstrated the presence of a staged, progressive process at least in the descent: from motivation to "discovery," or from the hero's birth to his winning of the prize. In future applications to other examples of the basic cycle, Bruner's terms will be of great value in our understanding of the creative operation that occurs on each of the four levels.

For an examination of the full cycle, however, we will return to the kind of creative exercise with which we began this chapter: ideation or problem-solving. Of the basic stages in this process we have already identified three: perspiration, inspiration, and application. But we noted (p. 65) that these properly constitute only the arduous sub-threshold quest itself, and would not be undertaken without some prior hope and vision.

Although I have substituted terms more appropriate to ideation, the essential qualities of Bruner's stages in the learning process are clearly reflected in my graphing of our typical adven-

---

1. The behaviorist school holds that learning is a matter of accumulating a series of stimulus-response associations. We are "conditioned" to respond to any given stimuli by the pleasant or unpleasant consequences of past responses which we associate with them.

ture in creativity (Fig. 24). His is, in fact, the only structured system, dealing in a similarly whole

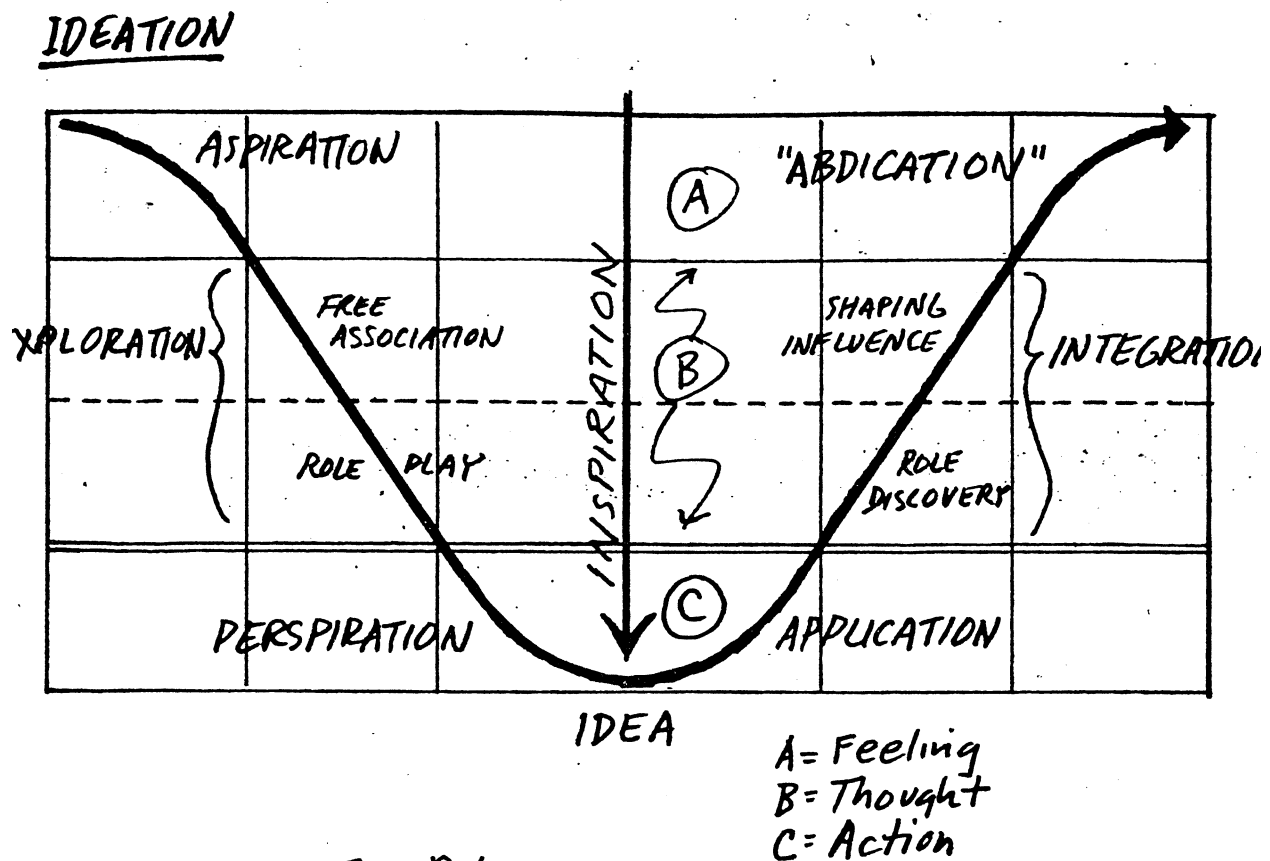


Fig. 24

but *short-range* process, to which I will refer the stages of ideation—in part because analyses of creativity tend to an unmanageable abstraction, complexity, and subjectivity. Because the levels “read across” the chart, Bruner’s stages of descent will also help us to characterize the equivalent ascending stages.

It will be helpful first of all to summarize the chart.

My term *aspiration* is obviously related to Bruner’s *motivation*. We seek an idea, or to solve a problem, from a desire or wish to do so. As we will see, in the kind of creative undertaking we are dealing with (relating to the arts, to problem-solving, or to invention), the specific wish has usually behind it some larger purpose that will be served by the fulfillment of the wish.

We can think of our purpose for wanting a solution as the motivating and guiding power behind the search, and of the specific wish for the solution as the seeker. The downward stages are quite distinct, and represent the successive ways in which our governing motive feeds and guides our wish through its journey of realization and discovery. We will consider these elements in relation to the *dramatis personae* of the myth in a moment, but clearly the wish itself is the hero.

We feed it first, in the aspiration stage, on feeling values. We anticipate its eventual fulfillment at its inception, indulging it a sense of one-ness with our purpose. Clearly, without this indulgence or “psyching up,” the wish could not acquire the impetus to seek its potential.

Then we feed it on thought, in our mental realms of imagery and past experience. In the first of these planes the wish can find images harmonious with its own thrust, and borrow them to itself in the beginnings of self-definition. It is structured here by the process of free association, but the structure is ephemeral and impermanent—like castles built in the air—because it is still not consciously directed. (This is the level of Jung’s *subliminal* personal unconscious.)

To give it pattern and direction, our governing purpose now brings it down to explore our memory—especially of our earlier successes in solving problems. From these patterned sequences of past successes, the wish can experiment—with the roles or rules or rituals that seem to promise a rewarding guidance toward its self-realization. (I’ve called this the “role-play” stage.)

But finally the wish will need—and our purpose for it will require that it have—the facts, the confrontations with “reality,” the skills that await it in the realm of possible solution. This is obviously the stage of conscious effort or perspiration in which imagination and borrowed successes must yield to struggle and persistence, and the wish must be satisfied with piecemeal “reinforcements”—the brief sense of accomplishment that rewards a successful response to each test.

Our graph makes clear inspiration is not after all a stage, but rather an episode—like the “discovery” that rewards Bruner’s ideal learning process, and of course the hero’s winning of the prize. We have already noted that most ideas or solutions come from the unconscious. This tends to happen when the perspiration stage had culminated in frustration or fatigue, and conscious effort is diverted or at rest. The idea is an ordered pattern within the chaos of problem elements. We cannot discover it *without* a close examination of the parts; but, as in the aphorism, we then become unable to see the forest for the trees, and it is only if we invite our unconscious into play that the key clue to the shape of the forest, and our “way out of it,” can surface. (This has been called the *a-ha!* phenomenon.)

Neither learning nor ideation ends with the miraculous appearance of the idea. Insight, discovery, illumination may be called a gift; they also are a challenge and a mandate to apply and to fulfill the prize that we’ve been given. When Edison spoke of perspiration as the greater part of the genius, he seems primarily to have been referring to the post-inspiration phase that I have called application. He “invented” the light bulb long before he was able to make one that combined the right materials and techniques—to work his way *from* the idea, *back through* the problem-elements, to a creation that not only transformed our world but became the symbol of ideation.

### ***Completing the circle***

In effect, the application stage re-flights the battles of the perspiration stage. It still deals in the problem elements and techniques—but where the earlier stage explored them, this new stage applies the insight or idea to gaining an effective command of them. Although *from* the ideal unity, it still is involved *in* a world of multiplicity and is still below the threshold. Yet obviously we must admit that at the end of this stage *the problem has been solved*.

Then why should we supposed that there is any more to creativity than this?

Beyond the resolution of the problem, or the execution of the idea, what bearing can anything further that we think or do have on this specific instance of creativity? What meaning can there be to the stages on our hero-graph that I have labeled *integration* and *abdication* (Fig. 24)?

What we must remember here is that this new idea was a product of motivation, imagery, and earlier successful experiences. The wish for it was the agent of a larger purpose, and the heir and beneficiary of earlier creative wishes—and their adventures in discovery—which helped to shape it on the planes of imaginative structure and remembered sequences. What has borrowed its impetus and its “emanations” or components from the mind remains at this point obliged to satisfy that debt. And any unpaid debt is a disequilibrium or imbalance which leaves a residual sense of unease, tension, and incompleteness on both “sides.”

If this seems abstract or theoretical, consider the artist who falls in love with his finished work...the inventor who takes inordinate pride in a single discovery...the college athlete who throughout his life cannot forget his glory years. In effect, each has mortgaged his mind to a thing, a space-time event which will inevitably and progressively lose relevance and meaning as he clings to it. The result is to deny the mind its potential for future and continuing creativity. It is also to deny the individual creative wish, and its discovery, their potential influence—thus their *fulfillment*—in the creative growth of the whole mind, which is the only context from which they have their relevance or meaning.

The creative alternative is for the wish to carry the idea back through the threshold of immediate problem-solving into the mid-planes of reflective thought. On the lower of these, Bruner’s plane of sequence, the memory of its proved pathway must join the lore of successful roles accessible for future ideation. On the higher, the plane of structure, its new fund of imagery acquired in its “real” adventure must enrich imagination and amend the errors of unreality or inflation to which that dream-plane inclines, again for the use of future wishes in their descent.

The final debt is on the plane of feeling (motivation, aspiration). Here the wish must yield its illusions of autonomy, and find a harmony of relatedness with all its antecedent and companion wishes which also have their place within the animating thrust of our greater purpose.

In sum: each experience in creativity that has been brought full-circle will contribute to the feeling-values of each newly-emerging creative wish; will lend imagery to the shaping of it; will have helped to blaze the directed paths available to it; and will even leave behind some hard facts and motor skills to help the new wish toward the resolution of its challenge. Its own full and continuing individuality—depends upon its return to a centering on the purpose that inspired it, and its continuing service to the creativity of a growing mind.

### ***The hero in ideation***

In this review of the creative process, I made only one reference to the specific creative wish as the hero and a few mentions of an “adventure” and a “threshold.” Because we graphed the process on the hero-model, the reader may have recognized some other parallels. Our need now is to make specific correlations between the ideation process and the elements of myth, so that from an understanding of the meaning those elements we may identify the equivalent stages, influences, and landmarks in such other instances of a cyclic creation as our lifetime psychological development.

Let us reexamine the eight stages of the heroic biography one at a time, as we summarized them beginning on page 18, to see what analogies we can discover in them of our staged adventures in ideation, problem solving, or invention. My assumptions are that the life-story of an idea is really the history of a *wish* for one, from its inception to fulfillment; that the hero is that wish;

and that every mythic character, creature, object, place, and incident represents some aspect of the self or influence within the mind that has a bearing on the creative process.

**1. The first stage of the hero's journey is from his birth in the royal kingdom to his exile. It includes the attempt on his life and his removal from danger, often by being "surrendered to the water in a box."**

We are also told that the hero is the child of royal parents, and at the same time is "reputed to be the son of a god" (Raglan). Manifestations of his triune origin—deity, father, mother—reappear in various guises throughout his adventure. The deity may be interpreted as our governing purpose from which has its mission, and so its crisis—exposure to the water, call to adventure, threshold crossings, gift of the prize, and so on—represents our own reassertion of our main purpose when the hero-wish becomes blind to or forgetful of his mission.

The hero's mother has her royalty, and the father-king his "divine right," from their service to this deity or main purpose. They are subordinate purposive motivations both related to the immediate problem for which the hero-wish is generated. Their sexes make them a complementary polarity; the father looks to the rule of *right* in the solution, and the mother to the *good* that can result from it. Their concern only for the accomplishment of the mission to which the hero is born makes them "near relatives" (Raglan); it also makes them mortal, and therefore fallible.

Their fallibility lies in the danger of inflating their roles and their progeny's importance—short-range motives—at the expense or in denial of the deity or farther purpose. The myth makes it clear not only that this occurs, but that it accounts for virtually all of the difficulties that will beset the hero through his quest.

This failure of commitment to the deity, or usurpation of divine right, may be represented in the myths by an ambivalence in the behavior of the royal parents or by other characters who play the part of the "dark side" of each of them. Thus the mother herself may, from a want of trust in the greater purpose, snatch hero infant out of the immolating fire in which the deity (as goddess) holds him—and so deny him immortality. Or, again from mistrust, she may "hold on" when immersing him in the immortalizing Styx, leaving the heel by which she grasped him vulnerable. As a separate character, the dark side of the mother is perhaps best recognized in the malevolent and jealous witch of the fairy tales, whose curse defines the hazards of the hero's subsequent adventures. The fault is essentially a feeling of possessiveness and overindulgence for the infant wish, and a fear of entrusting it *to life*.

The father-king is also ambivalent. In some myths he is the victim of a usurper tyrant, and it is the usurper who makes the attempt on the infant hero's life. In other cases the father himself becomes the villain. The "light side" of the father sired the hero-wish as a purposed agent in the service of our deity of deeper motive or farther purpose. The tyrant or *dark side* usurps to our subordinate motive the power or "right" that belongs to our greater purpose. What claims the throne looks to its own security; thus the usurper sees as a threat not only the power of our farther purpose, which it denies, but also the infant wish which, if allowed to grow, is destined to fulfill the parent's *raison d'être* and therefore consummate or end his reign.

The dark side of the mythic mother, then, tends to indulge the hero-wish and at the same time to smother it possessively. To the tenuous rule of a usurped autonomy—aspiration that is still suckling at the breast of the indulgent feeling is particularly threatening. And in the mythic world of mind, the tyrant's weapons are the oppressive doubts, fears, and guilts by which any tyrant pro-

fects his rule. It is difficult to judge which dark parent poses the direst danger for the wish itself, smothering indulgence or the onslaught of fear and doubt.

At any rate, it is our greater purpose, the deity, that foils both. We give the wish its first small dimensions of consciousness, to protect it from the unconscious swells of motherlust and to hide it from the power of doubt. We “box it in” and guide it through the threatening waters of feeling until—like a bit of innocuous flotsam—it brushed the far shore of imagination, the higher of the two mid-planes of thought. Jung noted that “thinking almost automatically throws out feeling values and vice versa.”<sup>1</sup> Waters (the moving deeps) invariably relate to the unconscious; a box (the quaternary) to the conscious. Once given even the beginnings of consciousness, the wish becomes irrelevant or “dead” (there is an analogy between box and coffin) to the very forces that had sought to smother or destroy it—and those feelings become the means by which it is swept out of the royal kingdom to the far country.

## **2.Spirited to a “far country,” the hero is rescued by animals and raised by humble foster parents. This stage is largely without incident....**

The first modest sponsorship in thought to which we now entrust the wish has little or the force or power of the now-unconscious feelings that generated it. But it is from a period of nurture on the humble fare or idle (uneventful) imagining that the child wish grows to strength and stature, shaping itself to the imagery that seems to suit it. There are the elements (emanations) of thought, acquired by what I have referred to as “free association.” In them the wish can recognize the echoes of its native thrust, and by identifying with them structure its own identity and intent.

But a wish kept too long in imagination is quite as vulnerable as it had been when too long indulged at the smothering of possessive feelings. If the foster-parents allow the wish to stray too far from their modest premises (in both senses of that word), the vulnerable hero will discover strange new echoes in the imagery he encounters that excite inflated expectations in him, and invite impatience and presumption. This event (referred to in the footnote, p. 20) is familiar in the fairy tales as taking place “deep in the forest,” or in a secret chamber of the castle’s tower—often forbidden ground—to which the youngster has been led by thoughtlessness or disobedience.

The event is intimately connected—and in some cases fused—with the call to the adventure. The negative aspect is owing to the fact that imagination harbors the agents, residual in symbolic imagery, not only of the feeling values of the deity and “light side” of the parents, but also of the dark mother and the tyrant king. *Hubris*—presumptuous arrogance or indulgence—is insinuated first. From the impossibility of its immediate satisfaction, the premature and inflated dream collapses. The hero loses his trust in the magical power of imagination. And it is for this reason that the wish must be called into a new *kind* of thought.

## **3.A new stage begins with the hero’s call to the quest, and his departure...from his foster-parents’ modest home...guided by a helper in humble guise who speaks in riddles which the hero nonetheless obeys.**

A wish stalled or frustrated by excessive image-building needs the help of our original purpose to get it moving again. This call demands a change in mode, from the borrowing of *structure* for the dream to the borrowing of *sequences* by which it may be realized. Our purpose now guides

---

1. .

the wish through pathways of process—inscribed on memory—by which our earlier wishes has succeeded. To the new wish, these roles or rules will have no proven relevance, and will seem like riddles or magic ritual, but will still have for the hero the compelling force of successful precedent. This is essentially a period of experimental play, of *emulations* of success.

This is an important stage in the ideation process. As Dr. Maxwell Maltz has stressed in his *Psycho-Cybernetics*<sup>1</sup>, rehearsals of successful experiences can build in the mind effective patterns for success.

But of course rehearsals are only useful as preparations for the actual performance.

#### **4. The threshold crossing into “a world of supernatural wonders” is clearly a transition into a new stage of commitment: a period of trials and tests which culminate in the “supreme ordeal.”**

Campbell’s emphasis here is on the “shadow presence that guards the passage,” which the hero must somehow defeat or circumvent. This shadow presence is the same paternal *hubris*—the influence of the “dark father”—that invited the hero’s inflated dreams at the end of the second stage. This time it seizes not on imagery but on the borrowed rituals or rules, inviting the hero-wish to mistake his role-playing, or emulations or success, for real achievement, and to think the solutions that blocks the way to progress, since it induces a fear of crossing over into the dread world or real “down to earth” challenges that can prove our borrowed mastery an illusion.

Again it is the patron deity of original purpose that helps the hero circumvent that fear and plunge into the realm of chaotic problem elements, seemingly insoluble mazes, interminable passages, threatening unknowns, formidable obstacles, Scylla-Charybdis quandaries. These are the tests. The helpers are the “reinforcements” of which Bruner speaks; they are the fleeting insights, the brief glows of triumph, the warmth of approbation by which purpose rewards fidelity for each fragmentary accomplishment.

Through perspiration the wish is forced to face down its fears and doubts and infidelities in direct confrontation with hard fact, and is given the outward shape of competence. By this difficult quest the stage is set for the miracle of inspiration.

#### **5. The gift or capture of the prize at the nadir of the round not only begins a new stage but initiates (and makes possible) “the final work...of return.” This phase of it is the struggle back through the arena of the quest, usually by a different route, and to the threshold of return.**

The quest for it is made especially arduous by the very nature of the idea as a discovery, flash, or sudden insight. Our wish knows only that it must accept each piecemeal test or challenge on faith; it cannot know how much longer before the idea will appear. A sense of having earned the prize builds up from past achievements; expectations rise and are disappointed. Small rewards no longer seen efficient. Fatigue, impatience, and doubt sets it.

We noted that the wealth of symbolism surrounding the winning of the prize is especially rich. The necessary yielding of conscious agency to the power of the unconscious is variously represented, in some cases by what Campbell refers to as “the hero’s sexual union with the goddess-

---

1. .



mother of the world” (p. 17), who—like the sorceress Medea who helped Jason win the Golden Fleece—has the numinous ambivalence of the light (life-giving) and dark (devouring) aspects of the long-forgotten royal mother. Consciousness both *submits to* and *possesses* this power, when for example the creative person deliberately relaxes his conscious effort to take strength from his unconscious feelings.

The idea itself appears as a vision of the inherent order or pattern that had not previously been manifest in the seeming chaos of problem-elements. Yielding to the maternal (matrical, chthonic, nurturing, feeling) principle in the unconscious accepts for the hero-wish an identity of role with the father principle (seminal, spiritual, ordering, insightful)—hence Campbell can refer to this episode in such terms as “father-atonement...expansion of consciousness...illumination, transfiguration.”

The prize or idea is a tangible gestalt which *restores meaning* to the feelings, imagery, roles, and “hard” experiences by which the wish, on the successive planes of its descent, has acquired consciousness and definition. Despite its fault of inflation on each plane, and the confusion of unresolved choices left behind on each of them, the wish has selectively attracted and accrued to itself the materials it would need now. And it is these that the aspiration, discovers symbolized (reified, incarnate) the key to the completion of his mission.

But the solution or idea is not the resolution of the problem; and in fact *re-solution* is an appropriate term for what we have called the application stage. The task of the hero-wish is now to *work his way back through* the factors of the problem, reordering physical elements, developing the chemical formula, writing or painting the work of art. From a renewed connection with the thrust of purpose, the wish now finds that many of the greatest obstacles to his earlier quest now yield helpfully to him and prove useful parts of the solution.

But there are other monsters: a pride in the idea for its own sake, recurring doubts, a tendency to vagrant applications of the idea that divert or delay the wish. The principal temptation of the idea is to tarry over small successes and partial achievements. In the myth this may be represented by friendly powers who bid the hero sojourn with them, offering honors, lands, and riches—and forgetfulness of the mission for which the prize was given.

The most grievous test comes at the threshold.

## **6. The “true” return starts with the hero’s re-emergence (from the subthreshold realm). This sixth stage of the hero-life begins with the defeat of the tyrant or his representative at the threshold, and includes the hero’s marriage to the princess.**

I gave as an example of the crisis at this crossing the artist who falls in love with his own work. Again the tyrant (or his avatar, the beast or dragon) represents that dark-father-pride or hubris which recurrently obstructs the path of creativity. With the problem solved, the hero-wish looks back on the work accomplished with satisfaction. He is reluctant to move on, for this is a work that he has wrought; it, and the world in which he triumphed, have become symbolic testimony to his prowess and identity which he fears to leave behind.

Again it is only with divine aid (the support of our original and deeper sense of purpose) that our wish can slay this tyrant—the prideful fantasy that would hold him down in the level of the work itself—and be liberated to pursue his mission.

The ascent is a return—in inverse sequence—through the same planes (“states” or countries) that the hero had encountered in his descent. This stage—between the hero’s *re-emergence* from the kingdom of the quest to his *assumption of the throne*—therefore revisits the plane of his travels from the *call to the adventure* to his *first threshold-crossing*. And, just as the “application” stage was a re-tracing and ordering of the “perspiration” stage with which it shared the lowest level, this stage of “role discovery” (Fig. 24) accomplishes what had been left unresolved in the earlier equivalent stage of “role play.”

We have equated this plane with Bruner’s principle of sequences, and with Jung’s lower level of the personal unconscious in which are recorded our retrievable (that is, sequentially catalogued) memories. In its descent, this specific hero-wish was given to experiment or “play” with roles, rules, or rituals that had been successful in our earlier adventures in creativity, as they had been recorded in our memory. The need now is for this new wish to trace the record of its successful experience upon this plane of our mind. At the same time, while it has the force of immediacy, it is but one wish in a succession of heroes: it cannot simply replace, but must find its place among those earlier experiences.

From this view, it is interesting that the hero often re-enters this “country” as tentatively as he had set out into it from his call, to discover the state of affairs before asserting his claim to rule. And since he cannot bring the passion of the quest across the threshold (“the transcendental powers must remain behind”: Campbell), the wish must acquire an affectional or motive dimension that is related to our purpose for allowing it a temporary period of governance in our mind: he must marry “a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor” (Raglan).

## **7. The assumption to the throne and the reign of the hero-king comprise the stage in which the kingdom is restored, although this period is characterized by Raglan as “uneventful.” It ends with the hero’s loss of favor with the gods or with his subjects.**

The wish which has most recently effected a successful venture into “actual” experience will carry with it into the realm of imagination an especially vivid representation of the ordered pattern (prize, or idea) which it has discovered, clothed in the symbols (the images of things and events) of its own adventure. “The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man,” Campbell tells us; and “The boon that he brings restores the world.”

The coronation of the hero-wish is our recognition and endorsement from our original sense of purpose (i.e., divine right) of the restorative utility of this wish and its idea from the immediacy of its experience. Since this is the plane of free association, of *wishful* thinking, the *fellows* to which the hero-king brings his boon are past and future wishes in a mythopoeic kingdom whose proper service it to our main purpose. The issuing of laws and restoration of this kingdom is, in effect, the exercise of the power of the mythic laws that govern feeling. The wish contributes its new fund of imagery to this plane; its new insight undoes long-held illusions or disorderly biases inconsistent with its own experience of material reality.

Again, this restorative or “shaping influence” (Fig. 24) which I have identified with the upper of the mid-planes of “integration” is on Bruner’s plane of *structure*. Unless the wish is allowed this restructuring influence in imagination, it will have been denied a vital aspect of its potential creativity—its own fulfillment and its service to our main purpose for it. But as in the

descent, imagination in the ascent invites excesses and inflation: the hero-king is vulnerable to the same grand delusions that caused him as child-hero to build unreal castles in the air.

Thus Raglan tells us that the hero-king eventually “loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and is driven from the throne and the city.” There comes a time when every wish must yield that special influence which the immediacy of its experiences had warranted.

We have all known people whose thinking seems to be governed by a single idea won long ago in a successful experience, the force of which should long since have yielded to subsequent wishes, adventures in creativity, and insights. We can only attribute such an *idée fixe* to a failure of far purpose in those minds, which has made their imaginations captive and unfruitful. The alternatives described by Raglan from the myths are surely preferable to such a stultifying tyranny. Either the imagination itself is richly enough populated by thought-images of strong feeling values (“his subjects”) that it becomes restive under that kind of bondage, or our sense of purpose (“the gods”) reasserts itself and unseats the wish—with its fixed idea—to allow “free association” to be restored again within the kingdom.

Incidentally, this also suggests why the dethroned king’s “children, if any, do not succeed him.” It requires a new hero—not the untried offspring of the old wish, born in the imagination, but an unrelated thrust fresh from the proving ground of experience—to bring about the new era of free growth and commerce.

In any event, if from want of sufficient purpose we leave a wish enthroned beyond its useful reign, we are also holding the wish itself back from a more profound fulfillment. For whether the wish is driven out, or (like Oedipus) remorsefully abdicates the throne, its departure is a further liberation from the limitations imposed upon it by its individual experience.

## **8. The final stage of the heroic lifetime is peculiarly unheroic: the wandering of a deposed exile until he is taken up, in a mysterious death, from a hill or high place. Other sources note that in addition to his sepulchres he leaves behind him the belief that he will return again in time of need.**

Especially on the lower levels of the cycle, the parallels between the ideation process and the story of the hero seemed clear and consistent. The hero narrative has affirmed and even enriched our insights into ideation in these more knowable areas: exploration, perspiration, application, and integration.

We have more difficulty in following the process on this higher level of aspiration which the hero must reenter now: the royal kingdom, the realm of feeling: the motive birthplace of the wish, the unconscious source of its inspiration, the subjective plane of mind into which the specific wish appears to vanish as we single out and make conscious some new temporal objective. It is the patron deity of purpose and the parent-motives—even in their lower-level manifestations as helper, monster, siren, dragon, princess—which resist clear definitions and sharp parallels.

Yet it is these powers of feeling that endow the images and symbols of the hero’s conscious quest with meanings and with values. It is from these that the wish acquires its own permanent quality. We may translate a wish into a creative triumph, and allow its experience to influence our thinking, and then “forget” it. *But we will continue to feel it.* If the quality of the experience failed somehow to acquire a harmony with our inner sense of purpose, the wish will continue as a feeling of incompleteness and unease—even if in consciousness it had seemed wholly satisfactory.

The intriguing question is whether a wish that in fulfillment finds itself entirely at home on the plane of our highest aspirations *is absorbed, at the expense of its continuing identity, or remains as uniquely individual in feeling* as it had been in conscious thought, in memory, and in imagination.

From the “conscious” viewpoint it *appears* to have been absorbed, because consciousness insists on equating identity with separateness. Yet our own experiences with strong feelings suggest that when we forget ourselves we actually enhance our individuality. What we call *esprit de corps* is an example of this. We enjoy our most vivid sense of being—of awareness—when we are caught up with others in the zeal of a common creative purpose. In being carried beyond ourselves we are given a still stronger sense of self as the “point” *from* which we experience the larger environment of shared feelings and farther purposes. From a shared purpose we savor the unique contributions made by others—and their appreciation *extends* (rather than *defining*) the force or power of our own individuality.

A similar mutual enhancement may reasonably be ascribed to those wishes which return to the plane of aspiration. Stripped of the accouterments of power, the deposed hero will feel at first as exposed as the infant hero surrendered to the waters at this same point in the descent. But this time he is submitting voluntarily to the gods of feeling (Oedipus, in fact, blinded himself to preclude self-guidance). The narrative here dramatizes how difficult is the final stage of “letting go.” Like the needle of a compass in a magnetic field, the hero’s last illusions of self-directedness must accept alignment with the orientation of our greater purpose.

It was to this orienting of individual attitude within the all-embracing horizon of original purpose—Jung’s mandala archetype, the squaring of the circle—that we related the hero’s “mysterious death...at the top of a hill” (p. 57 *ff.*). In the microcosm of mind, the wish returns to a relationship with our felt purpose that transcends the need for external definition. And its influence at every level is made the more powerful by its centeredness in feeling. It animates with meaning the images that, in our far country of imagination, correspond to it. Its pattern is still marked out in memory. And even in the kingdom of our conscious questing it will have its holy sepulchres: the habits, tools, and motor skills by which its motive power may be entreated to help future generations of hero-wishes in their adventure of becoming.

# Chapter 4 A Guiding Purpose

## *Alternatives*

By the synthesis of material which for the most part has been observed, collected, and formulated by credited investigators, we have completed what was promised for Part I of this study. In tracing the hero path, we have charted the countries of the mind and have discovered the dynamics of creative process. From their structural congruence with our common referent, the hero cycle, we must suppose that the life-stages of our psychological development and the stages of learning or ideation are both expressions—each on its own scale—of that single “path” of creativity.

This brings us to our central challenge: the question of a transcendent but *real* purpose in our lifetime adventure, and the meaning of the path to which our secret intuitions call us. The credentials of our guides up to this point are generally unimpeachable within the areas of their studies. But their special competence does not cross over into the fields of exploration upon which we are now embarking, if for no other reason than that their premises and expectations precluded their affirmative consideration of a genuine spiritual reality.

In our search for demonstrable meanings and real purpose within the structure and process of our life-experience, we will find ourselves abandoned—and essentially opposed—by the very authorities we have so far consulted. Some leave the question unaddressed, or open but at best unanswerable. The most common posture is to admit the power and importance of our subjective intuitions and religious feelings, but only as psychological products of physical processes—and as “fantasies” which, because we have them, must be reckoned with simply as a matter of adaptive functioning in the “real” world.

The objection may be fairly made that the methodological assumptions of science and the individual beliefs of the scientist are not necessarily the same. There are those who accept the parameters of science in their work, but not as compelling restraints on their personal philosophies. The problem is that a scientist can speak with authority only from his scientific premises. And those who confuse the two, and make science their religion, tend to be far less reticent in ascribing their mechanistic views to science than the one who maintains his religious views as a separate and private matter. In consequence, science has been made almost exclusively the tool of unbelief—when in fact, like any tool, its use properly depends on the hand that wields it.

The only satisfactory answer to a negative position is one which, from affirmative assumptions, fully accounts for and is consistent with both our psychical and physical realities. I asserted, in the introduction in Part I, that we would find that rational satisfaction in the spiritual system of Emanuel Swedenborg. Before we confront ourselves with a new set of assumptions, however, it would be well if we reexamine those which become almost the universal axioms of modern western thought.

The effort of this chapter will be to distinguish between scientific fact and the scientific myth<sup>1\*</sup> which underlies the facts and colors our thinking from them. We can do this without actually abandoning that myth for any others: we will be left free to choose, but will perhaps be more

---

1. Distinguish between meanings of this word in the footnote

aware of what we are choosing. The question will simply be what view we should take toward the material we have brought together in the past three chapters.

*The scientific myth is unexceptionally mechanistic.* Without explaining how physics translates into consciousness, the empiricist holds that the qualities we call physics or spiritual are the chance products by-products of an unintending biochemistry. Most treat this purely physical and fortuitous origin of life and mind as inarguably self-evident.

Even Carl Jung—though more inclined than most to accept a kind of “reality” in psychic content—fell captive to his pretensions of empiricism. “What we properly call instincts are physiological urges,” he said, “and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes....”<sup>1</sup> Thus God, as an archetypal manifestation, is merely a fantasized “revelation” of a “physiological urge.” (Jung leave the question of a “real God” open and unanswerable.)

Freud, whose explorations of the unconscious opened the way to a new appreciation of our inner realms, was more directly and uncompromisingly mechanistic. Life is shaped by the encounter of libidinous energies, biochemically generated in the chaotic cauldron of the id, with external (equally physical and fortuitous) forces.

Erikson’s discernment of a patterned wholeness in the growth of mind within the cultural matrix, and his gentle humanity, did not deter him from describing the individual life-cycle as “the accidental coincidence” my italics of that lifetime with the age in which it falls. Piaget denied a spiritual causation of the mind’s innately patterned way of growing. And Campbell, who wove our individual replay of the mythic round into a magnificent tapestry of universal cycles, saw endlessly repeated, futile passage “from the tomb of the womb to the womb of the tomb.”<sup>2</sup>

Is the path to be interpreted as an empty round in an interweave of unintending forces, a fortuitous charade of the universal physics? Are the awareness that we know, the good or ill we do, the ideals we seek, the perfection we envision, the meanings and purposes we are persuaded of, no more than epiphenomena, fantasy, illusion—a psychic face of nature no more meaningful than the physics that unaccountably produce it?

Or should we insist upon an interpretation that satisfies not only the compelling testimony of our physical senses, but also the persistent messages that well up into consciousness from our hidden worlds of inner or subjective experience? That credits those *inner senses*—for sense them we most surely do—which intimately affirm for us the touch of love, the light of truth, the reach of purpose, the taste of virtue, the attainability of a lasting, meaningful, and rich fulfillment?

In deciding between these alternatives, it is important to understand that negative assumptions are no less subjective than affirmative ones. Denial is not based on any facts, but is a way of looking at the facts. Scientific standards of credibility are the products of evolving human attitudes, and their authority lies mainly in a traditional consensus.

The tradition itself has a valid origin. Unquestionably science had its birth in a confusion that demanded a new objectivity. The conflict of religious dogma with the new and more accurate observations of natural phenomena had by the seventeenth century brought chaos to both science and religion. René Descartes’ proposal that physical phenomena be examined on their own terms,

1. .
2. .

without the imposition of spiritual interpretations about which none could find agreement, restored order and introduced system to the investigation of natural reality, giving a tremendous impetus to the accumulation of unbiased knowledge about nature and its processes.

But to isolate the physical in order to study it is one thing; to assert that only the physical is real is quite another thing. And the one set of criteria that specifically excludes itself from a valid judgment on the question is that which arbitrarily confines its recognition to what is physical. Those who elect to wear glasses that filter out the color red are not being “scientific” if they insist that, because they cannot see it, red has no reality. In making judgments beyond his chosen limitations, the scientist has adopted a new bias to replace the old. As linguist Noam Chomsky observed, “The empiricist view is so deep-seated in our way of looking at the human mind that it almost has the character of superstition.”<sup>1</sup> And any bias will discount—and seek to discredit—whatever evidence points to alternative interpretations.

But the discovery of a bias of “superstition” in scientific thinking does not restore validity to any religious superstitions that science has legitimately refuted. The eye of the spirit has no more right to a filter-lens than the eye of science—that is, it cannot deny the laws that govern physical reality. “We could adduce an immense weight offered by human faith and wisdom,” J.E. Cirlot wrote, “proving that the invisible or spiritual order is analogous to the material order.”<sup>2</sup> Where natural law is demonstrated by criteria proper to it, it will provide an analog of spiritual law—or our ideas about the spiritual order must be incomplete or faulty.

### ***A search for pattern***

Only those spiritual insights that have been grounded in material reality can long support us. Affirmation does not demand that we abandon experience or reason; rather, we must seek them out. But spiritual dimensions must be explored from appropriate assumptions, like a third dimension in geometry. The comfortable axiom that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points betrays us if we are moved from a plane surface to the surface of a sphere: we must be prepared to accept new axioms, or be doomed forever to a two-dimensional reality.

The myths bespeak our need to credit premises that transcend our fragmentary certainties. The hero wins his triumphs by a simple ruse not even of his own invention, a magic potion, or a wonder weapon. Jason sailed the Argo safely through the Clashing Rocks by following a pigeon he released at the bidding of a deity. Here the rocks symbolize the hero’s own fears and doubts of pressing onward, and the dove this *faith* in the divine command. The “secret” is simply that trust neutralizes doubt and fear.

The hero thus enjoys what seems an “unfair” advantage. The empiricist finds equally unfair the recourse to a spiritual hypothesis or explanation. Successes won not by his rules must be credited to blind chance.

And yet it is *his* faith in an inherent and beautiful order, functioning and consistent, that has led the scientist to his every great discovery. The most irreligious of scientists may in this sense be devout. As Nobel biochemist James D. Watson said of his twin-spiral configuration for the genetic molecule DNA, “a structure this pretty just had to exist.”<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. .
  2. .

What motive commits even the skeptic to this faith in a universal order? Perhaps it is the need to feel secure in a reality whose governance is consistent, dependable, and reasonably predictable. In any case, these trial flights of the dove appear to reflect an *irreducible* faith in the order and reliability of nature. They work: in the measure that we inquire from an affirmative expectation into nature, nature will reveal its ordered laws and patterns to us.

The question is what deities we will credit and what flights of faith we will assay. Only if our wish or faith or expectation transcends nature can we be rewarded by the discovery of equally ordered and consistent laws in the higher realms of meaning, purpose, and the human spirit.

We learn about spiritual things in much the same way that we expand our confident knowledge about the external world. We credit our senses—although a different set of “sense organs” that are *inwardly* directed—, and we credit the cumulative observations, discoveries, and interpretations of others. We find that there are some “authorities” we can more frequently rely on; some whose premises and measuring tools produce results incompatible with our own experience of the world within.

Selectively, judicious doubt, unbiased experiment, and rational assessment are as useful in the one exploration as in the other. But so are affirmative expectations and common sense. We would not attempt a delicate experiment in physics in a hurricane, or expect to demonstrate some valid corollary to a known law if we did not have the technology to generate the temperatures required. No more can we hope to validate the Golden Rule as an unalterable spiritual law in the midst of moral chaos, or if we cannot generate in ourselves the necessary steadfast warmth of feeling to put it fairly to the test.

But without the confident expectation that the search would be rewarded there could have been no advance in our knowledge and understanding of natural phenomena, and there can be no advance in our understanding and command of human values and spiritual laws. The pursuit of spiritual meaning, like the pursuit of natural order, becomes fruitful only when—however tentatively at first—we dare to explore intelligently from hopeful premises.

Here again the hero-life anticipates the problems we encounter. The threats are unresolved in the royal kingdom we left behind. In our descent from the spontaneous intensity of infantile feelings, and into increasing external consciousness, we are left with an uneasy distrust of our feelings for good reason. If we now credit them without discrimination, we are as vulnerable to the dark as to the light side of the parent motives. Our inner senses are no less susceptible to illusions than our physical perceptions of sight, touch, hearing. From this mistrust, as we earlier quoted Jung, “thinking almost automatically throws out feeling values”—puts them out of mind, or becomes forgetful of them.

The problem is that feelings are not neutralized by our forgetfulness of conscious denial. They continue to assert themselves indirectly on each plane of the descent—that is, in more and more externalized ways. What is particularly significant is that forgetfulness—or resistance to feeling values—is not a smooth continuum. Not is the “remembering” process of the return that reconciles us with feeling. Each stage—in the heroic metaphor, in ideation, in our lifetime psychological development—is a complete adventure and a cycle within itself: a subcycle—within the larger process—which transforms the quality of the hero’s recognition and response. The



events within each stage repeat the experience of the first stage on a new level, and anticipate the whole adventure.

### *Cycles within cycles*

This fact, the implications of which we will examine in a moment, is most graphically demonstrable in the nuclear biography of the hero. Each of the six lateral divisions of our graph presents its own equivalents of a *birth* of emergence, a central transformative event or *prize-giving*, and a departure or symbolic death.

The birth which begins the first stage is also the birth that initiates the larger cycle. The prize-giving is the infant's recognition by the deity which singles him out for salvation from the tyrant's threat and predicts his future greatness. (In every story of Jason, e.g., the prize is symbolized in this first stage by a ring bestowed on the infant hero, by which Jason would be recognized and acknowledged when grown.) In the standard saga, the box in which the infant is surrendered to the waters has the symbolic meaning—as we have noted—of a coffin, and a death or departure from this stage.

In the second stage, the shifting imagery of myth makes that same box a *womb* from which the hero emerges into the far country. The prize in this subcycle is the hero's call to the adventure—again a divine recognition and promise of a future greatness—at the transition from one midplane to the next. His departure from this stage may be represented by an actual death at the threshold-crossing where, as Campbell points out, many heroes are “slain by the opponent and descend in death.” More often the death is symbolic: crossings, especially involving water or an ascent or descent, almost universally in myth imply a death and rebirth.

Not only is the cyclic formula present in each of these *six* lateral divisions. We can detect it in the descent and the ascent, as *paired* subcycles; we can find it in the equal comprise of separation, initiation, and return, which thus comprise a *triune* of cyclic transformations; it is discernible in each *quadrant* of the major cycle—birth to the call, the call to the prize, the prize to the throne, and the throne to the hero's death; even *single episodes* exhibit the ubiquitous cyclic process. The “perfect” mythic narrative would thus be susceptible to infantile subdivisions in each of which the cyclic, transformative, or creative process is discernible. It is toward such an all-encompassing representation—which finds a place for every fragment of experience, subjective and objective—that mankind's mythopoeic inventiveness, his creativity, his visions and devotions, have been always and in all ways directed.

In effect, this is the effort to infill and reconstruct from the elements of experience a sense of wholeness that was originally perceived in feeling. In ideation, the initial *aspiration* has that wholeness; then *free association* fashions an image of it; then *role play*, by emulation, inscribes in memory ideal examples of other “wholes”; and in the final stage of the descent *perspiration* seeks unity or pattern within the seemingly random fragments of space-time experience.

It is the patron deity, appearing in a guise that the hero will heed at any given level, who keeps him moving forward through the stages of his quest—by a redefinition of the goal and a restatement of the “covenant.” The deity and promise actually are unchanged except in the eye of the hero who is undergoing change, growth, transformation, or becoming. In ideation we identified the deity with a main purpose—from which the hero-wish has its potential “divine right” and future rule—by which we periodically reinspire and redirect the wish toward its fulfillment.

But we have demonstrated that every cycle is at the same time a subcycle, originating in a greater cycle that transcends it, and is itself a greater cycle that transcends its own subcycle parts. Each, small and great, is an expression of the mythic round and of creative process. Each is the product of the greater cycle that transcends it, and made therefore in its image.

The question comes finally down to this: if, in the case of ideation, the deity—the transcending “universal reality”—is the *purpose* to which the wish owes its existence, *what else than a main purpose would be the motive source of any cycle?* Why would there be any difference except in magnitude, and our inability to discern a purpose in creative processes outside our range of recognition?

The spectrum of electromagnetic energies (those that travel at the speed of light) ranges from frequencies of one or two cycles per second to more than 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 per second. Of this enormous band, only a miniscule fraction in the vicinity of  $10^{15}$  waves per second is visible to the eye. All the rest we know only indirectly, or from effects we attribute to develop to detect them. What lies beyond the range of our instruments we still do not know.

The eye of mind by which we sense purpose in the realm of thought and feeling may be presumed to have a similarly limited mid-range of perception. Its directly “visible” spectrum includes only the purposes we sense within our conscious or deliberate endeavors. We can detect such purposes in others than ourselves only by analogy, from the things they say and do. In ourselves and others, also by analogy, we can assume from their effects that there are fragmentary or subliminal motivations too fine for our mental sensory equipment to detect, and purposes too far-reaching or long-range for our inner eye to span. And again by their effects we can analogously identify great waves of collective purposes: purposed partnerships, family aspirations, community drives, corporate objectives, ethnic and national ideological aims, world hopes.

### ***“To be human”***

The question of what motive in us governs our life-striving has fascinated even those psychologists who take shelter behind the evasive term “fantasy” to protect their posture of empiricism.

According to psychoanalyst M.-L. von Franz, “the existence of human beings will never be satisfactorily explained in terms of isolated instincts or purposive mechanisms such as hunger, power, sex, survival, perpetuation of the species...man’s main purpose is not to eat, drink, etc., but *to be human*.”<sup>1</sup>

What it means *to be human* has been the subject of endless analyses and conjectures. We will present our own (or Swedenborg’s) definitions later. For the present we may accept von Franz’ meaning: an unconscious ideal of archetypal wholeness, of which our physiological and psychological drives are a constellation of partial and subordinate expressions. This “human” archetype is personified in myth, and in dreams and visions, as Cosmic Man. The figure (often appearing centered upon the mandala, world axis, or tree of life, and sometimes androgynous) ineffably embodies the qualities of an overwhelming benignity and an infinitely wise intelligence in their integrated wholeness.

---

1. .

Encounters with representations of this figure, classed pejoratively today as hallucinations, are far less rare than had been thought. What kind of reality they have is not important here (it will be later); the immediately relevant point is that they appear to embody the subjective meaning of “humanity” as it is impressed upon our deepest feelings: compassionate, accepting, interacting, understanding, and creative.

We do not need a visionary encounter with the archetype to know that a great humanity embraces our highest ideals, purest virtues, and deepest longings. Even in consciousness we build our ideal from the examples of men whose lives express elements of our unrealized inner vision. But these merely clothe for conscious apprehension an ideal that already exists in the unconscious. Jung demonstrated that the archetypes, as shapes of feelings, precede the experience that provides the imagery in which we “see” them. Whether or not—as he supposed—ascrivable to our genetic heritage<sup>1</sup>, they *are* intrinsic to our own humanity.

If a singular and comprehensive *motivation to be human* underlies our subordinate motivations—our “isolated instincts or purposive mechanisms,” which in serving it tend also to obscure it—, it will function much as does the patron deity of myth. It will assert itself in whatever guise the hero in us will recognize and accept, clothing itself in our lesser drives and purposes when its true power and sublime quality have lost “visibility” in the clutter of our conscious (temporal, immediate) concerns.

The spectrum of purposes within us seems to range, then, from impulses so minutely fragmentary that we can detect no purpose in them; through a mid-range of purposes that we can sense within ourselves directly, or by analogy from their effects in ourselves and others; to this “main purpose...to be human,” which—if for the most part unconsciously—directs the course of our lifetime cycle.

But even if this is the deepest, all-embracing purposive motivation within our individual minds, does the hierarchy of purposes end here? Or is our wish to be human transcended by a continuing succession of collective purposes in the human “organisms” and cyclic life-histories of the family, community, nation, race, and mankind? There is more reason to credit than to discount such a hierarchy, rising toward the universal aspiration for a single, cosmic, whole humanity. The readiness of the individual to sacrifice himself to clan or cause suggests that a personal humanity cannot be achieved *except* in the advancement of society—at all levels—toward its collective potential for a greater humanity.

A transcendent “universe” of purpose—or source of creative power and direction—is an implicit element of the cycle wherever we discover it. All spiritual systems are founded on the recognition of a purpose that transcends even the comprehensive collective of all create or finite minds. And in fact the physical model that has best been expressed for us the spiral configuration of creative experience—an earth rotating in its orbit—has no effective meaning except in relation to the sun. Daylight, darkness, and the dawn of a new day (separation, initiation, and return) are the consequence of the earth itself turning away from and returning to its source of radiant life-energies. The rotation of an earth without a sun would produce no sense of directed movement, no diurnal transformations.

---

1. .

## Forgetfulness

But the long night is part of every “day” of our adventure, we lose sight and become forgetful of that source of our light and warmth. As in the dark we tend out Promethean man-fires, we distrust our childhood memories of the great swath it traced across our firmament, and doubt the promise of a coming dawn.

We have seen that in the hero story our progressive forgetfulness is prophesied: there are specific point of threat and test by the persuasions of futility, fears of initiative, and illusions of a lonely self-dependence. When the sense of a transcendent purpose fades, the obstacles—the monsters, shoals, or clashing rocks—seem in the dark most real and formidable, and the sirens most attractive. This is the “psychic underworld” to which, according to Jung, the rationalism of western man has made him vulnerable.

We found that even in our relatively small creations our tendency is to lose sight of purpose as we become involved in the details and routines of achieving it. How often, after sweating out some component problem, do we have to stop and ask ourselves, “Let’s see—where was I? What was I trying to do?”

Not only does our involvement in each cycle blind us to its own motive dimension, but each cycle blinds us to the greater cycle it was intended to subserve—and to *its* motive origin. Thus the higher purpose, the more fully human the ideal, the more remote, abstract, and irrelevant to the immediate problem it comes to seem—and the more isolated and meaningless (and so more formidable) our confrontations with the problem-elements appear. “There are no longer any gods whom we can evoke to help us,” Jung said. “The great religions...suffer from increasing anemia, because the helpful numina have fled from the woods, rivers, and mountains, and from animals, and the god-men have disappeared into the unconscious....Our present lives are dominated by the goddess Reason, who is our greatest and most tragic illusion.”<sup>1</sup>

The indwelling spirits of benign intent we have found in all things during the mythopoeic years of our childhood in the far country (Piaget’s “age of why’s,” p. 49) have in our approach to adulthood been reduced to fragmentary—and largely threatening—superstitions. We mature into the same disenchantment that has befallen western man, a forgetfulness of the purpose once recognized as echoed in the “soul” or “numen” of every animate and inanimate thing.

But Jung himself knows better than to make “the goddess Reason” the villain of the piece. What displaces the “helpful numina” is not Reason, or a goddess, but a mechanistic rationalism that *feigns* Reason in the hypnotic flickering of our Promethean fires: the agents of dark sides of our parent-purposes, the Shadow and the Anima, monster and siren, tyrant doubts and seductive indulgences. It was not Reason but rationalism that Jung (in our earlier citation, p. 37) found to have put modern man “at the mercy of the psychic ‘underworld.’”

Because it can appear so to consciousness, some myths assign negative powers to the divine pantheon. And yet the patron deities of myth strive not to deny, but constantly to purpose in us is not *reason*: that word itself has as its most intimate synonyms *cause* and *purpose*. Creative thinking (and except for its obverse, destructive thinking, what other kind of thought is there?) is the effort to rediscover order, pattern, meaning within an external reality that—without reason and purpose—seems to be a confusion of random data. To deny subjective values is merely unreasonable. To deny a supremely transcendent purpose in which all those values are qualities or aspects

---

1. .

of a single thrust is the ultimate denial of reason. The root meaning of *universe* is “a single turning.” A universal purpose is the order within which all the interweaving patterned purposes have their place and part in one great patterned movement—in which they have their *reason*, or have no reason. Denial of such a “final” purpose invalidates all lesser purposes, all reason and all reasoning, all pattern and all order, and exempts the universe itself from its own creative laws.

The challenge, therefore, is to know that universal purpose and to bring those purposes over which we are given a divine right of governance into harmony with it. Our personal fulfillment lies in the achievement of a consonance of spirit—a psychodynamic confluence—with the directed rhythms of cosmic creativity which animate us.

The universal myth appears to be the constant and the underlying revelation of such a purpose to all mankind at every epoch and in every culture, and to each of us through all the stages of the lifetime quest. It is the substance of our dreams and visions, the pattern of our recognitions, the shaper of our individual and phylogenetic growth, the process and the product of our intuitions—an expression of our aspirations, our personal and collective *raison d’être*, our ideals and our destiny.

As hope and dream and inner drive the myth speaks from within us. As echoed in the cyclic process of nature, and as the intrinsic form of all the elements of our cultural milieu—parental nurture, ritual and literary traditions, art and drama, social structures and instructions—it infills from outward experience, demonstrates and illustrates, endorses, confirms, and rewards our inner hopes and recognitions.

## **PART II: THE MACROMYTH**

# INTRODUCTION TO PART II

## *A brief review*

Where have our expectations brought us?

In Chapter 1 we derived from the several composites of the hero's biography, as distilled by Rank, Raglan, and Campbell, a lifetime synthesis which—if skeletal—exhibits a satisfying symmetry and unity. So combined, the findings of the mythologists present a graphic expression of the psychological processes that the psychoanalysts have variously attributed to our mythic heritage. And Dewey's findings (p. 28) suggested that the cyclic form of this adventure, with its psychological implications, is reflected in the rhythms of natural and social processes—of activity or energy itself throughout the analogous worlds of physical and psychical.

Chapter 2 summarily examined the developmental stages discerned by Freud, Erikson, and Piaget, and Jung's concepts of the structure and individuation of the psyche. We reserved for later the effort to discover in these various systems a harmony of underlying process. But by referring each stage-system to the hero model we demonstrated an impressive agreement between them as to the chronology of important developmental shifts. This common congruence with the standard episodes of the hero story, although it needs further study, is a significant affirmation of our thesis that the myth describes the shape, the growth, and the functioning of the mind through its lifetime adventure.

In Chapter 3 we borrowed Bruner's principles of learning to see if the creative process, in our everyday experience of it, is not allegorically described by the same mythic formula. We have found support for this thesis also. The episodes and sequences of the hero story accommodate those portions of the problem-solving process that we can know from conscious experience. And even the more subjective early and later stages, which tend to elude our conscious grasp, have found a congruence with the heroic metaphor in Bruner's learning sequences and in Jung's archetypes and structured psyche.

In Chapter 4 we addressed the question of how we may most reasonably assess the implications of these parallel processes. While logic may be used to build a system descriptive of reality based on the denial of purpose in all things, that negative premise has no special claim to verity. It is in fact contrary to those deeper intuitions—the readings of judgments as to what truths are “self-evident.” The psychological evidence demonstrates that at the deeper levels of our minds these intuitions—of a motive purpose in ourselves and in the universe—are a heritage common to all of us. Nor does the evidence offer any convincing reasons for the arbitrary dismissal of these expectations as mere fantasies. To accept the negative premise without sufficient cause can only close off to rational investigation what might be—surely would be—the most important and productive of all frontiers.

It was primarily from the psychological evidence that in Chapter 4 we isolated certain principles indicative of a universal purpose, which also explain—especially in terms of our own creative processes—the fugitive quality of our sense of purpose on the preoccupied plane of consciousness. Because our conscious attention is selective or directional, our awareness of our motive purpose tends to fade as we apply ourselves to the means by which to accomplish it. If this is true of our lesser or subordinate motivations, it will be truer still of each greater motive that the lesser purpose serves, in an ascending hierarchy of motivations.

In the individual mind, we found reason to identify the governing motive, whether accepted or denied in conscious thought, as the wish to fulfill potential integrated *humanity* which transcends, disposes, and embraces all the “isolated instincts and purposive mechanisms” that, from the loss of a sense of unifying purpose, have become fragmentary and conflicting. Further, we proposed that this individual potential for an ideal humanity is itself transcended by our collective capacity to fulfill the ideal humanity on a far greater scale: here again a hierarchy, served by the motives of the individual, his family, community, nation, each in turn a fuller potential for the expression and realization of the human ideal.

If the collective aspiration of all mankind is to fulfill a human ideal by which it is transcended—a purpose greater than itself—how may we best view what ideal? As an improbably magnificent fantasy, of as a substantively real, supremely human archetype and origin of humanity? And if, in that ideal, all those creative virtues we intuitively recognize as truly human are ideally embraced and integrated, can we dismiss that integrated, whole Humanity—as fantasized, “unreal”—without denying also the manifest reality and creative power of human virtues?

It clearly is not rational to dismiss as unreal any impress of experience on our minds unless and until, by logical process, it is reduced to improbability or absurdity. There are of course absurd ideas about human virtue and about God. Forgetfulness and illusion plague the hero in his descent. But the power of a transcendent Human Ideal, as an archetypal presence in the secret motive countries of the mind, remains the single source of man’s aspirations and the origin of his every sublime thought and achievement. In no sense can a recognition of that Ideal, of a devotion to it, be called absurd; and how can something of such creative force be any less real than its more consciously knowable, and even its physically tangible, consequences?

### ***Renewal of the covenant***

These considerations support our earlier supposition (p. 23) that the ancient worship rituals were imitations of the universal creative process—the cosmogonic round—; that such emulations should not be viewed pejoratively as merely “sympathetic magic,” but rather as the effort to find an affective harmony with the universal workings of a divine intent; and that any spiritual system is valid to the degree that the Ideal to which the rituals of living are shaped is true to the nature and intent of the original creation.

Again, forgetfulness and illusion plague the hero in his descent. It is therefore to be expected that the ritual and the myth will tend to lose their fidelity to the affective rhythms of universal purpose, to the extent that values are transferred to mediate and short-range (component) motivations. This seems to be a principle inherent in the myth itself. But in this eventuality there is another mythic principle, by which also mankind’s expectations have been shaped from the beginning, that comes into play: that the Patron Deity will make himself again to the hero, at standard and predictable points in the adventure; in a guise that is appropriate to the hero’s changing need and receptivity; with a solution for the hero’s immediate predicament; and in a form that is recognizably a renewal of past covenants and a reassertion of the Patron’s purpose. It is by such aid (sometimes given indirectly, e.g. through a messenger, oracle, sign, symbolic dream) that in the myth the hero is led through the stages of separation, initiation (the quest itself), and return (or restoration of the kingdom).

In our psychological development, the stages appear to be defined by periodically transformed concepts of the parental (adult) model to which we aspire, and especially the parental purposes which so largely direct our destinies. In ideation, we found the stages marked by a tendency



to forget our original intent in our increasing involvement with the problem-elements, and the consequent need to recall and reassert that purpose—thus to renew and redirect our efforts—on each succeeding level.

The essential question, which we posed in the introduction to Part I and tentatively explored in Chapter 4, is whether the psychological validation of these mythic principles has its demonstrable equivalent in the universal creation, and especially in the collective origin and evolution of humanity. Is the Patron Deity of mankind's spiritual traditions and mythopoeic aspirations in fact the Original Creative Motive, the antetypical and ideal Humanity, the Creator and Sustainer, according to whose purpose and by whose guidance in successive Self-revelations mankind's collective adventure has been directed?

To those who upon recourse to reason in the shaping of their postures toward life, this question is not a mere philosophical nicety that may be lightly sidestepped. Nor can those in the intellectual vanguard shrug off the obligations that attend the influence of their thought on evolving social attitudes and values. If there is indeed a Human Ideal, a Creator from whose creative purpose all human indictment of modern rationalism on psychological grounds is vastly understated, and the need to rectify the mischief done in the name of reason is immeasurably more urgent.

In our opening pages, I gave as the purpose of this study the subject of Part II—following the development and psychological exploration of the psychomyth in Part I—the affirmative resolution of this question. How the following chapters will pursue that affirmation was also anticipated (pp. 6-10) in my proposition that the spiritual system of Emanuel Swedenborg presents a rational and comprehensive reconciliation of the apparent conflicts between a spiritual faith and the discoveries of science. Because his system credits the validity of mankind's mythic heritage, and his insights into their symbolic content anticipated the modern psychological interpretations, our explorations thus far constitute, in effect, a secular prologue to his spiritually oriented psychology/cosmology/theology. And because he holds the Judeo-Christian Testaments to be the terminal formulation of the universal mythos, and presents his system primarily through the symbolic interpretation of that allegory, we will find that our familiar mythic metaphors have prepared us to grasp Swedenborg's essential principles with little difficulty.

In brief, Swedenborg asserted that humanity has evolved through a series of stages entirely analogous to those of the maturing individual mind. Each of these featured its own concept of the Deity and attitudes and responses to Him. Each had its inception in a divine Self-revelation adapted to mankind's changing need for goals and guidance. With the intellectual revolution of his own day, Swedenborg maintained, humanity had evolved into the need and readiness for a new such Self-disclosure which would answer to mankind's maturing rationality. And the appropriate means for the giving of these new spiritual insights was, according to Swedenborg, the unfolding of profound internal meanings—an allegorical significance intended and intrinsic in them from the beginning—which would fulfill and renew all past Covenants, and specifically their final formulation in the Testamental narrative.

Swedenborg asserts for himself no personal authority, but only a reporter's role. He does, however, claim for his disclosures the same authority he attributes to the Testaments from which they are allegorically derived. I do not expect the reader to credit even this authority in advance of our consideration of his system. If it is incumbent on the Patron Deity to adapt his guise to the hero's need, and the modern need is for a rational affirmation of our spiritual traditions, Swedenborg's claim to have been the human instrument of an appropriate disclosure must obviously not be credited apart from the rational criteria which Swedenborg himself makes paramount.

These criteria include the satisfactory resolution of the religious and moral-ethical dilemmas of our day; the self-consistency—and consistency with traditional and modern (psychoanalytic) symbolic systems relating to dream and myth—of the hermeneutic key by which he draws out the inner meanings of the Biblical narrative; and of course a fidelity to his own Scriptural authority.

### ***The scientist***

In this sense, Swedenborg the man is almost irrelevant to an assessment of his disclosures. On the other hand, the efficacy of his discoveries will necessarily depend upon their being heard; and our readiness to hear and assess them will be influenced by what we know about the intellectual caliber, the integrity, the achievements, and the character of the man. This is especially true in view of the extraordinary nature of the spiritual experiences he reports in great detail, and the pivotal role he assigns to his exegetic disclosures in mankind's ongoing spiritual adventure.

That role is inextricably a part of the historical process; and the time and place of Swedenborg's life in history, and the consideration of his mind both as a product of his time and an influence upon it, do therefore have a valid relevance to the understanding and assessment of his system.

Swedenborg, surprisingly, has been the subject of more published biographies than probably not over half a dozen other men: surprisingly, because except in limited scholarly and esoteric circles his accomplishments remain relatively unknown, unattributed, or misconstrued. The contradiction is not without identifiable causes.

His career in science followed that of René Descartes by about a century. Cartesian dualism had already produced the beginnings of many modern sciences. For a few decades it became possible for an exceptional mind to absorb all these new fields of knowledge, and to interrelate them in a way that the vast accumulation of data and increasing specialization soon made impossible.

Swedenborg has been described as perhaps the last of the great scientific minds to have encompassed all the important knowledge of his own time. He is credited with founding several scientific specialties; proposed the nebular hypothesis of planetary origins before Kant or Laplace; arrived at conclusions about the functions and activity of the brain that would not be rediscovered for well over a century.<sup>1\*</sup> While he involved himself early in those experimental researches which burgeoned at the dawn of the 18th century, he soon turned to the speculative analysis of the great fund of new knowledge being generated by others.

Although ardently appreciative of Descartes, Swedenborg was convinced that there was a discoverable connection between the two realities that Descartes has so sharply separated. Nor was he satisfied with Leibnitz' theory of a "preestablished harmony" by which mind (soul) and

---

1. The difficulty with an itemizing of Swedenborg's achievements is that it would be overlong for inclusion here, and involves concepts that would be meaningless to the layman. Swedenborg's wide-ranging genius is suggested by Robert Ripley's listing, in *Believe It Or Not*, of over 30 distinct *fields* in which he excelled; and by the retrospective assessment of his "IQ" at above 200 (exceeded by only one man) in *Guinness' Book of World Records*. These rather frivolous estimations of Swedenborg have their scholarly equivalent in an excellent summary of his scientific contributions given (under "Swedenborg") in the 1950 Edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, reproduced on p. 000.

matter operated in concert from their common divine direction, but without interacting upon each other.

Swedenborg's goal became one of identifying the means by which the realm of spirit influenced this one—to discover in nature, and especially the human body, the “seat of the soul.” Many of his scientific discoveries and precocious speculations were almost incidental by-products of that intensive search for a universal synthesis.

In his fifties, Swedenborg abruptly abandoned his scientific writing—innumerable brief articles on a vast variety of subjects, and many volumes of penetrating scientific-philosophical exploration: he was by now among the best known and respected of Europe's scholars. He did not give up his search for the connections between the material and spiritual realms, but from his conviction of spiritual causes redirected the disciplines of his scientific training to the exploration of his own mind.

### *The theologian*

We will look more closely at this transition in his studies later. The effort began with dream-interpretation and deep meditation. Following a series of remarkable visions, he began—according to his voluminous and meticulous records—an adventure of more than twenty years' duration the uniqueness of which immediately challenged the credulity of his contemporaries.

His reports of protracted experiences in the worlds of spirit were an embarrassment to his colleagues in the scientific community, at a time when materialism was emerging as the champion in a glorious war on superstition and religious oppression.<sup>1\*</sup> His own scientific accomplishments were forgotten, and his prodigious and precocious work in physics, physiology, psychology, cosmology, and related areas were swallowed into the archives of the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences. There they remained, ignored and untranslated from their original Latin, for several generations: his most brilliant scientific insights were not finally disinterred until after they had been replicated by—and of course attributed to—later investigators and theorists. By then, his anticipation of them could be viewed only as ironic curiosities, expressed in other terms than those which had gained familiarity and acceptance, irrelevant to the accomplished march of science—and still somewhat embarrassing because of their author's defection from the respectable investigation of purely natural phenomena.

On the other hand, his assertion of new ideas about God, creation, and the Bible were especially unwelcome to the organized religions, already desperately defending their conflicting dogmas and authority against each other, and in particular against the common enemy, materialistic science. No other challenges were wanted, and Swedenborg challenged equally the current teachings of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant theologians. In his own country, Swedenborg's defenders were tried for heresy and his theological works were banned; elsewhere, his new theology was for the most part pointedly ignored.

Still, it was the work of his second career that attracted a continuing if thin line of followers among the Christian clergy (many of whom kept secret their conversion to his teachings), intelli-

---

1. At that time there was, of course, no knowledge of the unconscious mind, and thus no scientific basis for the acceptance of such experiences of a “higher consciousness” as having at least a subjective reality. The 18th-century “realist” could only view such visions as evidence of madness.

gentsia, and literati. Among the latter who have acknowledged their debt to the genius of Swedenborg are Goethe, Heine, Balzac, Thoreau, Ibsen, Yeats, Carlyle, Edwin Markham, Henry James. He was enthusiastically embraced by that whole generation of poet philosophers which flourished in the mid-nineteenth century. Emerson, as one of these, said of Swedenborg: "A colossal soul, he lies vast abroad on his times, uncomprehended by them, and requires a long focal distance to be seen....he is not to be measured by whole colleges of ordinary scholars." And as to the influence of his ideas: "The truths passing out of Swedenborg's system into general circulation are met with every day," wrote Emerson, "qualifying the views and creeds of all the churches, and of men out of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

But the full power of Swedenborg's system was lost even on these minds, including Emerson's. There appear to have been two principal reasons for this.

First, philosophers with sufficient imagination to grasp some of his meanings were quickly dazzled by the facts that they saw, and were unable to resist constructing their own systems from them without waiting to study out the whole. Particularly appealing was Swedenborg's view of interacting and corresponding realities, and their symbolic connections. But from their visionary (often transcendentalist) perspectives, many of his eminent admirers—e.g., William Blake—gave equal weight to their lesser psychic visions and were irritated by the patient, almost rationalistic expository style that he carried over from his scientific writing.

Second, not only did these readers lack Swedenborg's grounding in scientific discipline; secular psychology had not yet developed any systematic frame of reference by which their understanding *could* be grounded. With the unconscious minds and its effects still unsuspected and undemonstrated, Swedenborg's anticipation of these concepts seemed no less speculative than his reader's own opinions. And by the time these ideas had been empirically discovered, Swedenborg had again receded into relative obscurity, his influence absorbed piecemeal into "the views and creeds of all the churches"—and of such "men out of the church" as Emerson himself.

However "vast abroad on his times," Swedenborg was clearly a product of them: heir to the piety of his father, an eminent bishop; to strong Neo-Platonic influences; to the liberated spirit of the Reformation; to the fledgling quest of a visionary science which still felt itself to be discovering in nature the laws of God. If the Enlightenment was a crossroad in time, Swedenborg epitomized the point of crossing: he retained an extraordinary faith, in the twilight of the Christian era, and shared with the best minds of his day in the vision of the new age of reason. Even in his unique time, it can be fairly said that no nearly equal intellect looked so clearly to the future from so thoroughly cultivated an appreciation of the values of the past.

It is unimportant that his precocious scientific insights became eddies in the forward rush of science, and that his religious influence was largely unattributed to him. The virtue of his scientific genius was in its utility to the development of his still grander spiritual perspectives. A deep and panoramic view of natural reality was a necessary basis for his understanding of the corresponding spiritual realities that he was given to investigate in the ripe and gentled years of his maturity.

---

1. .

## *Historical context*

It will be essentially in terms of our familiar heroic metaphor that I will argue the relevance of the man, and his place in the evolution of human thought, to the credibility of his spiritual experiences and disclosures. In Chapter 5 I will demonstrate that the Testaments from which Swedenborg allegorically derived his system are structured to that mythic formula, and can be assumed to express whatever meanings we have found in it. We than will present—as a parallel to the psychological content of the myth—Swedenborg’s interpretation of the Testaments as a staged history of the spiritual evolution of human society, as marked by the changing views that man has had about his Divine Patron. Our emphasis will be on the special role played in this spiritual history of mankind by the Jewish and Christian worships which are specifically chronicled in the Biblical narrative, and which are the peculiar heritage of our western culture.

Chapter 6 will expand on these parallels, equating stage by stage the episodes in the hero-life, their counterparts in the Testaments, the stages of our individual development as discerned by the psychologists, and the successive worship as identified by Swedenborg. From the cyclic processes, we will be able to draw some confident conclusions about where mankind stands today in its spiritual revolution, and what challenges and opportunities our own place in that greater cycle implies especially for modern western man.

In drawing these parallels between our individual growth and that of man collectively, we will in general accept the qualities of the Ideal Human developed in Chapter 4 with the help of Jung and von Franz, with this difference: that an image of such power that it can shape our deepest motivation, our “main purpose...to be human,” will be assumed to have its origin in the experience of an objective reality which can only have been God Himself. That thesis will be developed in Chapter 7, and Swedenborg’s fuller concept of the Divine Humanity presented as wholly consistent with our secret intuitions and aspirations, and with the evolution of mankind’s spiritual thought throughout the course of man’s adventure on this planet. Especially we will address the question of what “human” means in terms of spiritual qualities and potentials, and seek to recognize—within the human experience—the generative, sustaining, and guiding presence of an infinitely personal Original Humanity, whose successive appearances have continually redirected us toward the fulfillment of His human image in us.

# Chapter 5 Myth and Macromyth

## *A collective human mind*

Among the grander principles underlying Emanuel Swedenborg's views is that the cosmos, and all things in it, have in them the inherent thrust to fulfill—each on its level and in its role—the universal purpose. Since he ascribes creation to an Original Creative Mind—the Essential *Human*, transcending time and space<sup>1</sup>—, that thrust may be recognized in man and nature as an effort or *conatus* to image (replicate, complete) what Swedenborg calls “the human form.”

As the least image of that Divine Mind capable of an aware participation in the universal purpose, the human mind best exemplifies for us—in the created universe—the “human form” to which all things strive to shape themselves.

That human form also shapes and unifies *collective* man. We have used the term *esprit de corps* in reference to shared purposes that transcend the individual—the “spirit of the (collective) body.” Swedenborg puts emphasis on the fact that any social body—up to and including mankind as a whole—is formed and functions as a greater, single human mind. This phenomena is recognized in the language by which we speak of such collectives. Each nation is accorded its governing head (“capitol” has that meaning) heartland, arteries, arms (e.g., “of the law”), a voice, nerve centers, and so on. These “corporate parts” all reflect (and effect) the coordinate functioning of a common mind or spirit with its collectively human purposes, dreams, traditions, fears, initiatives. What historians have ascribed to civilizations—a rise and fall accompanied by changing attitudes not unlike those of any infancy, youth, maturity, and retirement or decline—is identifiable also in family dynasties, industries, religious movements, schools of philosophy, art, drama: ranging from the farthest reaching trends to short-lived fads or fashions, from collective human attitudes and interests affecting small parochial groups, or scattered minorities, to those shared by whole populations, or indeed *the* population of the earth.

Each human mind is a receiving instrument tuned to the feelings and inclinations circulating around it, as they impinge upon it, and is shaped by those which find a place in the individual's unique complex “inner world” and come to comprise its own “population” of attitudes and recognitions. Within this inner world, consciousness—within limits—has the power of movement among these populations: to visit the various “states of mind,” sojourning where it wills and moving on, resting indulgently, building and ordering, or risking hazardous explorations and threatening encounters. In terms of our past discussions, these are of course the lands through which the hero's lifetime itinerary leads.

While the individual world of mind is populated through our experience of the “human” exemplars comprising its environment on every level—collectives small and great: the parents, family, peer groups, culture, and humanity itself—it is at the same time a participant in every relationship or association or collective with which we share a common interest: a part of that particular “human form” or *greater mind*. We may fail to recognize our role in some of these, but in fact

---

1. Even modern physics recognizes that reality cannot be explained in space-time terms. “We cannot expect to understand genius,” said a leading physicist, “until we rise to an outlook that transcends time.

take part in the life of every one of them *even if it is by refusal of the role* to which our borrowing—of those examples, attitudes, and values which populate our own minds—obliges us.

Swedenborg invites us to view the populations of this earth as generations and communions of individual or component feelings (motives, wishes, loves, affections, purposes) in the complex of a single, great community of this largest collective human mind of which we can be consciously aware.\*<sup>1</sup> *In this supraordinate communion, each of us is such an affection, wish, or love.* And in the course of human growth this collective mind has progressed, according to Swedenborg, through stages precisely like those through which each of us just pass in his individual development.

This idea—that the ontogeny recapitulates the phylogeny—has been discerned by many others. But not even since Swedenborg's time has the parallel been viewed from so well defined a set of standards or examined in such depth. Scholars familiar with Swedenborg have seen in his phylogenetic viewpoint an anticipation of Darwin's theory of evolution. While Swedenborg's development of the genetic or physiological aspects is probably insufficient to warrant such attributions, it is true that the continuing refinement of Darwinism has furnished an entirely compatible system of mechanics by which nature effects the *psychological or spiritual* evolution that was Swedenborg's main interest.

Evidential support in terms of anthropology is still too sparse for any certain judgment on the question: we simply have too little knowledge of mankind's origins. Of more interest is the new and still uncertainly defined field of "psychohistory"—largely the product of the individual mind and what can be surmised from the available evidence about the evolution of mankind's ways of feeling and thinking. We will be quoting Freud, Jung, Mercia Elade, and Erikson—all pioneers in this study—to show that here, at least, the claim that Swedenborg anticipated the modern views seems fully justified.

Naturally, Swedenborg's terms are not those of the systematized discourse of today; and of course there remains the fundamental distinction of his first premise, that there is a universal purpose within the patterned growth of both the individual and collective mind. His concepts, however, are easily translated into the modern terminology, and lead to some logical conclusions that support, advance, explain, and unify these emerging psychohistorical speculations.

The hero myth, in our first interpretation of it, seems to be as applicable to the phylogenetic as to the individual development pattern. From an initial spontaneity of response and openness to feeling, humanity—like each of us—has from its infancy in general progressed toward an increasing awareness of and identification with external reality. The focus of this trend toward a collective ego-consciousness (the mythic "hero" of this larger cycle) has shifted from one culture to another, throughout mankind's descent—from its common origin in feeling—into a multiplicity of divergent populations.

---

1. While we can know from experience only mankind on our own planet, Swedenborg's view is that the universe is teeming with life. While unaware of each other, the peoples of all the innumerable planets—universal man—nonetheless comprise a single collective human mind, in the functioning of which the men of each world play a unique role. We will find that Swedenborg even defines the role specific to mankind on this earth.

## ***Judeo-Christianity***

Our individual values and susceptibility to guidance change through the stages of our own life's journey. But they are primarily shaped or qualified by our unique place and time within our culture, and *its* place and time within the greater journey of mankind. Our expectations and potentials, intrinsic and acquired, and the outward forms upon which they are projected, are the peculiar products of our spiritual and material heritage, genetically and culturally passed down to us. The search for meaning in our own lives must be within those successively diminishing contexts.

The symbols, rituals, and mythologems which are powerfully numinous for other cultures acquired that numinosity for them *through* their cultural and individual experience. Even if we come to understand what meaning another culture finds in them, they may have no power to move us. Thus von Franz can say that "Yoga and other Eastern practices...offer no genuine new adventure (for western man), for in them one only takes over what is already known to the Hindus and Chinese without directly meeting one's own inner life center."<sup>1</sup> We can discover affective meanings only in the things and events—the symbolic forms—that are specific to our own experience: the imagery shaped by our cultural surrounding, in which our "main purpose...to be human" can feel the thrill of recognition.

The hero credits the new appearance of the deity—the reassertion of a "main purpose"—only if he accepts him as the god of earlier appearances in new guise, and his new covenant as a renewal of earlier promises tracing back to the prophesy of greatness given at the hero's birth. The wise parent knows this: that his child's changing needs and receptivity require that he "reveal" himself differently to each stage—but that each new face he turns to the child must satisfy (fulfill) and be consistent with the child's earlier parent-concepts.

Our own adult search for a transcendent purpose, a credible guide, a renewal of the covenant, must begin among the spiritual traditions that have shaped our mythical substrata, and the cultural metaphors in which our values and ideals—however dimmed or weakened—are embodied.

*And despite the influence—and our absorption—of other cultural elements, western man is the spiritual product of four millennia of Judeo-Christianity. The metaphors by which we live, and by which we are connected to the numinous power of our mythic heritage, are inarguably those of the Judeo-Christian Testaments.*<sup>2</sup>

We will examine later how this particular stream of spiritual tradition relates to other world religions. The essential point here is that *for us* the Testaments are the formulated distillation of our unique spiritual experience, tracing back through the mythic origins we share with all mankind to the universal myth of The Beginning. Our need is to *retrace* in it our ancestral odyssey, and to rediscover in it our purposed place within the whole divine plan for humanity.

We have found that even in the exploration of physical reality, *discovery is the reward of a hopeful expectation of ordered pattern*. We can approach the record of our spiritual past with no less a hope of finding a meaningful pattern in it. And we have already an impressive clue to such a pattern in the fact, asserted in the introduction to Part I, that the Biblical narrative presents an extraordinarily faithful magnification of the heroic formula or creative cycle, from its opening in Genesis to its end in Revelation.

---

1. .

2. .



## ***The Macromyth***

Most mythologists equate the myths of Genesis, especially, with similar tales found almost universally in other mythologies, and isolated episodes in both Testaments with motifs common to the ancient mythical traditions.

But I am speaking of a patterned structure that underlies the whole of both Testaments, and reveals an internal unity—not surprisingly in a record of such magnitude, drawn from so many sources over so great a span of time—has been unsuspected and undiscovered.

From its initial recapitulation of the primal myths (creation, paradise, the fall, the flood, and Babel); through the call of Abram, the epic rise of the Jews from family to tribe and nation, and their conquests, captivity, and return; to the Gospel accounts of Christ's birth and ministry, and the profoundly symbolic visions of John on Patmos: from start to end, the Biblical account unfolds on a breathtaking scale the staged adventure of the hero. In the parade of its individual protagonists, each—in the familiar structure of his lifetime—is a hero in his own right. But from the larger view it becomes strikingly apparent that these successive heroes—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and the rest—represent the changing faces of a single hero. Each acts out an episode or stage of the greater hero-life, then yields that role to his successor.

Although it is said in a blend of pure myth, legend, history, and prophecy, I will use the coined term *Macromyth* to identify the Testamental narrative as a magnification of the heroic adventure, and at the same time to distinguish it from the standard hero-story and the early myths

of Genesis with which the Macromyth begins. The heroic structure in it is apparent (Fig. 25) in this brief outline:

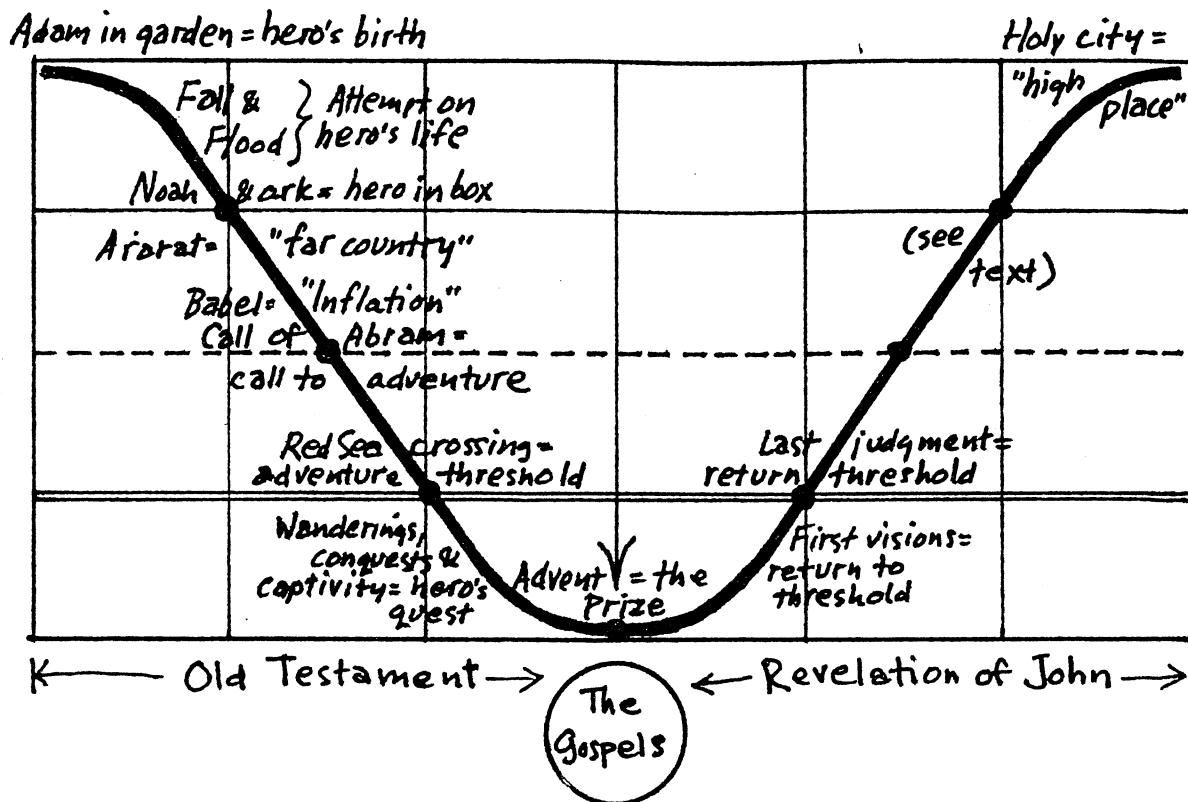


Fig. 25

The forming of Adam and breath of life are manifestly the infant hero newly born.\*<sup>1</sup> The garden of Eden, with its four river-heads, equates with the royal kingdom and its inevitable (mandala-like) "four corners of the realm." The fall—or onset of mistrust and indulgence—presents the serpent as a premier type of the dark mother, to which Eve is the infant hero's vulnerability. The "earth corrupt" and the rebelling "sons of god" describe the tyrant's usurpation of the throne.

Noah and the ark could not be a more graphic elaboration of the standard hero's submission to the waters in a box, with the flood itself the apparent threat to

1. The six days of creation, described in the first chapter of Genesis, may be interpreted as the conception and gestation of the hero. This interpretation accounts in an altogether paradox of two creations of man. This first one describes the staged separation of a human form capable of receiving consciousness; the second, the creation or birth of *mind*—for "spirit" literally means *breath*. (As a full cycle, the six days also have another meaning that we will examine later.)

the hero's life. His deliverance on Ararat and emergence from the ark as the hero "spirited away to a far country." Here the divine presence is intermediated by the rainbow, as by a foster guardian, and flora and fauna ("an humble wild beast") are given to his nurture.

*The building of the tower* perfectly describes the hero's impatient reach for eminence, and the inevitable frustration of that inflated dream. In the myth, this episode is intimately connected with the hero's call to his adventure; similarly

*The call of Abram*, out of the confusion of Babel, clearly marks the start and sets the goal for the quest to which the balance of the Old Testament is devoted. The promise is a future greatness for Abram's seed, with its own lands, identity, and royalty ("kings shall come out of thee"). The legendary migrations of the patriarchs at the seeming whim of Abram's family deity, El Shaddai, have much flavor of the hero's random travels toward the threshold.

*The Exodus* is a marvelously rich account of the threshold crossing. The bondage of Egypt, Moses' confrontation with the tyrant Pharaoh ("the shadow presence that guards the threshold"), and the miraculous passage through the Red Sea have all the symbolic features of the hero's entry into the dread arena of the quest. And the desert wanderings, conquests, divisions and captivities that follow express in their own symbolism the allegory of the hero's individual adventure: his trials and tests, the monsters and the helpers, his infidelities and triumphs.

*The Christian Advent* and the life of Christ have been recognized as an exceptional account of the heroic biography (we will know the striking congruence of episodes elsewhere). More important here, however, is the fact that in relation to the Testamental narrative viewed as a whole, the Advent manifestly is that specific episode in which the prize is won. The covenant with Abram at his call was increasingly interpreted by his heirs, and especially by the latter prophets, in Messianic terms. The Gospel accounts ascribe to Christ's mission just those characteristics which Campbell has found to hold the essential meaning of the prize: atonement, apotheosis, illumination, transfiguration.

The Old Testament, then, is graphically structured to the heroic descent. The Gospels describe the attainment of the Prize at the nadir of the round. The entire return is symbolically described in the apocalyptic visions of John in Revelation—necessarily prophetic, since they were recorded by its nature appears ambiguous, and Revelation can only be understood from a knowledge of its symbolism. But there are salient structural features that clearly relate to the unfamiliar with this last book of the Bible, it seems needful to identify the more important parallels.

The first vision, of the glorified Christ, presents the hero in possession of the power (the prize) to restore the kingdom. The disposition of the seven churches, and the visions that follow, describe the struggle back to the threshold of return. The dragon-battle clearly relates to the threshold confrontation, and the birth of the man-child to the hero delivered (or "reborn") into the kingdom which will be his to rule. The woman clothed with the sun embraces the eternal feminine (maternal and uxorial) who is *accepted* by the hero—nourished, and given "a place prepared of God." The victory over the harlot city, Babylon, seems equivalent to the hero's accession to the throne and restoration of the kingdom. (Note that this *Babylon*, at the midpoint of the ascent, is directly opposite from the *Babel* of the descent.) In the angel's refusal of John's adoration ("Worship God") there is that repudiation of self-agony implied in the hero's loss of the throne and city.

Especially dramatic is the culminating vision of the holy city New Jerusalem—a mandala of four walls and central tree, the “high place” of the hero’s ultimate transcendence: the original garden, now gloriously encompassed by the experience and acceptance of all four qualities or levels of reality.

### ***The “great churches”***

Subject to our more careful examination, the familiar episodic formula of the nuclear myth seems to provide the underlying structure of the two companion Testaments, as the descending and ascending “halves”—respectively—of the creative cycle. At least a tentative expectation is warranted that whatever process we have found to be described by the heroic metaphor, in its skeletal simplicity, will be more fully described in the far more elaborate Biblical narrative, or Macromyth.

We already have the necessary correlations, drawn in Chapter 2 and applied to the hero model, by which we can relate our *psychological* development to the new Macromythic stages as we have just identified them on the same graph:

Adam appears at birth, Noah emerges from the ark at age three, Abram is called at five, the Red Sea crossed at seven, and so on. Swedenborg’s interpretation of these episodes tends to emphasize the stages of man’s *collective* (psychohistorical) development as told in the Macromyth, let us first see how he identifies those collective stages, how well they find their place in our heroic/Macromythic model, and how they equate with the corresponding stages in the growth of the individual mind.

Because his emphasis was on mankind’s changing attitudes toward his origins, his Maker, and his place in the cosmos, Swedenborg represented the successive stages of mankind’s shared adventure as a series of distinctive belief-systems. Each of these had its essential character from the state of cognitive development of mankind during the epoch through which it directed collective man’s religious attitudes and practices.

Since until only recent times—and even today more so than not—man’s spiritual beliefs have shaped his life, this view in fact the most realistic and instructive one. Swedenborg’s term for these epochal worships or devotions is “the great churches.” He does not necessarily refer to ecclesiastical organizations or rigidly formulated dogmas, but to the *qualities* of belief and worship that reflected the changing genius of humanity itself. The mythical analogy would be those staged changed in the hero’s attitude and receptivity which require the patron deity to reveal himself repeatedly—in a new guise, with a renewed covenant and a new form of guidance—at the critical junctures of the hero’s life.

Swedenborg found mankind to have passed through four distinct stages, or epochal worships. His identification of them is based on an allegorical interpretation of the Testaments as a spiritual or “internal” history. Since we have already equated the Macromythic episodes with those of the heroic adventure, we must expect that a valid series of stages in the growth of the collective mind would be defined by those episodes in the Macromyth which correspond to the pivotal transitions in the hero-life.

We may also require that such stages reflect, on the phylogenetic scale, a progressive growth consistent with the developmental pattern we have discerned in the individual mind. While there are insufficient anthropological data for the full and certain *empirical* reconstruction of mankind’s

past, enough is known to discredit or affirm with reasonable confidence a reconstruction based on psychological psychohistorical parallels.

On both accounts, the “great churches” defined by Swedenborg anticipate precisely the parallel heroic and psychological stages. The structural congruence could not be clearer (Fig. 26):

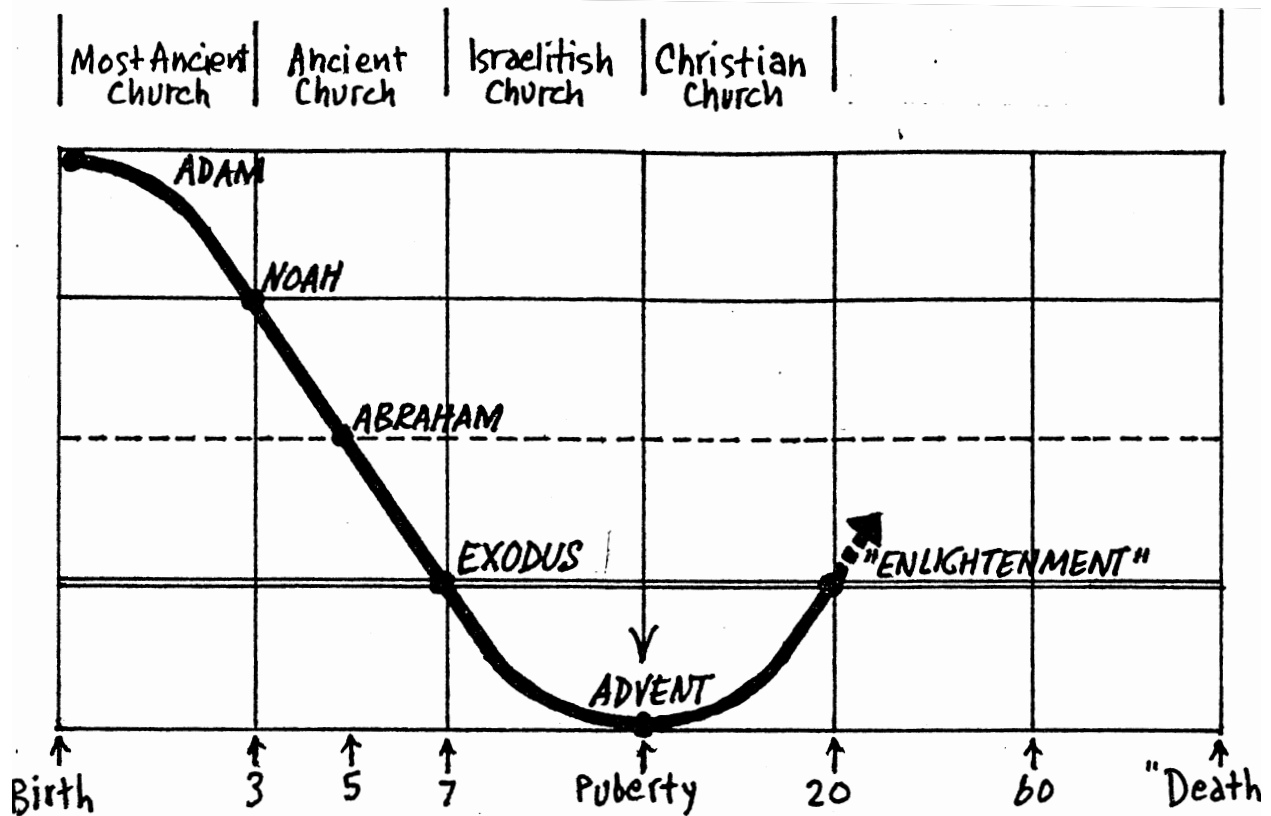


Fig. 26

\* Swedenborg describes the first or “Most Ancient Church” as having its allegorical beginning in Eden and ending in the flood. These coincide exactly with the first stage of the hero’s life, from his birth to his passage in a box into the far country (cf. Fig. 25).

\* The second or “Ancient Church” began with the passage of Noah (a mythical personification of this new kind of worship) from the ark; and continued through to the Hebrews’ bondage in Egypt. This is the direct equivalent of the second heroic stage, and is similarly divided by the call to adventure which, in the Genesis account, we have equated with the call of Abram.

\* Christianity, as the fourth of the great churches, was instituted at the Advent and continued that role into the “Age of Enlightenment” of Swedenborg’s day. Again there is a clear equivalence with the corresponding (fourth) stage of the heroic adventure, from the winning of the prize to the threshold of return.

Despite the satisfying congruence of structure, there are many questions raised by these parallels. First, why should *Judaism*, small even in its parochial arena of the Middle East, and *Chris-*

*tianity*, a minority in global terms for all its rapid spread, be singled out as epochal—rather than other and more widespread worships contemporary with them? What places do these other religions, small and great, have in the phylogenetic scheme? What of the implication that at the Enlightenment—as the threshold of return—the Christian epoch should properly have yielded to a fifth “great church?”

The answers to these questions are to be found in the comparison of the growth and functioning of the global or collective mind with the “world in small” that is our individual mind. The ways of thinking and feeling that Swedenborg assigns to each of the great churches should be those which the psychologists have found to be formatively significant in the individual mind during the corresponding stages in its development:

\* Swedenborg’s characterization of the *Most Ancient Church* should exhibit the qualities of feeling and responding ascribed to the infant *from birth to three* (bottom line of Fig. 26). These will include Erikson’s crises of trust and autonomy, Freud’s orality/anal, Piaget’s spontaneous (non-coercive) motor-sensory mode. In fact Swedenborg does identify Adam with innocence, trust, and spontaneity; the fall with a crisis of trust; and the flood with a crisis of autonomy or “self-will.” He describes the men of this first church as being initially “in the (spiritual) order of their (natural) lives,” but then from selfward willfulness to have perverted the appropriate spontaneity of their responses.

\* The *Ancient Church* and its worship should express the essential qualities of feeling and cognition typical of the child *from age three to about seven*, with a marked shift at its midpoint comparable to that in the child-mind at the *age of five*. At three, these will include Erikson’s initiative, Freud’s pregenitality, Piaget’s “age of why’s” and egocentric intentionality. At five, we should find the equivalent of Erikson’s and Freud’s oedipal guilt, and Piaget’s “sacred” view of the rules. The former (especially initiative and intentionality) are entirely consistent with the mythopoeic character that Swedenborg ascribes to this second church, for whom all of nature was an allegory reflecting the divine intent. (We will return to examine the latter half of this stage, from five to seven, in a moment.)

The quality and values of the *Israelitish Church* should reflect those of the child-mind *from the age eight to a point immediately preceding puberty*. These include Freud’s and Erikson’s latency and sublimation, Erikson’s industry, Piaget’s cooperative mode.

\* The attitudes, contests, and hopes of *Christianity* should find their counterparts in the feelings, faults, and ideals of the *adolescent mind*, from puberty to the threshold of adult rationality and responsibility. These involve Freud’s “storms of puberty,” and Erikson’s search for a social identity or role.

### ***The historical churches***

We can have no great difficulty in tentatively postulating the first two of these worships, which are in effect the spontaneous (“instinctual”) and mythopoeic (reflective) substrata from which have come mankind’s increasingly diversified—and elaborately formulated—religious systems. As the global worships of mankind’s infancy and early childhood, they seem to warrant the term “epochal” churches.

But in view of the number—and in many cases the relative magnitude or greater spirituality—of other systems of belief throughout the world, we feel uneasy if we accord to Judaism or Christianity a similarly important role in the evolution of religious thought.

And yet, from a world view, it is not a western parochialism to recognize that these two religions have functioned in what may be called the role of global hero—of a sort of moving ego-center for all mankind—, as the western thrust most certainly has done in exploration, commerce, science, and industry.

Your individual ego, despite its progressive loss of a connectedness with feeling, is—as Jung pointed out—your only effective instrument of a voluntary adaptation to reality by which a future reconciliation with lost feeling-values may be accomplished. In your latency period it was adolescence, it explored your world of mind to rediscover its lost populations, inviting forgotten feelings into the sphere of consciousness, and into participation in its active commerce, seeking “goods” of possible utility and applying its controls and values.

In the course of world-humanity, this part clearly seems to have been played by the role-conscious and goal-oriented western civilizations, which have their spiritual and cultural antecedents—reaching back to the Sumerian-Eblan-Egyptian matrix of history—in the four millennia of Judeo-Christianity.

The beginning of history was a critical shift in man’s way of thinking about himself and his cosmos. The eminent religious historian Mircea Eliade wrote that the “archaic” society featured a “revolt against concrete, historical time,” and instead was marked by a “nostalgia for a periodical return to the mythical time of the beginning of things, to the ‘Great Time.’”<sup>1</sup> Mythic times seek to erase the distance between mankind and the miracle of wholeness, by transferring him—through ritual, iconography, myth, and the mythical interpretation of events—to the Beginning.

“The chief difference between the man of the archaic...societies and the man of the modern societies *with their strong imprint of Judeo-Christianity*,” said Eliade (my italics), “lies in the fact that the former feels himself indissolubly connected with the Cosmos and the cosmic rhythms. whereas the latter insists that he is connected only with History.”

The emergence of historical man—“the man who *is* insofar as he *makes himself, within history*” (Eliade’s stress)—introduced mankind, as a collective mind, into the pursuit of objectives not *immediately* attainable, in a projected *future*. And it was, as Eliade implies, the specific Judaic sense of a destined future national identity and greatness *contingent on their fidelity and performance* (what they “made themselves, within history”) that provided this thrust into the cadenced march of history.

With the Advent, the quality of historical expectations underwent a profound change, but Christianity picked up the cadence. The Judaic impetus had been essentially defining and exclusionary, a “chosen people” and a small and private “promised land.” The Christian message and the imperialist expansionism of those to whom it spread made historical destiny and the new Messianic covenant to include all of mankind. A universalism that had been only obscurely hinted at by the later Jewish prophets became for Christianity an evangelical impetus to global exploration and conquest. Given its abuses of exploitation and its dark ages, it was Christianity *as historical man* that made a single great—if not united—community of all populations of the earth.

---

1. .

Swedenborg uses the single term, “internal history,” to describe both the psychological development of the individual and the psychohistorical stages of mankind’s collective growth. His discovery of these processes in the same grand metaphor—the Testaments as allegory—suggests how absolutely parallel he considers them to be. To show how—by what symbolic system—he demonstrated the presence of both meanings in the Biblical narrative, and so their correspondence to each other, will be the effort of future chapters. Meanwhile, however, we can gain a perspective on both processes by the tentative assumption of that premise.

It is equally instructive to view this analogy from either side: to think of the populations of the earth as a single mind, or to think of our mind as a populous and growing mind—a complex of residual and emerging ways of feeling, thinking, and responding. Like populations—and influential individuals—within the mind, interacting inclinations grow and wane, some even seeming to die out; divide and recombine in new ways, come into conflict, subjugate or are pressed to the service of other interests or ideologies; exchange or plunder or impose—among each other—the products of their particular cultivation or discovery.

None of the psychologists whose stages we have examined means to assert that the viewpoint or inclination by which he identifies a given stage stands alone within the child-mind during that period. It may not even be readily discernible. Piaget points out, for example, that the five-year-old’s new “sacred” view of rules has almost no immediate influence on the child’s behavior: its importance is its deep *impress* of the rules, for use in the later stage of cooperation. Residual, and relatively unconscious (i.e., unthinking) inclinations continue to govern the child’s overt initiatives and responses.<sup>1</sup>

The characteristics by which the psychologists identify their stages are those which *in the long range* will prove to have been most instrumental in the shaping of the whole mind. None of these appears out of nowhere: each has its antecedents and descendents. Each lives in a mental world populated by other attitudes and inclinations among which—like the hero—it passes in our life’s journey, with whom it dwells in its successive stages, by which it is strengthened or diverted, fed or threatened.

Swedenborg’s great churches—Most Ancient (Adamitic), Ancient (Noachic), Israelitish, and Christian—exhibit a similar staged continuity within the greater growth of mankind’s spreading and diversifying populations, especially discernible if the early myths are understood as historical analogies. Like the mind, humanity on earth—from its common “body” (terrestrial matrix and genetic heritage)—retains a “whole” thrust and potential, however much in any epoch it is divided or in conflict.

### ***Parent as patron***

In this sense Swedenborg finds mankind to constitute a “universal church” in a perpetual state of evolution. But in each succeeding epoch, this universal church has its evolutionary direction from the “great” or specific church whose name is given to the epoch. To call any church great means little more than to recognize it as equivalent, in the collective mind, to that ego-function (hero) in *us* which effectively advances our minds through the psychological stages of a lifetime.\*<sup>2</sup>It means simply that the population of which it is constituted is—by its strengths and

---

1. .



weaknesses, its place and time—susceptible to the kind of guidance that will advance the collective adventure of all mankind during that given stage.

As we will see, the parent comes to represent the patron deity in the mythos or “religion” or the infantile and childish mind; and in fact the parent is the agent of purposed guidance for the child. Parental purpose looks beyond the changing interests of his offspring, to the eventual maturing of that child-mind into a thriving, harmonious, integrated creativity: a dynamic fullness and unity of attitudes and inclinations. It is the child’s attitudes specifically toward the parent (or parental representatives)—as the model or exemplar of what the child hopes to become—that are most responsive to parental guidance. Obviously not all the inclinations (populations) in the mind at any age are equally absorbed in this matter of “becoming.”

It is especially the child’s most conscious concept of himself at any stage that most faithfully attends to the example and the guidance of the parent: again, the central ego-thrust. The parent seeks out, from among the motives and “devotions” in the child’s world of mind, those which will accept the kind of guidance needed then, assumes a guise that this interest in the child can credit, and adapts his guidance to it. The susceptible inclination may be narrow, selfish, literal, isolated: it is their utility, not their virtue, that makes these attitudes the “great churches” of the individual mind. And, clearly, other inclinations are no less important simply because they are developing—on the outer fringes of the child’s directed ego-consciousness. Those that are less responsive to appropriate guidance at one stage may become the new country of the adventure in a later stage; and the wise parent will protect and nourish and prepare—and cherish equally—those temporarily “gentile” populations, for their future role in the heroic quest and/or their eventual place in the restored kingdom of the mind.

Despite the marked stages of our psychological growth, there is a continuity in the development of ego-consciousness. That is, the conscious sense of self is continuous even though the self-concept (and parent-concept) is significantly altered in its values in the critical passage from one stage to the next. Each successive stage is the development of a residual ego-aspect that was isolated and prepared in—and survived the passing of—the prior stage.

The same principle may be applied to psychohistory. Judaism was an isolated strand which emerged from the mythic time (the Ancient Church), and translated the myth into historical terms and expectations. Its yearning for what Eliade calls the “Great Time,” or “The Beginning,” was objectified and projected into concrete time in terms of an earthly Canaan and a Messianic champion. In this sense the Israelitish epic describes a “neo-Ancient” church: a renewal of the covenant inherent in the earlier myths, and the *historical* pursuit of the mythic, paradisiacal Beginning.

It was similarly with a fragment element of the Jewish people, following the post-Babylonian dispersion, that Christianity began. The continuity is manifest in the characterization of Christianity as the “fulfillment of the (Jewish) Law and Prophets,” a reinterpretation of the Sacred Myth as Judaism had preserved, defined, recorded, and lived it out. It is also evident in the representation of the Christian expectation (or utopia) as a second Messianic visitation and a holy New *Jerusalem*. Thus in the same sense that the Jewish church was *neo-Ancient*—a renewal of the earlier covenant redirected to a new time and need—, Christianity has been following upon the former.

---

2. In fact, the Greek word *hero* originally meant simply the central protagonist in any narrative, with no implication of virtue, gallantry, or merit.

According to our chronological composite of the individual's psychological development (Fig. 21), the hero in us encounters his threshold of return in our early 20's—or at our “age of reason.” Historians apply the same term, as a synonym for the Enlightenment, to the emerging rationalism of the 17th and 18th centuries. As it does for the hero at the threshold and for the youth at the end of adolescence, this transition occasioned a profound shift in western man's attitudes toward his spiritual heritage, his universe, and his own place in it.

The psychohistorical inference must be that it was time for a new “specific church”—with new spiritual perspectives and expectations—to assume the heroic role of an advancing phylogenetic ego-center within the “universal church” of this new age. Assuming the continuing guidance of a Patron Deity—a universal Parent, whose self-disclosures answered to the needs of mankind's earlier developmental stages (pp. 124-25)—, we can recognize not only a pressing need at the Enlightenment for a new kind of guidance. We can conclude from the parallel between the individual and mankind what “state of mind” in the *collective* mind must be answered by any such new guidances—*and know where to look for it.*

# Chapter 6 An Internal History

## *Interpreting the allegory*

The modern western cultures, “with their strong imprint of Judeo-Christianity” (Eliade), clearly have retained into this new age the vanguard role of “historical man,” or—in terms of our metaphor—the hero’s role of goal-directed ego-consciousness within the global community of mankind. It follows that a successor dispensation to Christianity must be neo-Christian in the same sense that the Christian thrust has been neo-Judaic, and must have its continuity from the reinterpretation or “fulfillment” of the Christian covenant.

Our psychological/psychohistorical correlations also suggest that the Patron Deity must, at this age of reason or threshold crossing, make the new interpretation of the Testamental record accessible to the modern mind that is rationally questing and affirmatively expectant. Such a posture is comparable to that of modern western youth at his threshold to young adulthood: a questioning but hopeful reevaluation of all the guidance he had been given—but had interpreted and applied in immature ways—through his infancy, childhood, and adolescence.

These parallels provide a historical context in which the disclosure of an “inner sense” or allegorical significance within the Testaments is not only reasonable but to be expected. While Swedenborg’s claim to have been the instrument of such disclosures may seem extraordinary, if he had not been given to discover a deeper content within our Christian heritage those insights would have had to have been given in some other way. A rational judgment of his claim will properly be based on an assessment of his disclosures as a solution to that need.

The question of how the Testaments are to be understood as allegory seems to leave a great deal of latitude for individual judgments and interpretations. Efforts to discover a symbolic key to Scripture have been many and persistent.<sup>1</sup> The psychoanalysts’ application of unconscious symbolism to myth has included—and has cast considerable light upon—the more overtly mythical content of the Bible. But while the psycho-mythological approach has yielded useful insights, and has admitted values to the Testaments not previously recognized in modern times, its partial explanations and empirical criteria have tended to reduce the value of the Bible to the scholars’ psychoanalytic level. In effect, these interpretations have conceded to the Testaments only those meanings which are consonant with and supportive of conclusions that are based on an *a priori* rejection of any *spiritual* validity to their yield.

We have postulated (Chapter 4) that without affirmative expectations no discovery—scientific, moral, spiritual—of the pattern, order, or meanings within the seeming chaos of our experience is possible. Swedenborg’s approach was no less systematic, reasoned, experimental, even empirical than those of subsequent investigators. What distinguished his search (apart from the full century by which it anticipated any comparable investigations) was not his methodology but his affirmative assumptions: that the universe was created by divine intent, and that the Testaments are the definitive record of the Creator’s guidance throughout the evolution of human society.

The fact that Swedenborg still stands alone in this respect after more than two hundred years, and that the appropriate time for a rational disclosure of deeper meanings in our spiritual

---

1. .

heritage was (according to our parallels) the beginning of mankind's age of reason, or the Enlightenment\*<sup>1</sup>, there is at least a circumstantial support for his claim that is wholly consistent with his Biblical interpretation of mankind's "internal history" as we have summarized it in Chapter 5.

But of course we cannot be satisfied with circumstantial affirmations, and we have so far demonstrated only in outline the correlations between the mythic/Macromythic allegory and the psychological and psychohistorical processes. The only true test will be whether Swedenborg's disclosures, under continuing scrutiny, present a view of our individual and collective past, a new Self-revelation of the Patron Deity, a cosmology, and a destiny, which are consistent with our objective and subjective experience, satisfying to our maturing rationality in this sophisticated age, and able to solicit our participation in our own and in mankind's spiritual renewal and fulfillment.

It is necessary to take these questions up in sequence, although it is evident that each can be fully answered only in relation to the others. In this chapter we will explore more fully the Macromythic/psychological/psychohistorical parallels that were only identified in Chapter 5. We will be somewhat inhibited by the fact that we have not yet examined Swedenborg's symbolic system—which, with its theological and cosmological implications, will be easier to understand *after* we have explored the Testaments for their "internal histories." Since these histories relate to our actual life-experience, they are by far our least difficult access to the allegorical content. Fortunately in many instances—especially in the early myths—traditional and psychoanalytic interpretations of the symbolism are sufficiently harmonious with those of Swedenborg that there are few problems. In other cases, my application of Swedenborg's meanings may seem arbitrary, but I will attempt to hold myself to those that are graphic, reasonable, and self-consistent enough that the reader's credulity will not be strained. Where the symbolism is especially remote, or involves a philosophical groundwork that has not yet been laid, I will base the correlations on other evidence. This will be the case particularly in our paralleling of the Christian epoch with adolescence, which we will do in terms of Christian history rather than attempting to interpret the profoundly symbolic book of Revelation which allegorically anticipates that history.

A far more thorough exegetic treatment of the Genesis myths is given in Book Two, and the impatient or adventurous reader may refer to it for details where he finds the following survey too cursory or unsupported. But it is placed where it is for the reason that it involves concepts that will have questionable validity and meaning for those who have not read the intervening chapters. I hope that the reader will accept the material in this chapter rather than as a preliminary exploration than as a final statement, deferring careful confirmations at least until we have discussed the quality and implications of Swedenborg's key to the symbolism of the Testaments.

### ***The descent from Eden***\*<sup>2</sup>

We have identified Adam as the first awareness, both of our own and of man's collective infancy.

- 
1. It is an intriguing (though certainly not compelling) fact that Swedenborg's life—1688 to 1772—spanned almost exactly the period generally assigned to the Enlightenment: from the publication of Newton's *Principia* (1687) to the completion of the *Encyclopedia* in France (1776).
  2. The full text of the Genesis myths, from the Creation to the call of Abraham (Chapters 1 to 11) is provided as a supplement to Book Two, beginning on page 000.

Even superficially, the gift of “breath” to Adam and his placement in a garden paradise suggest this first awareness of parental/Parental nurture: a metaphor that is reinforced by the garden’s mandala form, implying an initial sense of centeredness or belongingness within the perceived cosmos. The *incorporative* (and therefore wholly trusting) mode that Erikson<sup>1</sup> ascribes to his first stage of infant life would seem to apply equally to the first men capable of recognizing a giving Presence within their generous natural environment. Piaget’s *sensori-motor* mode accords with the spontaneous harmony of response to Nurture’s gifts that Swedenborg ascribes both to the infant newly born and to Adamitic man. And even Freud’s *orality* acquires a certain beauty if we equate the mandala-centered fountain common to the myths with the mother’s breast.

Many psycho-mythologists accept this myth as a parable descriptive of a loss of trust in “instinct.” Swedenborg identifies the making of Eve from Adam’s rib as the inclination on the part of later Adamitic man (recapitulated in each infant life) to sense his harmonious and connate responses as his own volition. The sampling of a forbidden fruit signals the first conflict between that volition and a natural and harmonious response of inner dictate. It is interesting that Eve’s sin was *oral* (i.e., biting into the forbidden fruit), and that Erikson shows teething to be associated with the trust-mistrust conflict of infancy.

Because of the detail of our later exegesis, it would be redundant to follow these early myths through the first banishment from the garden of rewarding trust, the conflict represented by Cain and Abel, and the genealogical descent into “corruption.” We will discover the myth to be a remarkably graphic metaphor of the infant’s increasingly *autonomous* responses, which Erikson describes—in terms compatible with the Bible’s “giants in the earth”—as an anarchy of minute controls; even the term *corruption* is well suited to Freud’s identification of the key contest at this stage as *anal*. These inclinations are, as we have identified them, the *populations* of the infant mind come into conflict; and it requires no stretch of the imagination to accept a similar turn to autonomy (inexperienced, uninstructed, and therefore dangerous) among the populations of primeval man.

“It is the growth of consciousness which we must thank for the existence of problems,” Jung wrote. “As long as we are still submerged in nature we...live in the security of instinct which knows no problems...Problems thus draw us into an orphaned and isolated state where we are abandoned by nature and are driven to consciousness.”<sup>2</sup> Jung not only identifies this banishment with both the infant and his early ancestors, but with the garden myth, as “the sacrifice of the merely natural man, of the unconscious, ingenious being whose tragic career began with the eating of the apple in Paradise.” We would have to argue that that state of mind was not “unconscious” as long as man’s awareness was still resident in it—it *became* unconscious—; and that the perception of a guiding Presence within “instinct” is the sign, not of the “merely natural man,” but of the highest spirituality—and a much greater loss or “sacrifice.” But Jung’s interpretation is otherwise consistent with the far more detailed psychological/psychohistorical parallels that Swedenborg drew from the same symbolic narrative.

As the remote descendant of a whole initial trust (Adam) and the sense of a separate volition (Eve), Noah is an attitude that appears in the child-mind at the age of two. We will equate this with Piaget’s *egocentrism*; it is, still more graphically, what Erikson identifies—within the anar-

---

1. .

2. .

chy of minute motivations in the child-mind then—as “a basic faith in existence...the lasting treasure saved from the rages of the oral stage.”<sup>1</sup> Swedenborg identifies Noah as a culturo-genetic strain, within the degenerating society of early man, in whom the spontaneity of response from a perverted instinct is momentarily delayed by an instant of self-doubt or uncertainty about the consequences of the response. The reflective consciousness is at first confining (“orphaned and isolated”: Jung), since it must seek reference to precedent—past experience, which is still extremely limited—before responding. This confinement *is* the ark (a remarkable representation to which we will devote almost a chapter), in which Noah—as a “basic faith in existence” that still identifies with the parent/Parent—rides out the flood of willfulness in which the perverted spontaneously responses (“desires and motor habits”: Piaget; “stubborn and minute controls”: Erikson) in effect destroy themselves—or are relegated to a nether realm that thereafter is *subconscious*—as Noachic *consciousness* takes over.

In terms of early mankind, “Noah” is those who accepted as constraints (as a confining ark) those ritual traditions, preserved from the harmonious “Great Time” (Eliade), which were associated with the Universal Parent and thought to invite His favor. Even though these responses no longer had the spontaneity of a whole trust in them, in *form* they were still appropriate to man’s psychological and ecological realities, and hence possessed survival values which preserved the remnant through the anarchy (“corruption in the earth”) that put the original population in conflict with its natural environment and led to its “deluvian” self-destruction.\*<sup>2</sup>

### ***The postdiluvians***

The Noachic viewpoint that survives the flood and emerges from the ark on Ararat is the hero taken from the box, the new great worship that will “overspread” the earth, and the new governing modality that appears in the child-mind at the age of three.

Again, the interpretation of the Testamental narrative yields a remarkably satisfying picture of this critical transition in the life of early man, as well as in our infancy; but psychology offers us far more data for correlations than do the anthropologists.

Among the psychological developments at age three are Erikson’s new mode of *intrusiveness* or exuberant *initiative* (related to locomotion and to the sensitizing of Freud’s genital “zone”), and Piaget’s “*age of why’s*” and so-called *intentionality*. All of these appear to be a vital liberation of a sense of wonder from the self-imposed withdrawal of the previous year. The three-year-old dares again to trust and to explore, and is freed from a dependence on protective and repetitive rituals. Most significant is his recognition of *intent* within himself and others, and even in the inanimate things of his environment. It is the hunger to identify his intentions with those of his parents, his companions, and his cosmos, that accounts for his incessant “why’s” and exuberant intrusions. The whole world images his own hopeful intent and expectations—and most especially his parent.

---

1. .

2. Modern genetic theory supports the supposition that such a strain—especially in isolation—would reinforce the genetic distinction or trait its “founders” possessed; and if the trait was one of superior adaptive benefit, the new population would rapidly reproduce itself and even supplant the parent population—especially if the latter had ceased to adapt successfully.

We will later show that this mythopoeic stage in the child repeats a similar age of myth and animism in the life-history of mankind, and—like Erikson’s “pregenitality”—has in it the presentiments of a future generativity of which the rainbow promise is a symbol, and the “people of one speech” the consequent harmony of (individual and collective) mind. At the same time, there are early signals of a future failure of this innocent initiative, symbolized by Noah’s drunkenness and his prophecies about his sons.\*<sup>1</sup>This danger is inherent in the inability at this stage to distinguish between what the mind images within and the eye sees without, or “a confusion between the psychical and the physical” (Piaget).<sup>2</sup> Swedenborg ascribes the same lack of discrimination between the spiritual and material to the men of the Ancient Church. Apart from the question of whether the psychic vision is real, the difference between this archaic (or childish) confusion and the view of the modern adult is that the latter—even if he asserts the reality of his psychic experience—is unlikely to confuse it with his material reality.

Since the imagery of the mind is shaped by wishes and hopes, and capable of instantaneous transformations, it can “reify”—for those unable to know the difference—inflated expectations that cannot be similarly realized in the space-time world of material events. These are fantasies not because they exist in the imagination but because they are unreal even on their own plane, and thus are doomed to the frustration or collapse of any “dream castle.”

The tower-builders of Babel perfectly symbolize the effort to erect, on the “plain” of material reality, the edifice of inflated presumptions that in imagination will “reach unto heaven.” In the tower itself, the city, the purpose (to “make us a name”), and the inevitable frustration of the project, we will find a striking analogy to the traumatic collapse of the child’s inflated expectations in Freud’s so-called “oedipal” experience, especially as Erikson describes it. In phylogenetic terms, the same parallel describes the effort of archaic man to use the numinous power of myth and mythic ritual for his material advantage: the perversion of worship into magics, idolatries, polytheism, blood sacrifices—all of which were gross distortions of sublimely spiritual death-and-rebirth motifs of purification and renewal. The loss of that central meaning in the myth, and the proliferation of such perverse worships, are the confounding of “one speech” and the scattering of the people abroad.

In the child-mind, at precisely this time (age 5), there is a similar forgetfulness—which Freud calls “infant amnesia”<sup>\*3</sup>—or a *dispersion* of the childish trust in easy, instantaneous transformations by wishful thinking. Like the earlier trauma of the “flood,” the hurt of Babel closes off the “state of mind” that had produced it; the essential mythopoeic faculty—like the spontaneous responses of infancy before it—becomes *unconscious* and its negative aspects are repressed in the *subconscious* mind. And because this way of thinking had governed the whole child-mind, *its loss requires the emergence of a new point of view.*

---

1. I realize that these glancing Biblical references may have little meaning for some readers unfamiliar with the Genesis account. The full text of these myths is given, as a convenience, starting on p. 000.

2. .

3. This phenomenon, which has its cause in the “repression” of such early traumatic episodes as the first appearance of doubts and the “oedipal” challenge to the father, is described on p. 277.

## *The call of Abram*

That new viewpoint is represented in the heroic myth by the hero's call to leave his foster parents' home and country and undertake his quest. For the child, whose summoning deity is the parent, the susceptible hero is an emerging egocentric *introspection* that can be found as the weak survival of a basic trust among the scattered remnants of frustrated mythopoeia. In the Macromyth, and in the spiritual development of mankind, the new face of the hero is Abram, linear of Adam and of Noah: literally (if only incipiently) "historical man...the man who *is* insofar as he *makes himself, within history*" (Eliade).

In each case the hero is manifestly a new goal-orientation, asserted in historical time. The mythical hero looks to the winning of his prize. The child sets his sights on "growing up": on the power, possessions, and freedom he associates with adulthood. Abraham looked to the greatness of his seed, a promised land of plenty, and the Messianic power of "kings to rise out of" him. Each seeks now The Way by which to become, and endows his patron with extraordinary powers to guide and to protect him. It is through this stage that Piaget finds the child to view rules as emanating from the parent, sacred, and inviolable. And it is *only* for the patron Deity of Abraham—not for the Divinity in any other age—that the appellation "El Shaddai," or *God Almighty*, is used in the Hebrew chronicles.

The Macromyth helps to dramatize for us the fact that the accomplishment of the descending stages of any cycle is to "increase and multiply, and cover"—with populations of great variety—"the earth" which is described by that cycle. The hero, or heroic lineage, is the development *within* those populations of an effective attitude or point-of-view with the potential of ordering, restoring, and eventually unifying or "fulfilling" those diverse populations, from its identification with the patron deity of purpose and thus its sense of destiny.

In the first or infantile (Adamitic) stage, the growth of populations ("when man began to multiply on the face of the earth") is described as disorderly, anarchic, and threatening—not only in the story of the hero and in the Macromyth, but also by Erikson—as a consequence of mistrust, and of a compulsive autonomy. The solution in this stage is the "destruction" of the "corrupt" populations, and the "spiriting away" of the hero to a cleansed new haven: we have interpreted this as the repression of those harmful impulses in the subconscious—a dispersion that leaves them *wholly inaccessible* to the surviving and strengthened hero-consciousness.

In the second stage it is the several aspects of this liberated egocentrism—the sons of Noah—by which "the earth is overspread." We will find that these sons and their genealogies relate to what Piaget calls "*intentionality*" (Shem), a new *autonomy* (Japheth); and that these three can also be seen as inheriting the qualities of Freud's ego, superego, and libido. It is important to note that in this case the dispersion that results from a decadence of these interacting populations does not destroy them but only "scatters them abroad," dividing the earth—as separate *states of mind*—among these various inclinations.

The "unconscious" and "subconscious" that are created by this second global trauma are therefore at a lesser remove from consciousness, and the influences of the divided generations, in their nations." Abram is *called out* of his "father's country"—that is, from the perverted mythopoeia that was the cause of the dispersion; but as the hero he and his successors will live and move among the descendent populations of Hamitic, Japhethic, and divergent Semitic origins—most of which are far more powerful and influential in his world (and analogously in the child-mind) than is his thin line of nomadic patriarchs.



It is entirely consistent, then, that Piaget should find the child's "sacred" view of rules to have virtually no effect on his overt behavior. The path of the ingenious hero through this stage, of childish ambition, and of Abram and his lineage, is traversed without real understanding or effect, but with unquestioning fidelity *in intention* to the puzzling whims of the patron deity. In ideation we found this to be the stage of role-play; here it is a period of play-learning, a delighted emulation of success-patterns as exemplified by the parent. There were earlier imitations of parental roles, of course, but those were enacted in "mythical time"—the child imagined himself to *be* the parent by the magic of imitation. Now the intent is to *become* adult by adopting the rules and rituals of success.

Such emulations can be actually rewarding (success being measured by the sense of identity and belongingness that is produced), because adult experience and selective judgments are within the exemplary rituals and formulated rules. But as Piaget points out, the child is without experience or perspective, and accepts the examples and the rules of having a "global" or universal application, sees the rule as an unalterable verity, and cannot realize that any ritual is modified by the use to which it is put.

For the child, then, the rules that work in appropriate instances not only become binding on him in all instances but become his proud possessions. And the formulas that had opened the world to him begin to close him in as they come into conflict with new experiences. His proud attachment to them at the same time (again, as Piaget has shown) shifts his allegiance from his patron exemplar—the source of the rules—to the rules of themselves.\*<sup>1</sup>

The rewarding aspect of role-emulation is told of in the Biblical allegory by the increase of Abraham's progeny in Canaan, and later the great multiplication of the Hebrews in the fertile land of Goshen in Egypt's delta region. The shift in trust from the parental model to the rules themselves, and to an immobilizing pride in them, is symbolized by the succession of a despotic "new king over Egypt." As the children of Israel—or childish expectations—wax restless under his bondage and the lack of progress, this tyrant rule of pride is the fearsome "shadow in the presence which guards the threshold": the child of seven is intimidated by the fear of failing should he apply himself to real instead of play challenges.

### ***The Israelitish quest***

The increase and diversification of any inclination in the mind is a response to the invitations of a rich and varied environment to grow into it and fulfill it. As in evolution, this variety in the population has its origin in the gene pool of the "founders." This means that the population will tend to divide among them the more persistent traits of the common parents.

The relevant proliferation of Abraham's descendants begins with the twelve sons of his grandson, Jacob (Israel), and the four wives and concubines by whom Jacob begot them. We will consider in our exegesis the Abramic "traits" of these sons (and thus of the twelve tribes) which were modified by the maternal input of Israel's genetic partners. Meanwhile, we may accept the principle that the twelve tribes of the Macromyth present as separate inclinations the sum of the

---

1. The reason for this is simply that parental guidance, in new circumstances, will offer new rules which conflict with the rules that the child takes pride in knowing and mistakenly considers universal. The child opts for what is "his."

potential qualities of that egocentric introspection—hungry for a sense of origin, identity, and destiny in historical terms—with which we have equated Abram.

Now, if in the child-mind the view of rules as sacred because of their origin in the parent has been (as we have learned from Piaget) displaced by a *possessive faith in the rules themselves*—as literal and coercive tradition—, the mind is closed to new parental guidance: from fear and pride the hopes of advancing safely into new realms of experience are held in bondage. But happily, no essential trait that was inherent in the founder is lost—according to genetic probabilities—if the heirs are numerous enough to tap the whole gene-pool. And among the sons of Israel, one clearly perpetuates the trait in Abram of a (now residual) devotion to the eternal authority of the parent: Levi, whose descendents are the legalistic priestly tribe. Moses is a Levite.

As the child-mind at seven grows restless under its immobilizing bondage to learned rules appropriated “globally” or literally, parental purpose will seek to find some trait within that mind with which it may renew the covenant of eventual adulthood—the Promised Land—, and by which it can help childish ambition defy its tyrant pride in no-longer-productive knowledge, and dare the fearful Red-Sea threshold to adventure. The Exodus is an exquisite parable of that deliverance, in which the ancestry, childhood, exile, and call of Moses, the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the pillars of fire and cloud, Jehovah’s identification of Himself with the God of The Beginning but also with the God of Abraham, all represent the ways in which the basic mythic process of transformation is applied to this particular psychological and psychohistorical transition.\*<sup>1</sup>

The readiness to accept a new compact with parental authority unquestionably works plagues upon the childish pride, and it is only with great difficulty that frustrated ambitions to become grown-up can be persuaded to dare the risks of failure. Since literality is a consequence of the descent—of the loss of mythopoeic or imaginative views—the new covenant has almost the quality of quid-pro-quo, the legalistic specificity of a contract: in exchange for a commitment of trust and obedience—which requires that the forces of Pharaonic pride be “swallowed” (submerged from consciousness in the depths of the Red Sea\*<sup>2</sup>)—the child will receive a virtual guarantee of his long-promised destiny.

This threshold crossing marks a new stage. Freud calls it the “latency period.” Erikson characterizes it as the “tool years,” in which not only the dreams of earlier childhood but also the play-learning of the stage just past are sacrificed to the acquisition of the facts, and the drilling in the skills, which are necessary to the development of competence. Teaching methods reflect this change, in the shift at about the age of eight from play-learning to more structured rote and drill. Through what Erikson calls sublimation (more accurately, *substitution*: the diversion of the child’s drives into concrete pursuits and toward approved goals), the child in his latency period builds up attitudes and responses that will, as Freud puts it, “stand up against the later storms of puberty.”

---

1. Again, additional interpretations of the symbolism are given as applied to psychological development in our later exegetical treatment of the narrative from Eden to the Exodus (Book Two).

2. It is interesting that the levels of the unconscious are defined by the three major traumas, and that the way in which the hero leaves each level behind suggests their relative (increasing) accessibility. The hero is *swept out of* Eden by the flood, *summoned* out of the “far country,” and *delivered* out of Egypt because he asks to be.

The deity of purpose for the child of this age is single-minded and exacting, and characterized by the child's own foibles—literality, impatience, capriciousness, and perhaps more than anything else a demand for recognition: "Thou shalt have no other gods before my face." All these traits are vastly magnified into the image of what the child fancies he may be when grown, his idea of what it will be to have become. This hunger for an identity puts the child's ego-concept "one on One" with the *adult Ideal* to which he will commit himself. Thus the child—like the Israelites—is an absolute monotheist. At the same time, he has no aspirations (and so ascribes none to his deity) beyond his concrete or historical goal. The word "latency" describes this characteristic aptly. And Judaic thought—prior to the captivity—was similarly lacking in any spiritual-natural dualism, but "entirely relinquished immortality," according to Freud: "the possibility of an existence after death was never mentioned any place."<sup>1</sup> Nor was the lost innocence or the garden: Eden was replaced by the earthly Canaan. Conscious life may be perfected, but not transcended.

This threshold which, for Erikson, is the beginning of an industrious and more realistic pursuit of competence, Piaget defines as a transition from childish egocentrism to a *cooperative* point of view. This reflects again the contractual character of the new Mosaic covenant. Still more striking is Piaget's discovery that there is an overlapping period during which the sacred view of rules continues into the cooperative stage: a period entirely equivalent to the time during which—after the crossing over into the desert disciplines of the renewed quest—the terms of the Covenant were delivered with the force of thunder from the delights of Sinai. Except to note that the subsequent descent of that authority into the Tabernacle, in the midst of the encampment (the orderly disposition of the populations of the conscious child-mind), and then the rule of judges and the anointment of kings, each has its equivalent in the stages of prepubescent development identified by Piaget,—except for that mention, I will resist the temptation to continue here the parallels which are more appropriate to our later exegesis.

The general principle seems clear enough that a contractual restatement of the "law," the commission of rules and facts and rituals to memory, the establishment of skills and habits, the development of competence, are the work of this period. For the Hebrews, these were the reception and codification of their law, the fixing of history and tradition, the forging—from their tribes—of a warrior nation, the definition of "territorial" prerogatives, the refinement—as prophecy—of expectations. For the child the accomplishments of latency are the adult-guided preparation for "the storms of puberty." And the Hebrews, as a third great church, accomplished in their epic quest a similar foundation of Law and Prophecy—in which the meaning and divine intent lay latent—for the coming Advent with its global consequences.

### ***The Advent and the prize***

In ideation, we recognized the prize as the idea itself, given at the nadir of the round; an *incarnation* of the original purpose, through the acquired images of thought and pattern, into the *body* of facts and skills shaped to receive it: an *at-one-ment* of wish with purpose.

Joseph Campbell describes the prize (page 17) as "an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom)," and "apotheosis."

In our individual, physiologically-linked life-cycle we identified the prize with puberty, the *incarnation* of generativity (the physical capacity for parenthood), and also of a new psychologi-

---

1. .

cal insight. “The physiological change,” Jung said of the pubescent child, “is attended by a psychological revolution.”<sup>1</sup> Here, too, there is illumination, a “transfiguration” of the rule-concept, an emancipation from literality, a brief but intense pre-vision of a far more deeply felt fulfillment.

In all of these creative cycles—ideation, hero, and psychological development—we thus find the prize expressed in terms that are most familiar to us in their ascription to the birth and life of Christ: incarnation, atonement, transfiguration, apotheosis. Our earlier correlations—of Eden, the flood, Babel, Abram’s call, the bondage in Egypt, the Red Sea crossing—have been sketchily drawn. But if these survive our further scrutiny, then on the phylogenetic scale the identity of the prize with the Messianic Advent is inescapable.

Around the time that the hero wins his prize, the myths present a concentrated wealth of symbolism by which overt events take on a mysterious significance relating especially to the hero’s parental origins. For the child at his entry into adolescence, the physical awakening of his glands opens up lost connections with forgotten imaginings (also related to infantile parent-concepts) and brings imitations of future wonders. There is clear evidence of a similar resurgence of symbolic thought and mystical experience in the geographical arena and around the time of the Christian Advent, found in the later Prophets, the Gospels, and the book of Revelation. The tides of gentile empire had already swept over the small Jewish nucleus and threatened the identity of goal-directed thrust it had been so long in building. The Silk Route had opened up an east-west ecumen revealing the vast dimensions of the globe; from Babylonian, Persian, and especially Hellenistic influence, ancient mythic concepts were reintroduced to Jewish thought and brought changes—and division—to Messianic expectations. The essential transformation was the recognition, by the later prophets, that the Messiah would be the savior of the meritorious among gentile populations as well as of the faithful among the “chosen people.”

For the youngster, physiological changes invite into consciousness tendencies and dreams that had through latency been regulated to its fringes; the drives especially that were anticipated in the pregenital stages, and since the oedipal trauma had been scattered, sublimated, expressed in substitute ways. The “chosen” ego-thrust, with its literal one-to-One devotion to a god of Competence, finds its identity threatened by pagan powers, and suffers a dispersion of expectations comparable to the post-captivity Diaspora of the Jews. A remnant trust in the promises of infancy and childhood returns to the “holy land”—the central (if badly damaged) attitude *relating to the Parent-imago* in which the prophesy was to be fulfilled—to recover hope, reaffirm its devotion, validate its identity and destiny. And, like the Jews, this thrust must recognize the need for its Messianic fulfillment to embrace its whole world: all the nations of the mind which have gained such power in it and among which that identity itself has been dispersed.

I have equated the sons of Noah with the “components” of the psyche (p. 149). Shem, from whom the Jews were descended, represents the ego. Japheth, as his significance is described by Swedenborg, is roughly the equivalent of what Freud calls the libidinal drives. According to Noah’s prophecy and the genealogies, Japheth at Babel was to be dispersed to the “isles of the gentiles”: to the fringes of consciousness, as consciousness relates to parental guidance in a directed effort to gain identity and stature. But the Japhethites, it was predicted, would eventually return to “dwell in the tents of Shem.” The clear meaning of this in terms of our individual development is that those drives, absent from the central concerns of ego-consciousness during latency,

---

1. .

would reassert themselves and be brought into the goal-directed, parent-related ego-thrust.\*<sup>1</sup> Biblical historians identify the Japhethic peoples as those of the northern Mediterranean coastal lands, especially Greece and Rome (“isles” meant any far shores), and of Europe: just those who, following the Advent, came into the “tents of Shem” as had been prophesied: embraced the God, the goals, the renewed Covenant, and henceforth the historical role of the Jews.

Thus the Advent, like puberty, can be viewed as a nadir which ended the isolation or “separation” process, and renewed the Covenant in a way that could embrace the gentiles and initiate a return arc of reintegration. The historical continuity of the Christian with the Judaic experience is unmistakable. The “Law and Prophets”—like the facts, skills, and expectations built in latency—remained the foundation of the new stage; as Christ defined his role, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

To assess that role, or the historicity of the Gospel accounts of Christ’s life, will require further development of our still tentative views about the Patron Deity and *his* “main purpose,” of creation as the unfolding of that divine intent, of the dual universe as macrocosmic or collective body/mind, and of the interfunctioning of those planes of mind (e.g., Bruner’s motivation, structure, sequence, reinforcement; Jung’s levels of the psyche) as creative process on the cosmic scale. The questions of Christ’s reported miracles of healing, apotheosis (or divinization), and resurrection cannot be answered satisfactorily except in terms that are consistent with a rational cosmology: that show them to be, not violations of physical laws, but nature responding in an entirely orderly way to the same spiritual laws that govern all natural phenomena. We will address these problems in Part III, beginning with the next chapter.

Meanwhile, the psychological/psychohistorical parallels we have been developing from the Macromyth should at least caution us not to dismiss the validity of Gospel history too quickly. We recognize, but do not yet have any real understanding of, the effects of the mind upon the body: what we call psychosomatic phenomena are no longer viewed as “miracles” only because we delude ourselves that we understand what we have named. The miracle of puberty—its attendant psychological revolution—must almost be expected to have its counterpart at the equivalent psychohistorical point of transition. Even those historians who view the record of Christ’s birth and ministry as retrospectively mythologized accept the event itself as the most impelling impetus to change all of history.<sup>2</sup> Modern social activists are fond of pointing out that Christ was a “revolutionary.” Indeed he was. He not only reinterpreted Judaic tradition, but by the example of his life and by his neo-Judaic teachings conquered Judea’s non-Semitic masters, bringing Japheth into the tents of Shem and to the altar of Jehovah. Quite apart from the question of his apotheosis, Christ served undeniably as the incarnation of a new *model* of the Divine Ideal, the renewer of an ancient covenant, as a physical presence in space and time, at a *specific* (and astonishingly efficacious) place and time within the collective body of developing humanity on earth.

It is more difficult to identify a physical cause or instrument of the “revolution” within the individual mind at puberty, but we must assume that all psychological phenomena are effected by means of bodily processes. What we do know is that a recognition is “born” within the child-mind

---

1. The Biblical reference is to Genesis 9:27 and 10:5 (see p. 000). A far fuller case for these representations of Noah’s sons in relation to psychological development is made in our exegesis of the Noachic and Babel myths (p. 000 ff).

2. .

of *his own potential parenthood*, and that this intimately and immediately sensed parent-*imago* becomes the interpreter of, and replaces in terms of authority and fidelity, the Ideal Parent that the child had previously identified as external to himself. We also know that this internalized Ideal Parent that the child had previously identified as external to himself. We also know that this internalized Ideal (which has been called the “phantom parent”<sup>1</sup>) embodies, and returns to consciousness, the qualities of nurture and of “intentionality” that the Parent of infancy and early childhood had meant to the child. In effect, a physically matured *genitality* invites the “incarnation” of the parent-concepts that had governed in the stages of an immature *pregenitality*. It must be realized, however, that this new Ideal is born into a mental world in turmoil, and that the reawakening of the generative drives repressed through latency also invites the return of all the perverse inclinations of hubris and indulgence by which the infantile and childish parental ideals had been distorted. Thus again (as in the earlier cases of Noah, Abram, and Moses) there is only a small remnant trust immediately receptive by which the “atonement” of competence and nurture can be accomplished. And inevitably, in its spread to other inclinations in the mind, that insight will be subject to their misconstruction and distortion.

### ***Christianity and adolescence***

Both the individual and collective revolutions, however quietly and innocently they begin, at the same time fulfill and renew the earlier covenants. But both are humbling fulfillments, not in the form anticipated—the right and might that would reward the achievement of competence—and not a paradisiacal rest of labor. The prize earned by his arduous struggles of latency is for the child the means by which he still must battle back from this nadir to the threshold of return: a path still beset by siren-seductions and monster-threats. Not did the Messiah bring to the Jews the kind of fulfillment (a lasting national identity and greatness) to which the covenants of Abraham and Moses had inspired that people’s struggle. For both, what is offered instead is the new challenge of ministry and mercy, service and sacrifice, humility and caring.

Erikson identifies this as “a second period of delay, namely, prolonged adolescence”—the first delay being the latency period—, and observed: “Here the sexually matured individual is more or less retarded in his psychosexual capacity for intimacy and in the psychosocial readiness for parenthood.” This moratorium accommodates the effort to apply to the identity and competence acquired in the prior stage *the new ideal*—revealed at puberty—of what it is to be human; and to extend this revelation into other areas of thought and feeling. These other populations of the mind, ironically, are *more* receptive to the new idea because they had been uncommitted to the literal expectations of the ego-thrust of latency; at the same time, they cannot embrace it without accepting also the one-to-One parental ideal, and his rules and examples, which are the matrix of the deeper insight.

On the collective scale, Christianity has been similarly a period of delay, was similarly resisted by those committed to a literal fulfillment of the Messianic promise, and spread primarily into gentile populations for whom both monotheism and the Christian message were new revelations. But the essential problem of literality was not lost in the transmission, and the residual idolatries of pagan worships (retained from the mythopoeic stage) tended also to distort Christ’s message for those gentile peoples who received it.

---

1. .

The essential philosophical problem of Christianity has been the apparent conflict between *the Law*, which demands that “justice” be visited inexorably on iniquity, and *Love*, which forgives. It is the at-one-ment established between these two by Christ that Christianity has struggled to comprehend and apply to its own (and the world’s) salvation; and it has been the failure to resolve these values that translated into a tripersonal Deity—for peoples already prone to polytheism—the comfortable and uncomplicated monotheism of Judaic tradition.

The adolescent finds his “god”—his concepts of parenthood, his ideals and values—similarly divided. His judgments shift, often violently, from the rules and habits that shaped his competence and potential. It has been said that the normal conflicts of this period, if found in the adult, would have to be called schizophrenic. According to Erikson, “adolescents have to refight many of the battles of earlier years, even though to do so they must artificially appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the roles of adversaries.” This is an especially pertinent observation, to which we will refer again in a moment; it is an equally apt description of the Christian era, with its crusades and “holy wars” in which whole peoples were undeservedly assigned such adversarial roles.

The equivalent character of these individual and collective “second periods of delay” is apparent from their identical position within the heroic cycle. The entire moratorium in each case—in which the hero must carry the prize back to the threshold, as emissary or in flight—takes place in the same “kingdom of the dark” through which the hero had sought the prize. In our application of Jung’s archetypes to the hero-graph, we found this lowest realm or level governed by “The Shadow” (Fig. 20). To be governed by The Shadow is to project on external things, events, and especially people those “dark” drives or motives to which we deny conscious admission or expression in ourselves (p. 56).

During latency there is no contest with The Shadow except in terms of disobedient acts which might jeopardize the pursuit of competence. The prepubescent can hardly see as “dark” or evil the qualities of relished power, jealousy, vengefulness, indulgence, anger, which he ascribes to his Ideal! But with the “expansion of consciousness” (Campbell) to embrace his other motive drives, not merely the drive to competence, the Shadow-threat comes to include the “dark side” of these rediscovered motives. Just as the child in the latency period ascribed his disobediences and failures in performance to outside circumstance, the adolescent cannot admit these motives as his own, and battle them as such, without doing injury to his hard-won self-image. He must therefore, to do battle with them, ascribe them to external provocations. He ascribes his lust to the designs of a seductress, his tardiness to another’s unreasonable (malign) impatience; his greed is a necessary appropriation of his due in the face of *someone else’s* greed.

When Erikson says that adolescents “must artificially appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the roles of adversaries,” then, he is describing the same behavior that Jung calls projection of the Shadow. Erikson’s use of the word “must” is significant. Projection is a normal and effective exercise during this period of mental growth. It protects the child’s sense of identity by allowing him to recognize his Shadow-qualities as external to himself, until—by this “Shadow-boxing”—he had developed the strength to manage or control them. It serves to contain them in the time-space object, event, or person upon which they are projected, so that the archaic conflicts can be “re-fought” in manageable contests.

In the incredible swings from sublimity to madness with which the child fights to manage his “storms of puberty,” there is a likeness to the millennia through which Christianity gained and asserted control. In both there are the early extremes of ingenious martyrdom; the sense of mis-

sion which rapidly expands the field of influence; improbable tests of fidelity for its own sake; the recurring expectations of an imminent fulfillment; ideals inflated to the tyrannical status of ideology; dark ages of repression, and bursts of renascent creativity; the impetus to rediscover and control lost populations, which fails to unite and instead exploits them from a sense of righteous mission; the growing tyranny of entrenched responses and attitudes, and the effort to be freed of them.

Especially striking is that last parallel, between what in the child is an effort to break free of the “phantom parent,” and for Christianity was a rebellion against the “Mother Church”—the so-called Reformation. These have an altogether similar quality, and lead to like consequences. The growth of any tyranny reflects an abdication of difficult choices and initiatives in favor of easy dependence on an illusory security. The adolescent’s interiorized parent-concept is “loaded” with infantile and childish content: at its center is nurture and mutuality, but it is overlaid with inflated feelings, misunderstandings, unresolved contradictions and conflicts. In earliest adolescence the child rediscovers the central content of mutuality—the true child prize or illumination or insight into his own potential parenthood—as an almost mystical revelation. But in the face of hard reality the negative associations come into play. In her best-selling survey of the crises of adult life, *Passages*<sup>1</sup>, Gail Sheehy notes that at this stage, “feeling exposed and uncertain, we are tempted to take on the form of our phantom parent along with its weaknesses.”

This identification with the phantom parent is not the same things as (although it is attended by) the projection of the phantom parents’—which means the child’s own—motives on the real parents. The true tyrant is the phantom; and the parents themselves may simply be among those “perfectly well-meaning people” who, according to Erikson, are “artificially appointed...to play the roles of adversaries.” Where that is the case, the phantom actually serves to close off the child’s recognition and reception of any parental guidance, however benign and useful.

But because the tyrannical elements of the phantom parent have been projected on the parents, “the need to de-glorify the parents becomes pressing,” as Sheehy puts it, and “an encouraging teacher or charismatic coach, a libertarian aunt or eccentric uncle,” or more extreme models (guru, rebel, deviant) whose exaggerated styles are easier to identify with and to mimic.

Like the youngster who in his late teens has dared the remote corners of his mind to rediscover lost continents of feeling and repressed hungers under the impetus of his parent-imago, Christianity—as mankind’s heroic element—explored the globe and in the name of the Church brought into its ken and commerce long-lost populations. Like the phantom parent of the child, ecclesiastical Christianity extended its influence throughout its world and came to hold the west in bondage. And like that element in the child that Sheehy calls the “Seeker Self<sup>2</sup>,” which breaks away from the emotional compulsions and constraints of the phantom parent, a restive faction of the European “ego-center” asserted its independence from the repressive rule, despotic dogmatism, supposed infallibility, and spiritual blackmail of the Papacy.

But unfortunately there is not easy, single leap from the struggles of mid-adolescence into a free, directed, and responsible adulthood. Nor did western culture by the Reformation accomplish a full transition from the ecclesiastical repressions and superstitions of the earlier era into the kind of liberated rationality that can solve world problems.

---

1. .

2. .



## *The dragon*

“Most young people,” Sheehy says, “search avidly for a cause greater than themselves, in the service of which it will make sense to be an adult.”

But, as she also points out, “Given the raw clay of adolescent sensibility, minds as yet undeveloped, moist and yearning for the imprint of an ideal, it is easy for charlatans...to exploit the young simply by promising them a bogus new destiny, or a way to ‘happen’ overnight.”

In fact, the beguiling model may or may not be a charlatan. Like the parent against whom the child seems to be rebelling, he (or they, in the case of a peer group or a movement) is primarily *the object upon whom the youngster’s desire “to ‘happen’ overnight” is projected*. The model—“encouraging teacher or charismatic coach”—may be wholly innocent of coercive intentions. Again, the villain is the youth’s *own* compulsion to find something to believe in that will miraculously and instantaneously “save” him.

Swedenborg identifies the dragon of the Apocalypse as *justification by faith alone*, the central doctrine of the Reformation. This belief in the saving power of *one’s own faith* (not the struggle to *live* Christ’s example) possesses in its claim to an instantaneous salvation a preemptive quality similar to that of youth’s hope in “a bogus new destiny, or a way to ‘happen’ overnight.” We have equated the dragon with the “shadow presence that guards the threshold” (Campbell); with the usurper-king “and/or giant, dragon, or wild beast” (Raglan), which must be defeated at the threshold of return; and with Jung’s Shadow archetype, or those “dark” inclinations which throughout the quest are projected on other objects or people. From our examination of the projecting process, we should be able to recognize in this mythic monster-figure the original serpent of the garden, the seductive hubris of sensual experience, now grown the wings of thought. When the fragment projections have been penetrated and defeated in the lesser contests of the quest, we are brought face-to-face with the projectionist himself: the original usurper, our own draconic aspect of self-agency, which—obscuring our vision of a genuine Ideal—repeats its early promise (in the garden) to make us “as gods, knowing good and evil,” *if we will reduce the Messianic Ideal to a mere symbol, and usurp His saving power to out faith*.

“Why can’t we,” Sheehy asks rhetorically, “hurry up and find absolute truth at 21?” The dragon would have us think that we have found that final answer. The doctrine of “faith alone,” as a collective claim to absolute truth, has in common with the youth’s “transfer of idealization from parent to model” the quality of grim self-certainty. As Sheehy describes the young converts of Sun Myung Moon, “theirs were the faces that chilled. Deathly solemn, expressionless except for flinches of contempt and a lip-set of distrust....” The quality is of course most readily recognized in its exaggeration, just as Calvinism caricatured the face of the Reformed. And the dragon will accept a variety of guises—harsh or libertarian, aggressive or exclusionary, visionary or materialistic. The essential draconic quality in any case is the illusion that one has found “a way to ‘happen’ overnight.” Such a posture perforce denies all other answers, and especially any that have been “contaminated” by the rules and standards of the parent (or the “Mother Church”). If the states of mid-adolescence were schizophrenic, the “normal” psychopathology now tends to paranoia. The conviction of an absolute truth (at 21 or any other age) in fact courts persecutions and inquisitions.

“A deviant peer group—one that encourages crime or hell-raising—would regard any effort by society to ‘reform’ it as confirmation of the hostile intent of society and of the importance of the group,” says James Q. Wilson of Harvard<sup>1</sup>. But that is true of any strategy for an “instant sal-

vation” in the face of real or imagined efforts to change it, even if it is not deviant in the sense of destructiveness or delinquency. Even within the mind the presumptuous claim to having been saved by one’s own faith—however sublime one’s model—will feel threatened by residual ingrained values and ways of thinking, so that the youngster will feel his “faith” to be persecuted and at the same time justified *within himself*. The sense of threat leaps to the defense of that faith, and weaves a web of reasonings that serves to obscure its untenable premise.

And of course the threat tends to be projected onto others. This is often reflected in that argumentative behavior we call sophomoric. By its stubborn closing of the mind to other viewpoints it leads to that rationalism which, on the collective level at this same stage, has according to Jung infected the great religions of the west, which consequently and similarly “suffer from an increasing anemia.” Draconic rationalism thus masquerades as reason at the very threshold of maturation and experience where a genuinely rational survey, rule, and restoration of the inner kingdom could at last begin.

“The strategies for living that we develop,” Sheehy says, “some causing us to be tender and loving and other egging us on to be competitive by the end of childhood. To ‘know thyself’ in the full sense, one must eventually allow acquaintance with all these parts.” But that acceptance is precisely what the Shadow/Tyrant/Dragon will *not* allow those parts that do not affirm its power to save, making them—the tender and the cruel—“confirmations of the hostile intent of society.”

If the claim of consciousness in late adolescence to a (bogus) saving faith—or “absolute truth at 21”—obstructs a genuine self-knowledge, that problem in the *individual* mind is a direct reflection and consequence of an identical conceit that today obstructs *collective* (and especially western) man’s ability to bring his “parts” together and to know himself and the dimensions of his humanity. This has been increasingly the case since the Reformation and in particular since the Enlightenment, which we have equated with the individual’s “age of reason.”

Like the “transfer of idealization from the parent” on the youngster’s part, the Reformation had positive values in the liberation it accomplished. But from the quality of *protest* which gave the churches it produced their names, it tended to strip religion of its affective numinosity, the traditions by which it was connected to the mythical Beginning, the power of its symbolic ritual. Howevermuch those powerful religious elements may have been abused by the Roman papacy, their total loss—to the almost sterile severity of succeeding worships which held faith to be paramount and feeling virtually sinful—set western culture on the road to that rationalism which dominates our day.

But even while it was in the process of stripping itself of *its own* mythic connections with the Beginning, western rationalism found itself brought more and more by its own explorations into confrontation—on a global scale—with just those archaic values it was denying in itself.

### ***Mankind at the threshold***

There is a dramatic likeness between what Sheehy says about youth at his crossing over into young adulthood, and what Mircea Eliade says about modern western man.

Sheehy calls for the youngster, if he is to “know himself” in the full sense, to “allow acquaintance with all (his) parts”—with ways of feeling, thinking, and responding that by projection he had come to think of as “other.” That admission must be made, of course, by the “part” of

the mind (ego or Seeker Self) concerned with self-definition and *becoming*; and the need is to allow the other parts into the realm of consciousness as valid elements in the “community” of mind.

Eliade sees the same need, for western man, to allow acquaintance with those “other” parts—however strange or alien they may seem—which share his origin. “If the discovery of the unconscious has compelled Western man to confront his own individual, secret and larval ‘history,’” he says, “the encounter with non-Western cultures will oblige him to delve very profoundly into the history of the human spirit, and will perhaps persuade him to admit that history as an integral part of his own being.”<sup>1</sup>

It was from Eliade that we learned earlier that western culture developed from the emergence, out of the archaic or mythical society, of “historical man.” What we have here, then, is a re-confrontation of parts grown separate. And it is particularly significant that Eliade assigns the role of reintegration to the west—that is, historical man—and makes the historical viewpoint a necessary means for that reintegration. Because—to quote him further—“the ‘exotic’ and ‘primitive’ peoples have now come within the orbit of history...Western man is obliged to enquire into their systems of values, if he is to be able to establish and maintain communication with them.”

It has been developments within western thought and attitudes which have provided the means for a reintegration: “the rise of the sciences of comparative religion, of ethnology and Orientalism, as well as the development of depth-psychology and the systematic study of symbolism, have considerably helped the West to enter into the spiritual universe of ‘exotic’ and ‘primitive’ peoples....Heremeneutics is Western man’s response—the only intelligent response possible—to the solicitations of contemporary history, to the fact that the West is forced...to this encounter and confrontation with the cultural values of ‘the others.’” The effort holds out rich rewards: “This confrontation with ‘the others’ helps Western man better to understand himself. The effort expended in correctly understanding ways of thinking that are foreign to the Western rationalist tradition—an effort which is, primarily, that of deciphering the meanings of myths and symbols—is repaid by a considerable enrichment of consciousness.”

The assignment of this role to the west is reminiscent of Jung’s observation (p. 5) about the individual mind: “Since it is the point of reference for the field of consciousness, the ego is the subject of all successful attempts at adaptation”: in the world of mind, individual or collective, it is the “seeker” element—which is also the historian—that must search the record it has kept in order to accommodate and unify the whole.

While Eliade, writing in 1959, asserted that “the meeting and confrontation of these two types of civilization count among the most significant events of the last quarter of a century”—making the challenge to seem extraordinarily recent—the striking fact is that Swedenborg anticipated by two hundred years precisely those means which Eliade enumerates for the resolution of the problem. Certainly Swedenborg’s concept of the “great churches” is a sweeping approach to comparative religions, embracing and relating all other non-western worships. We have thus far found that his descriptions of the structure and functioning of the mind are consistent with the findings of the depth psychologists, an likeness that our further scrutiny will make still more evident. And this chapter in particular has made it clear that both his “comparative religion” and his

---

1. .

“depth-psychology” were derived by hermeneutics (what Eliade call “the only intelligent response possible”)—that is, by “deciphering the meanings of myths and symbols.”

In fact, a proper summation of Part II is that it has been the correlation of depth-psychology and comparative religion by means of hermeneutics, or the symbolic exegesis of the Macromyth. It is gratifying to be reassured by the eminent mythologist-historian that this is the intelligent response to mankind’s threshold confrontation.

At the same time, it is apparent that we have done only the first (if an important) part of what we set out to do at the beginning of Chapter 6. We have traced the hero’s travels from his birth to this threshold of return—but have not brought him across it. We have followed the growth of mind to the crossing over into young adulthood, but have not yet found the means to defeat the Shadow-guardian who bars the passage. By exegesis and analogy we have found reason to place mankind at precisely the same threshold, and in collective contest with the identical draconic self-delusion, but have not discovered the secret by which the Prize won at the nadir can work its magic for us now.

Yet hopes that may have seemed vain speculation when we first proposed them have found reasonable grounding in our correlation of Swedenborg’s disclosures from the Testaments with the subsequent discoveries of science and experience. Reason itself no longer seems so captive to the need for proofs, nor proofs so certain. In the light of our own and mankind’s spiritual histories, the hope and expectation of a new age—a New Christian epoch, a fifth great dispensation, in which faith finds the support of reason—appear to be the rational alternative to the sterile dogmas of fortuity and futility by which our spiritual progress has been stalled.

# Chapter 7 The Patron Deity

## *The Ideal Humanity*

According to the mythic formula, the Patron Deity reveals himself to the hero, at specific and predictable junctures in the hero's life, in ways successively appropriate to the hero's changing need and recognition.

We have been able to equate these “revelatory” episodes in the hero-life with the chronological stages of advancing consciousness identified by developmental psychologists (Chapter 2). From the knowable presence of purpose in our small adventures in creativity (Chapter 3), and our intuitions of a “main purpose” as the directing motivation of our individual life-cycle (Chapter 4), we were encouraged to seek the presence of a corresponding universal purpose directing the evolution of human thought, and especially the evidence of it in our own spiritual-cultural traditions as recorded in the Judeo-Christian chronicles (Chapter 5). That search has been rewarded by our discovery, in those Testaments, of the same heroic structure and process that shape the myths; and, from Swedenborg's interpretation of it, we have found this magnification of the mythic metaphor to describe—as parallel “internal histories”—our individual psychological development and the spiritual growth of the collective mind.

These serial considerations have led us to the reasonable proposition that humanity on this earth (with the western or Judeo-Christian cultures in the vanguard) had, at the time of the Enlightenment, arrived as a *collective mind* at the threshold to its *collective young adulthood*, or age of reason. This historical perspective lends at least a circumstantial credibility to Swedenborg's asseveration that in his day mankind stood collectively in need of a new and “saving” insight suited to its new developmental or evolutionary stage, metaphorically equivalent to the need of the hero at his threshold of return and to the need of modern western youth at the end of adolescence.

It is Swedenborg's claim—and my original thesis—that the disclosure of “hidden” meanings in the Testaments, intended in them from “The Beginning” for mankind in our time, constitutes that new and necessary revelation to mankind's maturing reason. It seems logically requisite that any such new insight be discoverable in past experience, as recorded in our “collective memory” or spiritual traditions. It is as necessary to reaffirm God's guidance in the past as to discover His restatement of it for our present needs. The new insights must be a further development for us of our Judeo-Christian heritage, and of its continuity with the mythopoeic worships of our still earlier progenitors.

Not only does the Macromyth allegorically contain—and Swedenborg disclose—such “hidden meanings,” but the meanings themselves have so far proved to be of a nature precisely suited to the needs of this new age. Swedenborg describes them as freeing the modern thinking mind “to enter with reason into the mysteries of faith.” From an understanding of the psychological and psychohistorical content of the Testaments, what had been “mysteries” to our pre-rational states—the patterns of divine intent in those growth processes—become accessible to our rational recognition and conscious, voluntary participation.

Campbell found the hero to be similarly liberated at this point in the myth. As we quoted him (p. 17): “At the return threshold the transcendental powers”—the mysterious forces that had aided or beset the hero through his underworld adventure—“must remain behind.” This require-

ment is reflected in the youth's need at the threshold to his adulthood, and mankind's need at the close of the Christian epoch, to abandon the management of motives by projection and superstition. Motives may no longer be viewed as mysterious or transcendental forces of good and evil working in "the others," but must be accepted as knowable "parts" of one's own self. By this recognition, the motives themselves are transcended. They therefore need not—and should not—any longer be invoked or exorcised *as alien powers*, by those "mystery-rites"—ritual responses talismans, and incantations—which are the tools of projection and superstition.

But merely to recognize our "isolated instincts and purposive mechanisms" as subordinate parts does not bring them automatically into harmony or creatively redirect them. To recognize that there is a schism between our feelings and our conscious lives, and to trace the history of its development, is a necessary first step. There is even a certain efficacy in that knowledge: "Such correlations," Jung asserted, "can have a remarkably healing effect in certain cases, as Freud saw long ago."<sup>1</sup> But the desire to be healthy—in mind or body, individually or as a society—must be classed as a subordinate motivation in contest with the others such as sex, survival, hunger, power. It is not in itself a sufficient motive for the difficult resolution of the human condition, a fact that appears to account for the failure of psychoanalysis to reverse or even slow the trend toward individual and social dissociation and neurosis.

"Most young people," we quoted Sheehy, "search avidly for a cause greater than themselves, in the service of which it will make sense to be an adult." Yet where can a youth's individual search be but in his society and its motivations? And what "greater cause" can he find in a society which presents collectively the same disordered and conflicting motives that he has come to recognize within himself, and that stands in need of the same redeeming cause or purpose: a Human Ideal that is greater than the sum of its troubled and conflicting parts?

To accept our motives (to leave the "transcendental powers behind") may in itself be liberating; but to apply that freedom to our spiritual restoration—individual or collective—, we need also to be given a valid vision to which our "parts" may be reshaped, renewed, and redirected. If, as Swedenborg maintains, the allegorical content of the Testaments constitutes a new divine instruction for mankind's emerging reason, there must be in it more than a psychological and psychohistorical retrospective that reacquaints us with our fragmentary and conflicting motives. There is the equally pressing need for the Deity to reveal Himself in that history, in a new guise—a new vision of the Ideal—embodying His purpose for us as a supremely "greater cause" to which we may devote our liberated rationality and creativity.

Swedenborg shows that in the Macromyth, on a still deeper plane of symbolism, just such a fuller revelation of the Deity has awaited mankind's need and readiness to understand it. This study has not yet equipped us to follow his exegetic method. But from our explorations of the mythic formula to which the Testaments are shaped, we will be able to discern in them this new vision of the divinely Human Ideal, and know it as the Patron of our past.

## ***God as Love***

What motivation of main purpose in *us* may be said to animate us and to produce whatever image of a genuine humanity we may achieve? What power in us seeks to express itself in the

---

1. .

unfolding diversity of our material and psychical realities, and to fulfill itself by integrating that rich diversity within—and into the service of—our “main purpose...to be human”?

According to Swedenborg, *it is love that makes the man*. What Bruner calls “intrinsic motivation” and von Franz calls man’s “main purpose”—as the same impelling drive—appears to exhibit the qualities and serve the role that Swedenborg assigns to a “love” that is inmost to each human creature’s aspirations. But from whence does this animating thrust possess—not learn, but have intrinsically and originally in it—that intuition of *what it is to be human* by which it strives to make us so?

Swedenborg’s use of the word *love*, rather than purpose or motivation, reflects his philosophical position that our connate motive to become human has its source in a Creator whose divine motive, creativity, and essence are “Love Itself.” Probably the reader will intuit something of the intended meaning for this term. But because the concept of God as Love is the key dynamic in Swedenborg’s theology/cosmology, we had best be sure we are in agreement as to that meaning before developing his premise.

In reference to the newborn, Erikson observes that “the encounter of mutual trustworthiness between maternal person and small infant, in all its infantile simplicity, is the first experience of what in later occurrences in love and admiration can only be called a sense of ‘hallowed presence.’”<sup>1</sup> But there is no way the mother can *endow* the infant with that feeling: it is intrinsic to the child-mind *as a quality of his awareness*. It is characterized by simplicity; it is *limited* by the small dimensions of the “world” encompassed by that infantile awareness; it is, however, also wonderfully *unbounded* in its spontaneity: open, giving, trusting, and unspoiled.

Swedenborg attributes this first sense of “hallowed presence” to the initial lack of impediment or distortion in the infant’s experience of God’s benign vitality inflowing as life itself: the direct perception of God’s presence as “Love Itself.” But our first intense experience of it is soon dimmed as we seek its reflection in the things our material environment, and overlaid especially by that fullest reflection, representative, and correspondent of it which is parental nurture.

How that first recognition of Love in its wholeness is broken down into the fragment recognition of its reflections, and eventually ascribed to the things themselves (objects and people, actions and events) in which its presence and animation is reflected, is exegetically discovered in the early myths in Book Two. What is important to us here is that this initial impress remains with us throughout life as the unconscious foundation of all our recognitions and responses to Love—however fragmentary, faint, and faulty they have become.

By the end of our youth—especially in this “modern” age of disenchantment—it is a difficult thing for us to accept as real what isn’t tangible: to allow conviction to follow where the handrails of immediately sensed experience can’t lend the comforting if illusory security of their proofs. We have become so immersed in and attracted to the outward means—its ultimate processes and products—by which Love nurtures us that we have lost sight of their animating and unifying source. We are so accustomed to think of “love” from its limited reflections, and from reflections distorted by the things in ourselves and our environment in which we see it, that we abuse whatever word—in any language—was or is intended to express the meaning of it. We confuse “love” with maudlin sentiment, with mere liking, with indulgence and possessiveness and lust.

---

1. .

The error is not in recognizing that Love's "hallowed presence" (*hallowed* derives from the same root word as *whole*) is differently reflected or expressed on each plane of reality and embraces many shades of feeling—for that is so: the Greeks had their words *agape* for love of God, *philia* for love of men, and *eros* for physical love; English has its proper equivalents. We do not lack the means to discriminate between these, or to relate them to each other. Our failure is the degradation of the *concept* "Love"—as the generative source of all its subordinate expressions, the *wholeness* of motive feeling—to be merely any (or at best an agglomerate sum) or its derivative "isolated instincts or purposive mechanisms." Even our effort to see love as a spiritual *quality* tends to make that quality abstract, as an amorphous feeling-tone without pattern, purpose, or direction, unrelated to our "real" and effective drives.

To know the meaning of Love, we must invite or recall its initial impress on us, into those "later occurrences in love and admiration" which make us one with those with whom we share the perception of Love's whole or "hallowed"—and therefore unifying—presence. We are not joined by Love if in ourselves *agape*, *philia*, and *eros* are not united within that hallowed presence: we must be one *with* Love before we can be one *in* love with another. *Agape* effects only a mutual aspiration; *philia*, only friendship; *eros*, only a physical attraction or union. Love conjoins at every level.

### ***What love is***

What single motive has this power?

We need only credit and consult our most idealistic—aspiring, hopeful, reaching—inner feelings to affirm what Love in its essence really is. *Love's thrust and nature is to give, to share, to gladden or delight.* Its inherent endeavor or *conatus* is to proceed outward from itself and *give of itself*.

This single attribute of love, ascribed by Swedenborg to "Love Itself" as the original Motive Power—as God, or *Life Itself*—accounts not only for the wonders of creation on both the natural and the spiritual planes, but also for the *need* for a creation: for the existence of a recipient, or recipients, on whom Love may bestow itself. The essence of love is giving; thus Love as Life itself must be *life-giving*. Because there is no sharing of delight unless there is an awareness of its reception, the recipient must be aware of what is given—or capable of *knowing he is loved*. And more important still, the recipient must be capable of giving what is given to him: Love's greatest gift is *the capacity to love*—to "pass love along"—; for it is in loving that the most sublime and fulfilling delights are found, that love *as life* is most exquisitely experienced.

But we also know—both from our inner intuitions and from experience—that *genuine love cannot impose itself or force gifts upon its object*. A "love" that imposes itself incurs the obligation of reciprocity, denying its object the opportunity of a free response. Because the delight in giving or returning love can only be in giving of it freely, the "gift" of an imposed or forced love is not delight but bondage.

The quality of love, then, is a free and unforced mutuality. This requires not just that it be given only in the measure of its free reception. It requires also that *Love be open to the return of love, knowable in its gifts, and lovable*, so that the recipient can recognize not merely that he is loved but by whom—for unless he knows the Source he is not capable of that free return which completes the circle of mutuality.



How is Love Itself—or any love—made knowable? We found in our discussion of ideation (Chapter 3) that the creative process begins with aspiration—that is, on a plane of motive, purpose, wish, or (what is the same thing, the same psychic energy) love. From our own experience with creativity, we know that *what any such motive purpose produces is an image of itself*. An artist's work reveals and fixes the artist's feelings, and corresponds to them. What love strives to create is its own fulfillment, and thus its very likeness.

A painter has a purpose of communication (we call it “*self-expression*”), inherent in his wish to paint, which it is his effort to fix, in otherwise dead pigments, upon an otherwise lifeless canvas. The painting has its living message only from the love that he pours into it; his love is communicated to us only if some love in us *draws out a meaning*, from the canvas, which *corresponds* to the love in him of which it is the symbolic expression.

The analogy is obvious. If Love Itself is the Cosmic Artist, than tangible reality is a work in which His purpose and His presence *may be discerned but must not be found compelling or coercive*. Natural reality—including what we can know from nature about ourselves—is the canvas plane on which we are free to discover or to deny the Artist's purpose, love, and meaning. From this perspective we can view Love as a higher *reality*—the source, not simply an epiphenomenon, of nature.

Love cannot be found out by scalpel, beaker, lens, or scales, and proved or disproved. We are free to see or not see, feel or not feel, accept or reject the Artist's “love offering,” on the plane of the canvas itself where its vitality is only representative. It is only *from love* that Love and its meaning are perceptible, even though it is their representation in the overt act or creation—the painting, gift, gesture, nature itself—in which we can discover and affirm Love

s living presence.

We have found unmistakably in our study of myth and mind that our descent into outward consciousness has left behind—in what have become the unconscious levels of our minds—an awareness of our inmost motive feelings. We may now restate this in terms of what those feelings are, and what their origin. What we have lost is the ability to sense Love's intimate and immediate presence, unspoiled and spontaneous, within the things, companions, and events of our conscious life. And this restatement, which makes the royal kingdom the realm of mind in which Love Itself was originally experienced, applies not only to our own life-cycle but to that greater cycle which is the life course of humanity.

### ***A universal beckoning***

Myth and Macromyth describe not only Love's attendance and adaptation to us in that descent, but also the guidance offered for our free return to His kingdom of Love—the “kingdom of God (which) is within you.”

Mankind has never been without an inner inclination to believe in a Creator, a Loving Universal Parent; in an original state of blissful innocence and belonging; and in a destiny which is the restoration of that bliss. Our own sensitivity to such felt convictions—residual of our first infantile experience—was dimmed in early childhood and is blocked by the unsubtle pressures of our physical existence. But it is too deeply rooted in us, inscribed in us, for any of us to have entirely expunged it.

Our persistent visions, aspirations, and beliefs, our inclinations to look to a perfection, an ideal, a destiny, exist similarly—that is, take a common form—in all of us as they have in all men,

and all cultures, throughout human history. In tracing them we have described a course that embraces the dimensions of the mind itself—and have found reason to suppose that this same passage through the countries of the hero, the levels of the mind, also describes the path we seek for our return to wholeness in the divine parenthood of Love.

That path of return to Love is a veiled but constant beckoning in everything we feel and know and do. Its distinctively staged descent and ascent are discernible in the inception, growth, and fulfillment of every love, wish, hope, or purpose. We have found the echo of its cyclic sweep in an electromagnetic pulse, in a planetary orbit, in a heartbeat and a breath. We have found it in the passage of a day, a year, a lifetime, and the whole vast turn of history. It describes the rhythms of our art and music, the themes of our fairy tales and poetry and drama.

It is only from these deepest, vibrant echoes of our origin, in our farthest visions and our highest aspirations as they resound from that first experience of Love's hallowed presence, that we can still feel faintly what kind of LOve it is that is the source of all creativity: that is the kingdom of Love into which our first breath brought us is so great, our capacity for love has grown so small, our use of love's creative power has become so mixed, inconstant, and unpracticed, that it is only by analogy that we can now envision Love in its wholeness.

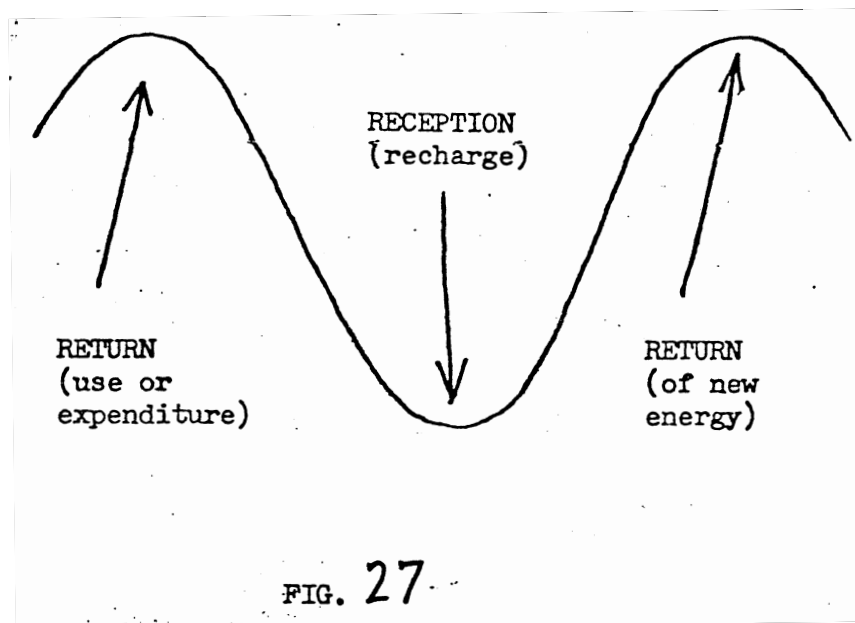
But the analogies are everywhere: not only in the cyclic processes of nature, and in our own experience of love and loving. Because the love in us by which we might draw out the Artist's purpose has been crippled, we have throughout history had the need of Love's more direct help in the rediscovery of His presence and His guidance. That guidance is the myths, the religions, the spiritual traditions, visions, and chronicles of mankind: the products of a continuing revelation into the minds of men. All the mythologies and all religions contain within them their symbolism the record of such revelations, brought to their final formulation in the magnificent canvas of the Macromyth.

### ***Love's reciprocal pulse***

We are given no simpler—and yet no more comprehensive—representation of Love's relationship to us, and ours to Love, than that basic *pulse* which we have found in so many physical and psychical phenomena.

Love's nature is mutuality. In the giving, it is not truly love unless the giver is open to love's return. In the receiving, it cannot retain its motive or creative force unless it *is* returned to the gratification of the giver's intent. Love, energy, force, life, is first received; then used. Its use or discharge produces an "exhaustion" which invites, again, the infusion or "recharging" that fills the

void, renews or rewards the use, the return, the giving, the sacrifice. This process is familiarly diagrammed in Figure 27.



As we noted earlier, it would be an error to mistake the graph for the reality or nature for the living spirit. We cannot confuse a sea-wave for love's pulse. But we can describe and savor our own love's activity, as the poet may, in terms of the troughs and crests of the ocean's mindless surge. The power of music is not in the air's vibration, nor in the eardrum's, but in the corresponding "vibrations" in the mind. Yet each activity expresses in its medium the same power-source from which all have their origins.

Nature's cycles—like the pigment and canvas of a painting—are, from the insistence of our physical senses, too compelling to deny. But we *are* free to feel or not the harmonies of intent: to discover or not Love's living vibrancy within the sensate spectrum of nature's energies. It is in nature's tangible rhythms that the higher rhythms of Love and purpose and meaning are offered to us.

We have ascribed these qualities to Love:

- That it is the essential creative Power, force, or energy from which creation is, on all its planes.
- That its *conatus* is to give of itself, to share the delights of loving and of being loved.
- That what is genuinely loving cannot force itself upon that which it loves.
- Yet that Love must make itself knowably present in its love-offerings, so that it invites (allows) the mutuality which is the essence of love.

The last two of these postulates appear to present a paradox. The necessity for assuring freedom which is incumbent on the giver would appear beyond achievement in the case of a creative Love which is the All: all powerful, pure, infinite, eternal. Would not such a Love be overpowering, and compelling of recognition and acceptance by any created consciousness shaped to receive it and be animated by it? Yet from another message of our inner senses—that love is wise—man has accepted the truism that even in his own case "love will find a way."

It is somehow satisfying that the “way” or wisdom by which the Creative Love resolves that seeming paradox is the Way—the cyclic life-pulse, the path prescribed for the mythic hero—that we have identified with the myriad expressions of creative process. Assuming that an infinite and eternal Love-Source cannot limit its outpouring or its giving: still, it *can* endow its creation with a qualified capacity to *receive* its gift of Love. The cyclic nature of man’s experience, by which reception is “metered” and moderated, is the provision of a way (or “Way”) for finite man to bask in the Infinite Love without being overwhelmed by it—and even to turn himself away from it.

Life is not *given* as a pulse, but is full and continuous. *It is man who is created to receive life as a pulse: in a cyclic pattern of impulses which in themselves are not compelling or coercive.* And “built into” that cycle are even the *shades of reception*—the planes of the cycle or the countries of the hero—among which man can choose, as the degree to which he will feel, acknowledge, and respond to Love.

We have already touched on the analogy—one of the more ubiquitous of mythological symbols—which dramatically illustrates this provision. In describing the heroic cycle as a helix, we employed the model of a rotating earth in its path around the sun (see Fig. 8, p. 30). And in tracing the cycle of an individual lifetime, we quoted Campbell’s reference to it as the passage of the sun across our firmament (p. 36). The ancient myths and worships gave great significance to this diurnal revelation, finding the sun to represent the Deity—in his heavenly realm—, and the earth to be the realm proper to mortal man upon which the sun bestowed its light and warmth.

### ***Life as an orbit***

The appearance that the sun circles the earth was reflected in the belief of the ancients that God at night withdrew his presence from them. Still, their reverence for the spiral—an especially sacred symbol in the iconographies of nearly all spiritual systems—shows their appreciation of the repetitive quality of experience as the opportunity to amend or reinforce their responses to their God’s beneficences each day.

As we will see, however, it is not only the appearances of nature but its realities which paint on the canvas warp and woof of space and time exquisite representations of the eternal verities. The more we know about nature’s laws and operation, the more accurately and fully we can find illustrated in them the laws and operations of the spiritual order. And the Copernican view of the solar system provides a model of the relationship between man and God far more graphic and instructive than the ancient concept of an earth-circling sun.

The earth’s orbit around the sun is the product of two forces: its own tangential inertia, and the mutual attraction of gravity. Without that gravity, the blind inertia of the earth’s mass would impel it into the death of space. Without inertia, the earth would be irresistibly drawn to a fiery end around the sun. Only the two vectors together, gravity and inertia, can hold the earth in its continually circling course around the sun, and within the living reach of its vital radiation.

The parallels are striking (Fig. 28). Gravitational attraction exhibits that *mutuality* which we

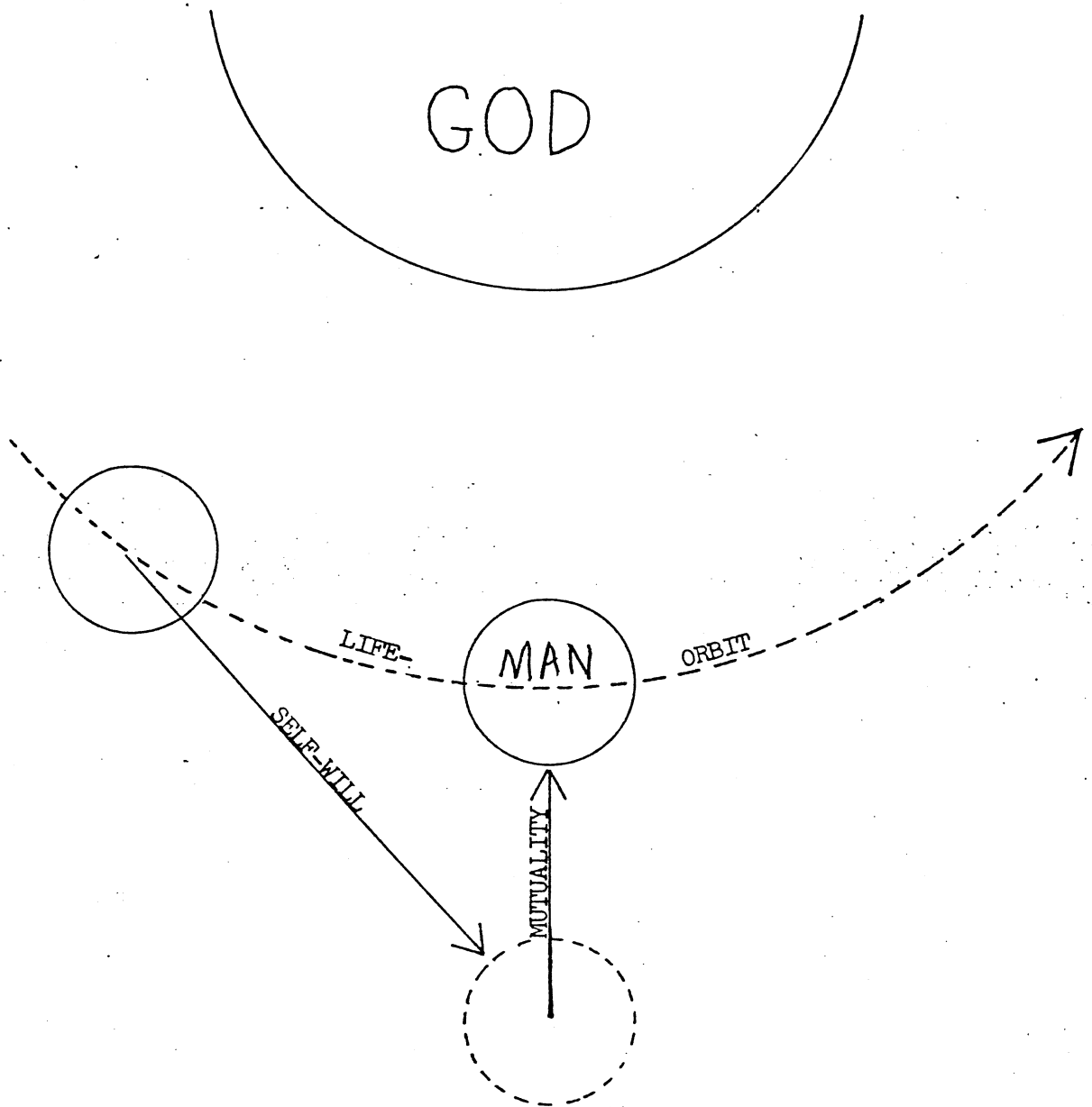


Fig. 28

have found to be an essential quality of love. The earth's inertial thrust was not a product of itself, but imparted to it; yet it appears to be a movement of its own. It is thus a graphic correlate of man's apparent self-life or self-agency. We have here, then, a "working model" of the way in which a natural or neutral matrix may be provided for the reception of life—in no way limiting

the outpouring of the source—and for the growth of spirit. It pictures for us how, without Love’s almost imperceptible attraction for us and our fainter attraction for love (gravity is called the “weak force”!), our inertial impetus of self-agency—while an illusion—would yet carry us off to a cold, dark void beyond the radiant reach of life and love.

But it equally dramatizes the need for such an appearance of self-impetus. Without the equivalent of an earth-mass and momentum—the sense of a separate existence and an inherent thrust to live it—we would fall back into the anonymity of Love’s source. We cannot refuse our inertial mass, abrogate the mutual pull of gravity, or alter the orbit in which these two forces hold us. The attractive power of God’s love and the given momentum of our native will are the unalterable vectors of our directed destiny. The spiral course on which they take us is God’s far purpose for us, a single strand inextricably woven into the fabric of His creation.

Not have we any more direct perception of that Love-field than we have of its correlate, gravitation. The only attraction of which we are aware is the earth’s: that is, toward our own self-center. And science admits to knowing far less about the inner earth than about outer space: “...we can tell far more about what is happening inside a star thousands of miles of light-years away,” says astronomer Herbert Friedman, “than we know about the interior of our own earth.”<sup>1</sup> Our own inmosts are as deep a mystery. Except from the eggshell crust of awareness, we cannot know ourselves. The pressuring forces and fires within, the soul of our being, are beyond the depths to which our digging-tools of thought can penetrate.

It is tempting to carry a simile beyond our knowledge by which to manage it. Emerson warns us that “a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.”<sup>2</sup> But I doubt that any consistency is foolish: only our understanding of one or both sides of the analogy. We still do not know how, within the field of solar gravitation, our planet was formed and positioned as a self-lifeless interceptor and recipient of the sun’s generativity and nurture. Gravity is an enigma still to science. If, as we quoted Cirlot (p. 96), “the invisible or spiritual order is analogous to the material order,” the material model can be instructive for us in its correspondence to the spiritual order only in the measure that we are given to know how nature functions.

There is, however, an area in which we may confidently pursue the solar simile further. So far we have only set the stage for an understanding of the apparent paradox that we had posed: how an infinite, all-powerful Love might create an image of Himself upon which to bestow his gifts, yet leave his creature free to acknowledge or deny them.

How the counterforces of Love’s “gravitation” and our own “momentum” establish the orbital conditions for a moderated reception of Love’s vital radiance is remarkable enough. But the most dramatic provision for our freedom to accept life as a gift of Love or deny it is reflected in still another momentum with which the earth is endowed: its axial rotation.

### *The diurnal cycle*

The symbolic equivalence of light with thought and warmth with feeling will later be developed and applied more fully. We use the analogies instinctively—as we also use the word “day” to

---

1. .

2. .

mean any period of time. Its alternations of light and darkness, warmth and cold, activity and inactivity, make the diurnal cycle our readiest metaphor in nature—especially from our responses to its stages—for the cyclic changes that we sense in ourselves.

Our knowledge that the earth's rotation on its axis is the cause of day and night provides a fuller insight also into the spiritual analogy than the ancients could possess. Even though they could recognize in that analogy their spiritual dependence on a Source represented in their daily lives by a visible sun whose passage marked the day. Our better understanding of the physical model does not change the fact that light and warmth on earth have their source in the sun. What allows us to recognize is that the reception of those radiations is metered, not by the alternating presence and withdrawal of the sun or its outpouring—which remain constant and unstinting—, but by the earth's own changing constant attitude toward the sun.

Analogously: in the alternations of light with darkness and of warmth with cold, Love's radiance is felt at any time by only that face of our mind which is turned to Him for sustenance and guidance. Simultaneously, parts of the mind (including those in which at any time our consciousness does not reside) are in full light, in half-light, in dusk, and in the dark of night. Our unconscious feelings may be absorbing Love's life-giving radiance while the hero in us is groping through the kingdom of the dark. No part of the mind is denied its time in the Sun, or its opportunity to experience in the zone of darkness a sense of autonomy or separateness in which the earth-self stands between us and our God.

For all its encrusted mystery within, the earth is the birthing-ground of all life as we know it. But that life, and all direct self-knowledge, from the lowliest vegetative existence to the highest of human feelings and aspirations, can arise and flourish only on its sunlit surface. So with the mind. Our deepest oceans of memory are but surface depressions and irregularities, our mental mountains are textured places, our atmosphere—that living awareness we call "spirit" from the Latin word for wind or breath—is but a sheer and clinging gauze.

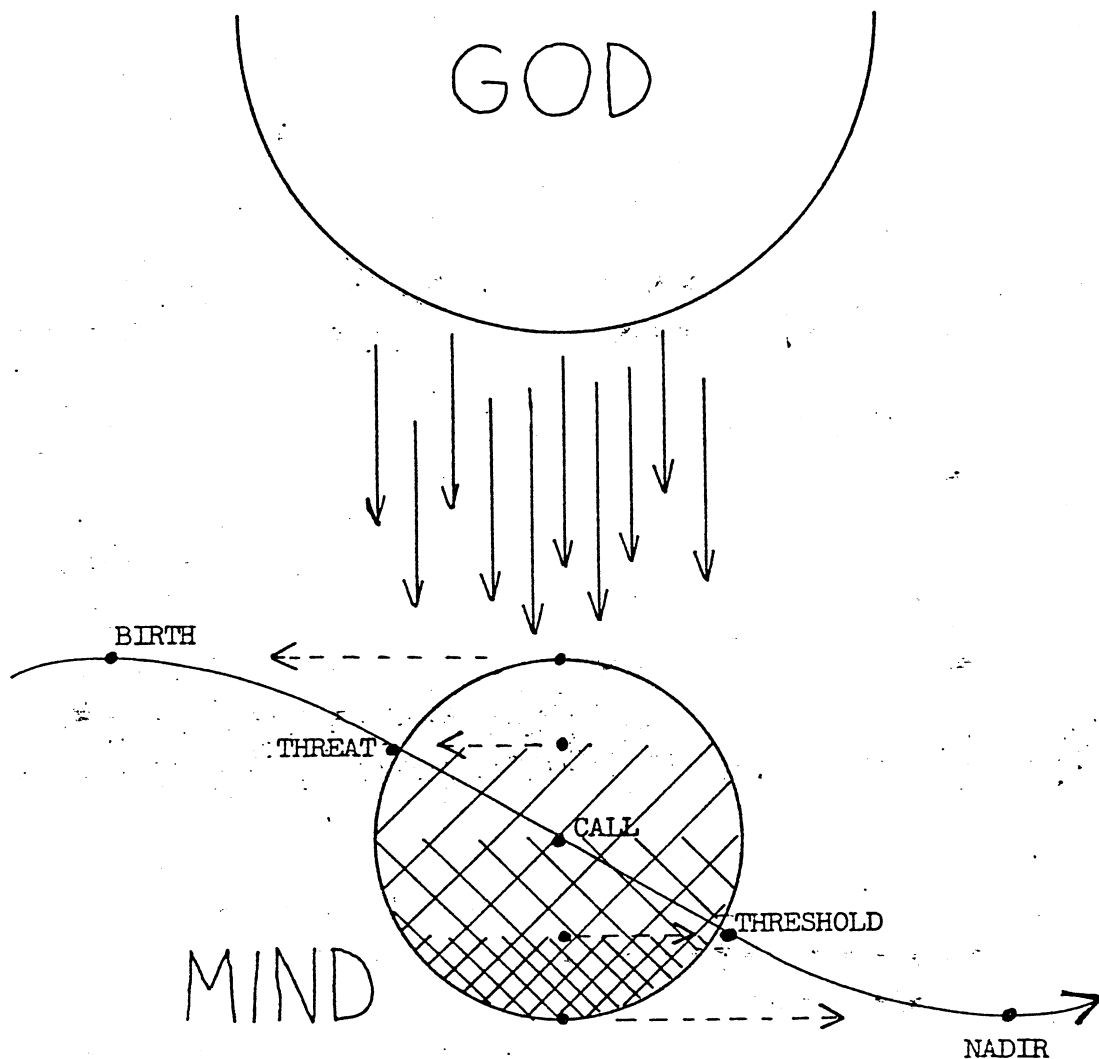
All life on that surface takes its vitality from the direct experience of Love's radiant spectrum, especially in those perceptible forms which correspond to the light and warmth of the sun within the reach of which our given orbit holds us. The divine light is God's wisdom working in us, like a spiritual photosynthesis which transforms the dead chemistry of self into the fruitful gardens of perception. The warmth of that divine Sun, which "strokes" alive our inanimate clay, is Love giving of His substance: the generative, nurturing touch of God.

If, as Jung suggests (p. 53), we take ego-consciousness to be a specific point on the sphere which is the self, and add the idea that a single diurnal turn of that sphere represents a *lifetime* cycle, we can see that in the periods of a day—and in the passage of ego-consciousness through them—there is a direct equivalence to the psychological stages (or "attitudes" toward nurture and instruction) that our previous chapter have explored.

Our purpose here is not simply to develop further our cyclic model of the human mind, but to find in what we have explored the expression of a Creative Source and to learn the manner of His working. Like our "orbital momentum," the rotation or "turning" of our world of mind through these stages is not of our initiative or maintenance but an endowment and condition of our existence. In that cycle we are carried through and exposed to all four planes or attitudes of reception of the sun, and enabled thus to choose our preferred zone (posture) of awareness, "hallowed presence," reliance and response, in relation to the divine Source. We may from choice become creatures of the warmth and brightness of the day who take their rest at night; or denizens

of the darkness whose spiritual responses are dormant through the day, and vision closed, to Light's guidance and Love's touch.

This diurnal simile, graphically congruent with our model (Fig. 29), may be taken to illus-



29  
FIG. 22 -- The downward course of the  
cycle represented as half a day,  
from high noon to midnight, as  
the earth rotates.

trate the means by which Love Himself—without limiting His effulgence, constancy, or integrity—gives man the freedom, from the experience of His presence in what appear to man as modulated shades, to choose the degree of his recognition of and his response to a Love that actually transcends those apparent limitations. In fact, the periods of this cycle describe not only the *degrees* of Love's apparent presence, but also the *quality of God* (or aspect) that is apparent, and the *nature of man's response* to that quality, in each successive period or stage.



### *Four planes of recognition*

These additional analogies are susceptible to almost endless development and correlation with the levels we have found in every cyclic process. But in brief:

- •        ∇In the fullness of day we sense the sun as an immediate, immanent, and pervading presence. Bathed in the ascendant sun we feel its warmth, light, and generativity as one, and feel at one in ourselves, with it, and with our world. Our response is one of unimpeded receptivity and recognition (Erikson's "incorporative mode"), and of mutuality: we at the same time *absorb* it and *give ourselves over* to it. Our shadow of self-agency is barely visible underfoot, and yet we are made exquisitely self-aware by the well-being that caresses us and penetrates to animate our every cell.
- •        ∇As our world turns, awareness is transported into a "far country" in which the sun as an immediate presence seems to recede behind us; we receive *less warmth* from its rays; and our awareness of it is the *light by which the world before us* is illuminated, revealed to our sight, and given definition. Looking back, in fact, we see only the shadowed side of what lies behind us; to find warmth, we therefore seek instead the things before us upon which the light shines, and recognize in them the benign presence of the sun (this is the mythopoeia of early childhood, or Piaget's "intentionality"). We are drawn on by light's reflection (imagery); yet in this world of sharp contrasts between attractive images and forbidding shadows, our own lengthening shadow of self-agency appears increasingly to point the way.
- •        ∇In the evening hours that follow the setting of the sun below the horizon of awareness, not even a backward glance can raise again into our direct view that source of our fading light and warmth (Freud's "infant amnesia"). Contrasts of light and shadow that had defined the way for us become diffused, and not even the shadow of apparent self-agency can be distinguished from the general obscurity as an illusory guide. Only the sun's last touch upon the clouds sheds light upon the path ("rules are regarded as sacred and untouchable": Piaget); and only its final fiery kiss on imposing mountain-peaks still stands before us as a compelling beacon (the "Ideal Adult") that glorifies our goal of a like stature and a similar divine endorsement. As that beacon flickers out our trust shifts to the dim light still reflected from our clouded understanding of the rules; and from it we desperately rehearse and commit to memory the pathways that will soon fall into total darkness.
- • ∇With nightfall, we are left entirely to our own resources. Lacking vision (foresight) we can attend only to each immediate test or obstacle, the survival of which becomes its own regard ("reinforcement" or extrinsic motivation replacing intrinsic motivation: Bruner). The shadow of self-agency becomes identified for us with the agencies of darkness, and our trust is transferred to the tangible. But a remnant hope commits us also to unseen yet compelling sounds of guidance and warning\*<sup>1</sup> that issue mysteriously out of the night: the voice of a transcendent Competence that seems to know the way, and promises (if we but follow) to stand forth revealed at some future bending of the path—in a sacred meeting preordained for the magic hour of midnight at the deepest center of our being—and share his power with us.

---

1. "Unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces" (Campbell, p. 17).

That power is represented most graphically in myth by the Promethean gift of fire: the divine substance of the sun itself made incarnate in this world of night, by which we may be warmed and guided through the hours after midnight to the coming of dawn. The return passage—back through the darkness, the dawn, the morning, and again the fullness of the day to noon—repeats for us in reverse order the same four degrees of apparent solar presence and withdrawal. In the return, owing to our prior experience of these levels in the descent and to the gift of fire at the nadir, we now have the freedom of alternative responses to these degrees of solar influence—a freedom that was not possible until we had been given exposure to the quality of life that governs each of the four levels.

For the last half of our nocturnal journey, we may accept the redeeming power of fire (as, at puberty, we may accept incarnate genitality) as the means of spreading warmth and illumining the way; or we may appropriate it to a consuming self-indulgence and the projection of distorted and grossly magnified shadows upon a perfectly innocent reality. We may happily embrace the dawn; or we may seek to hide ourselves from that greater illumination that fills the sky and dims to insignificance the flame that we have misconstrued and misused as self-life, fashion a cavern of dark jealousy, and continue to feed and fan that flame. We may delight in the dawn, and still welcome the rising of the sun that ends dawn and begins the morning; or we may flee the sun's direct, revealing gaze and find some realm of continuing dusk where our preferred illusions may persist in the diffusion of light and shadow....

But the question of our free response to Love is not our immediate concern. The purpose of these analogies has been to provide a model, consistent with the mythic metaphor and the meanings we have found in it, which illustrates how Love Himself—as a transcendent power source, full and constant in the outpouring of His substance—might produce in the mind just those four degrees or qualities of recognition and response to which clinical and analytical experience attests.

### ***The only real Humanity***

It appears to be a native intuition in us that the virtues and the values we associate ideally with love are the real measures of a man's humanity. We have ascribed that archetypal ideal of what is human to impress—on our deepest, now unconscious feelings—of an actual experience presence, given with our first breath and sensation and perceived “in all its infantile simplicity” (Erikson).

What are the essential qualities of that Human Ideal? There is striking agreement between what may be deduced from infantile behavior about the “hallowed presence” with the newborn, and what grown persons report as the qualities of the “Cosmic Man” archetype in dreams and visions (p. 103). There is primarily the quality of love itself as a *total caring and acceptance*, the most valued of all love's gifts. This *love* is the overwhelming aura of the archetype.

But acceptance cannot be mutual unless there is also the recognition that love “knows what it is doing” and can be trusted not only as loving in intent but as *wise in its way of loving*. Like the perception of caring and acceptance, this recognition of Love's wisdom will in the newborn be characterized by infantile simplicity. But that simplicity is also present in the adult encounter with the archetype—the sense of all truth being here embodied in a single Cosmic Truth, the sense of being wholly understood, and the recognition of an absolute trustworthiness.

The Ideal Humanity, then, is not only loving (caring and accepting) but is also wise (knowing, understanding, and trustworthy). We are at least as prone to make this quality of *wisdom* to be divine as we are to idealize *love*. “The presence of a superior reasoning power,” Einstein is quoted as having said, “...revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, even in our finite allotment of these qualities, the two are faces of a single creativity: “A man doesn’t learn to understand anything,” Goethe observed, “unless he loves it.”<sup>2</sup> It would hardly be necessary for Goethe to say this if mankind, from his fragmented motives and paucity of understanding and of knowledge, did not tend to separate the two.

Freud’s formula for a utopian humanity was “Lieben und arbeiten”—to love and *to work*.<sup>3</sup> We measure a man’s humanity not only by his capacity for love and wisdom, but also by his productivity or *usefulness*. Yet it is only if we see love and wisdom as separate that we can think of productivity as a third, independent quality. The more *ideal* the humanity, the more these aspects of it—love, wisdom, and usefulness—may be viewed as the ways in which a *single creativity* may be apprehended on the several planes of its fulfillment.

Swedenborg identifies these creative attributes as the keys to understand God, His Humanity, and His Creation. In God, each is whole, and wholly present in the others: He is “Love Itself, Wisdom Itself, and Use Itself”—which means that *only He* is loving, wise, and hence creatively effective *in, of, and from Himself*.

There is no contradiction between this divine *Trine* of Love, Wisdom, and their creative Proceeding (as Swedenborg also refers to it) and their essential *Unity* in God. Love Itself is *inherently wise and doing*. Wisdom Itself is simply Love’s *wise means or way of loving*. And God’s directed Creativity, the “third” of the Trine, is Love *acting or doing wisely*. Thus all three attributes as One constitute the Original, infinite and eternal (i.e., divine) Humanity, and God alone—in, of, and from Himself—is Man. And it is these qualities as received by man from God that constitute the image and potential likeness of Man in us: there can be no attribute in man to which we may measure our humanity, that is not present, whole, and perfect in the Source and Antetype whose gift it is to us. (Because any creation may be summed up in the formula, *Love + Wisdom = Doing*, we will examine this trine from a cosmological point of view in our next chapter.)

Nor, however, is the unity of these attributes in God contradicted by their apparent separateness in finite man. As we have seen (e.g., in the solar/diurnal simile), the gift of periodicity and modulations in the reception of Love is itself a gift of benign restraint. Our freedom to accept Love (life, awareness, participation) requires that we experience it in different degrees or modes. We first are introduced to these apparently diminishing influences on their descending planes; and then are invited to seek the return or rebirth in us of the fuller awareness and response we had experienced in our earlier states or stages.

It is for this reason that what is One in God is a trine in His creation and appears as a trine to us. The mind is fashioned to know God’s presence sequentially according to these attributes. These are the “guises” in which the Patron Deity presents himself to the hero—the aspects he

---

1. .

2. .

3. .

reveals to himself—at the pivotal junctures in the hero’s life adventure. The planes of mind, or the countries of the hero, are the successive levels of recognition and response provided—like the periods of the day—for these qualitatively distinct self-relations of the Deity in his trinal aspects:

- •        ∇ On our highest plane of motive or aspiration (the Royal Kingdom; the state of “full day” with the sun in its ascendancy; the innocence of infancy, and the wisdom—if we accept it—of old age): on this plane we are given to know God in the fullness of His *Love*, whole or hallowed in its wisdom and generativity. And in this subliminal realm of feeling we retain that image and ideal of His genuine Humanity, even while our hero- consciousness is away on his lifetime adventure and forgetful of that earliest revelation.

On our mid-planes of thought (the Far Country of the hero’s childhood and later realm of his rule as king; our middle states of afternoon and morning, when we are more sensible of light than warmth; the emulations of our early childhood, and role- performance of our adult years): on these dual levels we are given to know God as *Wisdom*—the beauty and the guidance of order, pattern, regularity—, effective whether or not we sense Love in it. And it is on these planes of imagery and memory that we retain our vision of an Ideal Truth that shapes reality, exemplifies what is Human, and directs our path.

- •        ∇ On our ultimate plane of doing (the kingdom of the quest; the dark hours before and after midnight; at this level we are given to know God as the power manifest in *Use*—that is, in tangible results. And it is on this plane that we retain (again, whether or not we sense a loving purpose—or even method—in the act) the ideal of utility or competence as the ultimate criterion of Humanity.

### ***The loss of unity***

Swedenborg found these attributes of the Creator represented by a triumvirate of deities in each pantheon of myth; by the names to which the One God answers in the Testaments; and especially by the Triunity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. To the extent that these are understood as aspects of a Unified Ideal, the study of the interrelating divinities about our own potentials for a genuine humanity and about creative process.

From its receptiveness on each plane to a different aspect of the divine—Love (motive, purpose), Wisdom (imagery *and* knowledge), and Use (effect or functioning)—, the mind in sum is the image of the Universal Mind or the Divine Man. But it is only a working *likeness* of that Original and sustaining Creativity *if it is open to His influence on all the levels* of loving, thinking, and doing. And the tendency of most mythologies and spiritual systems has been toward a separation and proliferation of deities; often the original chief deity (representing the Creative Love, and so the Unifier of the pantheon) becomes subordinate or is altogether lost. The surviving deities not only proliferate but come into increasing contest with each other, as lesser and conflicting ideals.

This view of a deterioration from monotheistic to polytheistic worship is contrary to the prevalent view that the idea of one God “evolved” out of an original animistic belief in a multiplicity of deities resident in the things and processes of nature. As a psychohistorical parallel, however, it is consistent with the psychological fact: that the infant’s first perception is of a “hallowed” presence, and that it is in the descent into a separate consciousness of external things that that sense of unity is lost. In the case of infant mankind we cannot recover the kind of evidence that the psychologists have gathered about the infant’s initial state. But there is reason to conclude

that each pivotal revelation—those which instituted great new worships—*restored* the concept of a single deity or at least established his place in the pantheon, *following* a period of division and corruption of the Ideal.\*<sup>1</sup>

This proliferation of deities (ideals) in the myths at first expressed a recognition of the divine presence in all things, similar to the child's mythopoeic sense of wonder or "intentionality" at age three. In the psychohistory as in the psychology, it is when the lesser deities are invoked apart from—and even contrary to—the unifying rule of Love that division and conflict set in. Sacred knowledge and effective ritual used for power or private pleasure—gods or saints or idols petitioned to intercede for selfward purpose with Love's own governance, where Love has been lost sight of—will inevitably produce just such warring pantheons as are told of in the days before the flood, the confusion of Babel, the Egyptian bondage, the Babylonian captivity, and the spiritual Armageddon predicted two millennia ago and fulfilled in our disenchanted age. What pits itself against Love sees Love's power in opposition to itself, and all reality as hostile.

The psychoanalysts have shown our own minds to be a battleground in which our motives, thoughts, and actions—the potentials of Love, Truth, and Use imaged in us—are in conflict. We have at the same time divided our own single humanity and that of God, and so have fallen prey to out petty prides and short-range self-indulgences.

To recover our potential for a whole humanity—to liberate ourselves from the divisive tyrant and temptress in us, with their monster-threats and siren-seductions, and to free our given life-energies for creative loving—, we must make over or renew our ideal of what it is to be human: we must rediscover God as the all-embracing Source and Antetype, the one in whom are All Love, All Wisdom, and All Use, and seek to reopen successively those planes in our minds through which we can receive, acknowledge, and respond to those animating and unifying influences.

---

1. This is especially clear in the Macromyth. The God of Noah, following the deluvian dispersion of the "multiplied" and profane worships of "giants in the earth," reasserted by his rainbow covenant his single rule of earth and heaven. After the scattering of worships at Babel, it was as the ALL-Mighty that God made Himself know to the patriarchs. Egypt had divided its pantheon into literally hundreds of deities when Moses was led out of that land by a Jehovah whose first commandment reasserted the singularity of His power. After the captivity in Babylon—where Nebuchadnezzar for political reasons had welcomed the gods of all the nations—, Christ appeared to effect an atonement (at-One-ment) with the Father, identification with the Holy Spirit, and the embodiment of the trine of Love, Wisdom, and Effective Power: His statement, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," presents these three in the reverse sequence of the *return* to "the Father."

# Chapter 8 The Threshold of Return

## *Substance, form, and function*

“All things are the same,” Swedenborg wrote, “in greatest and in least.” This seems a rather sweeping generalization about a universe whose most striking feature is its absolute diversity—in which no two things are the same, or even any one thing the same from one moment to the next.

Swedenborg’s reference is, of course, to qualities that every “thing” has in common with all others, of which uniqueness (identity) is one—and change (growth) is another. He is speaking of the common form and function of creative process that underlies all the phenomena that we have so far undertaken to examine, and which Swedenborg attributed to an all-embracing singleness of divine intent.

Behind this likeness is the thrust, which we explored in Chapter 3, of any motive to fulfill itself by producing on the descending plane of enabling means and ultimate utility or consequence. Each such lesser motive, like its parent source, will work through its appropriate means toward its particular fulfillment or effect. Thus any creation—every subordinate endeavor animated by a greater motive and contributing to its fulfillment—will have in common with “all things in greatest and least” the “sameness” or the image of the essential creativity it serves. And all things in creation may therefore be viewed as what Swedenborg calls “forms of use,” in service—each on its plane—to the universal end or purpose, each echoing the divine creative trine of Love, Wisdom, and Use.

This view of God, as the origin and antetype of the creative process we have found ubiquitously exemplified by the mythic metaphor—including the inherent tendency of each subcycle to repeat “in small” the form of the greater cycle—makes of creation as we know it the unfolding product of God’s Love. As in that model (and as in our own finite animations of creativity), the descent of an original motive into multiplicity and diversity is an *expression* of the greater thrust or purpose, and is accomplished without self-diminution, without the loss or violation of its own integrity or gestalt. Love’s awareness of its eternal “main purpose” remains whole and eternal even while it is present simultaneously in all of the “purposive mechanisms” by which that main purpose is effected.

Our explorations have made us most familiar with this trine of qualities or attributes in the functioning of our own minds. We see it best as the *purposes* that move us, the enabling *thought* or imagery that clothes and shapes the motives, and the *actions* by which we bring our motive purposes into effect. Love, Wisdom, Use. But this trine is analogously present in all creation, and has its parallel even in the inanimate objects of nature, whose equivalent attributes are substance, form, and function. All natural things have substance (whether energy or mass), shape or form (whether fixed dimensions or, in the case of energy, direction, amplitude, and frequency), and (whether or not we can recognize a use in it) an influence, effect, or function in the universal scheme. If the equivalence of these three aspects of physical reality to the elements of the creative trine is not immediately apparent, consider that we can recognize our purpose as the motive content or *substance* of anything we do, can see that motive taking *shape or form* in our thoughts, and by our actions can produce whatever thing or change or *function* our motive and our thought seek to effect.

The physical universe may thus be seen as the ultimated consequence of the divine creative process, the plane of effects in which God's Love, by means of His Wisdom, is fixed or terminated: in which the descent into increasing multiplicity—typical of the descending portion of all the cyclic processes we have studied—becomes finally absolute. The search of science for the irreducible building-blocks of the universe—tracing them back from atom to electron, and today to “quarks” so purely hypothetical that modern physics finds itself verging on the metaphysical—can be interpreted as a search for what Swedenborg identifies as the ultimate reduction or finition of the divine creative power of Love.

The transcendentalist denial of physical reality—the doctrine that reality is essentially mental and that the material universe is an illusion—is no more satisfactory than the directly opposite view of the empiricist. The evidence of both realities deserves a less “either/or” evaluation. The problem is one of relationships and interactions. We have quoted Cirlot to the effect that the “invisible or spiritual order is analogous to the material order.” Piaget noted in young children “a confusion between the psychical and the physical,” which has also been attributed to mankind in its mythopoeic childhood. The recognition of an analogy between the two requires that a distinction also be recognized; but a two-sided analogy does not resolve the question of whether one reality is primary and the other consequent, or—if so—which is which.

Swedenborg's resolution of the problem (I mentioned earlier that he was dissatisfied with Descartes' dual but non-interacting planes of spirit and nature) relates these planes to the trinal creative process: i.e., as two of the *three* attributes of Love, Wisdom, and Use in God (and of the corresponding faculties of loving, thinking, and doing in ourselves). The formula to which Swedenborg most usually refers in this regard is *end* (or purpose), *cause* (or means), and *effect*. It is quite evident that if “end” or purpose is omitted from this trine, we have no way of judging which of the remaining levels is cause and which effect. And if the universe is viewed from the idea that it is unpurposed or fortuitous, we can make no judgment as to whether the spiritual is a reflected spin-off of material reality, or the physical is shaped to effect or manifest a realm of spiritual causes.

Behaviorist psychology, which deals only in stimulus and response—excluding purpose—, leaves similarly meaningless the question as to whether thought initiates our acts, or the act comes first and thought is merely the effort to give meaning to our actions. But while there are obviously acts in which our conscious will and thinking play no part, the concept of unconscious motives and thought-processes sufficiently accounts for these. And if there is no paradox or problem in accepting the apparent stages of creative process—the sequence of willing, thinking, doing—neither is there any reason to invent such “explanations” as chance or fantasy.

The cosmological inference to be drawn from these considerations is that there are not just two planes of universal reality—a material order and a spiritual order—but three. The mythical and psychological principle of forgetfulness makes it evident that it will be the highest or inmost of these realities which we are most apt to lose sight of or deny: the wholly integrated and perfectly ordered plane of God's loving purpose in creation. It is in their relationship to this highest order that the realm of spirit and the realm of natural reality may be understood in terms of their creative roles. Spiritual reality is mediate between the Creator, viewed as the universal motive, and the physical universe of ultimate effects; hence the spiritual is the world of means or causes, of which the physical laws and things and functions of this world are the terminal expression.

## *Soul, mind, and body*

Creation cannot be properly understood apart from the motives and the wisdom (the “superior reasoning power”—Einstein) of the Creator, of which, like the work of an artist, it is the visible projection. Accepting that God is the antetypical, Ideal Human, we can recognize the validity of Swedenborg’s principle (p. 110) that all things in the evolving universe—as the “body” of His work—“strive to the human form.” And because we ourselves, remain the most familiar example for us of what is human, it is in reference to the relationship in us between the mind and body that we may best conceive of the universal interactions of the spiritual and material orders.

Our applications of the mythic metaphor to ourselves have so far been specific to the mind, which within the cycle of its staged growth comprises three basic levels of potential awareness and of function—of which the typically divided mid-plane makes four. These are the planes of motivation, of imaginative and mnemonic thinking, and of sense-experience. (That terminal or lowest plane, while sensible of an exerted upon the body, is not *of* the body, but a plane of consciousness or recognition and therefore proper to the mind.)

Let us be altogether clear on one fact. From the study of the body and its functions, science has learned a great deal about the mechanics of physical stimulus and physical response. About what we properly call the mind the neurobiologists can tell us absolutely nothing—to which embarrassment their response is to avoid the term or to refer obliquely to “the problem of understanding how it is we perceive anything at all.”<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. David H. Hubel of Harvard, “there is input: man’s only way responding to the outside world and influencing it. And between input and output there is everything else, which must include perception, emotions, memory, thought, and whatever else makes man human.”<sup>2</sup> Even in only physiological terms, “Something is known about the significance of the connections near the input end of the brain and near the output end. For less is known about the workings of regions in between, which make up most of the brain.”\*<sup>3</sup>

These admissions express an admirable candor. But on the record Hubel’s further assessment seems appallingly unwarranted and misleading: “Although the visual system is now one of the best-understood parts of the brain, neurobiologists are still far from knowing how objects are perceived or recognized. Yet the amount that has been learned in the few years since microelectrodes became available does suggest that a part of the brain such as the cerebral cortex is, at least in principle, capable of eventually *being understood in relatively simple terms*” (my italics). Such advances will undoubtedly advance our understanding of the brain as a biological computer; but there is no indication that they will reveal to us the nature of consciousness, or reduce to neurobiological terms—simple or otherwise—the marvels of “perception, emotions, memory, thought and whatever else makes man human.”

A fuller understanding of the physiology, then, can help us to know how it serves the mind, and so to better understand the mind’s demands upon the body and its influences on it—to better know the mind itself by these tools it uses and how it uses them. But that will only be so if we

---

1. .

2. .

3. This is rather like saying that one is familiar with the input keys and the readout mechanisms of a computer, but knows little about what goes on inside. But even this analogy understates our ignorance, since a computer does not present the problem of consciousness.



avoid the “confusion between the psychical and the physical”—whether in the form that Cirlot attributes to young children or in the manner of the biophysical sciences—and accept a clear distinction between the two.

There is an appearance that the body produces or creates the mind, since it is from sense-experience alone that the imagery which constitutes the mind is acquired. At the same time, our awareness and our individuality are so resident in the mind that we think of the body and its senses as belonging to the inner and “real” self—as the vehicle of our awareness and the instruments of our will. These ambiguities—which make it possible to argue the primary or governing role of either the body or the mind—are satisfactorily resolved only if we accept the primacy of yet another plane of our individuality: a level of our being that Swedenborg calls the *soul*.<sup>\*1</sup>

This “soul” is not simply a logical convenience contrived to bring the body and mind into congruence with the universal syllogism of end, cause, and effect by adding a third element. It is an inescapable corollary to the premise of a divinely purposed creation: if each man is *intended* within the universal scheme, then *God’s purpose for him* must be the first and all-embracing definition of his individuality and the fountainhead of his becoming; transcending—as the whole potential of his feeling, thought, and usefulness through all time—the limited comprehension of his mind; and knowable in its universal context and relatedness only to the intending Deity.

Soul, mind, and body do, however, clearly constitute a trinal whole that is analogous in structure and in process to the others. It is in fact its mediate “position” between soul and body that accounts for the corresponding levels of the mind itself, and—by their proximity to either soul or body—gives each plane of mind its quality of willing, thinking, or doing. We will return to this in a moment.

The body is to be understood simply as the dead chemistry of man-the-microcosm—our own “material universe,” shaped by the soul (that is, by God’s purpose for each of us) from the physics of the larger universe. It is animated only by the inflow of God’s vitality through the soul specifically and through what might be called the universal soul (God’s universal purpose) into all of natural reality. The function of the body is that of a growing matrix for the mind or spirit. Inert in itself, its service is to receive, fix, and reflect that living influx; and it is these reflections of the divine life—imagery shaped by the spatio-temporal limitations of natural reality for our finite apprehension, retention, and use—which cumulatively fill each mind with its unique population of thoughts and feelings.

---

1. This word of many meanings should not be taken in the classical Greek or Biblical senses, which may position it below “mind”; its meaning for Swedenborg in this trinal context will be clarified as we go along.

The mind, then, may be seen as the realms between the soul and body (Fig. 30), and—in our

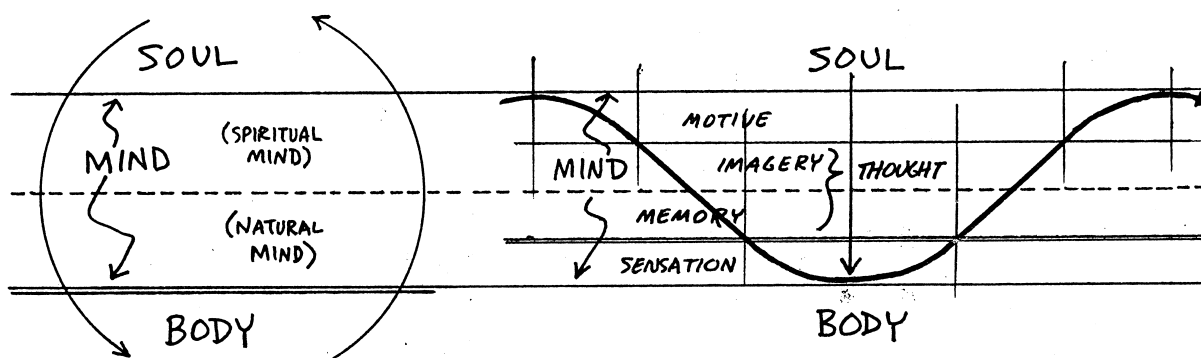


Fig. 30

The trinal relationship of soul, mind, and body is analogous to that of the planes of mind: motive or feeling, the mid-planes of thought, and the effective sensate plane. The circulation of awareness is only through the planes of mind, where are all feeling, thought, and freedom: this is the man, the "kingdom of God (which) is within you," the arena of the hero. Both trines reflect the divine Trinity of Love, Wisdom, and Proceeding or Going-forth.

metaphor—the proper province of the hero. It is only within the mind that the divine life granted us—that is, individuated for us by the soul as our unique and continuing endowment—can discover itself in the imagery reflected from the corporeal matrix, and we can come to recognize and know ourselves. While limited by the encounter with the matrix, the imagery of mind retains the vitality and substance of the divine life of which it is a reflection: our feelings and our thoughts are real, and thus themselves become able to receive and to respond to influences both directly flowing through the soul and newly reflected—as continuing sense-experience—from the matrix.

It is in this context that the planes of mind—the countries of the hero—can be understood to have their qualities from their relative proximity to the soul and body. The higher plane of mind will be most affected by God's purpose for us—which we identified as the soul—and will therefore be the plane of our inmost and aspiring (if presently for us unconscious) motives. The lower plane will be most influenced by the sensations of the body, its spatio-temporal concerns, its material needs and challenges, and its sensual satisfactions.

The dual planes of thought lie mediate between these feeling planes, and thus present an area of equilibrium between the powerful appeal of a paradisiacal perfectibility in Love and the immediate attractions of the senses. It is this balance which permits that *weighing in the mind*—as to which motives will govern in us, spiritual or sensual—which we call *thought*. Note that it is only if our consciousness or attention is elevated above the lower plane of sensual feelings, into the realm of value-ratios, or reason, that the alternative values can be contrasted for us and we can be capable of free choice.

Thus the *active* divine influence through the soul and the *reactive* influences of the body in sensation each has its proper province in the mind. In Swedenborg's terms, this dual influence divides the mind itself into a "spiritual mind" and a "natural mind" (Fig. 30), which in turn account for the dual *mid*-planes of the mind which we have identified respectively with mythopoeic and mnemonic thinking. While all the images by which we think are the reflections of our sensual experience, on the higher of these two planes that imagery serves to clothe the aspirations of the motive plane above it (and hence is characterized, as Piaget points out, by "intentionality"); while the lower of the two planes of thought simply records those images as a sequential chronicle of our sensual experience in its own terms and values (Jung's "retrievable unconscious," Bruner's "sequence," or simply *memory*).

## *The matrix for the mind*

To postulate a soul, therefore, is simply to accept that there is a universal purpose, in the unfolding of which a potential share is assigned to each of us. In a descending hierarchy, the divinely Human trine of God's Love/Wisdom/Use has its echoic image in the individual "trinity" of soul/mind/body from which the mind itself—as the potential arena of man's voluntary participation and awareness—has its three interacting faculties of motive/thought/sensation. These in turn are finally present both in our full lifetime adventure of becoming and in our every least experience in creativity (Chapter 3), as the applications of this process to particular instances of willing/thinking/doing.

It is evident that the mythic metaphor—the hero's path—has its most instructive relevance to the realms of our potential awareness and participation: that is, to the levels of the mind. Soul/mind/body, as a prior and greater context, serves mainly to identify the soul as a realm of individuality beyond mind, finite but untainted and eternal, the Olympian home in us of the Patron Deity, from which He descends into our knowable world of mind to guide the hero in us, reassert His purpose for us, and—successively on each plane of our descent and ascent—renew His covenant with us. It is only from the knowledge that there is the soul that we can understand the mind to be the arena proper to our heroic aspirations ("the kingdom of God...within you"), and can accept *the purely matrix function of the body*, and the intended service of the physical senses: to provide each mind (psyche, spirit) with its populations of reflected images which clothe and express our feelings and constitute our thoughts.

Because the body and its sensations properly claim our attention while our spiritual need is to be shaped and nourished by them, as by a matrix, we tend for the greater part to have only vague and fleeting glimpses of our higher functions and their spiritual environments. And the more man has immersed himself in the matrix functions of the body and the tangible realities of the physical universe, the *more* vague and fleeting have become his recognitions of his own inner or spiritual being and of the living reality of the planes on which our spirit functions.

From our immersion in the matrix, where only the pressures and influences of our material environment appear to have a substantial reality, by what means can we affirm with a reasonable confidence the equal—or even prior—reality of our immaterial worlds of experience within?

"In earlier ages," Jung speculated, "as instinctive concepts welled up in the mind of man, his conscious mind could no doubt integrate them into a coherent psychic pattern. But 'civilized' man is no longer able to do this. His 'advanced' consciousness has deprived itself of the means by which the auxiliary contributions of the instincts and the unconscious can be assimilated. These organs of assimilation and integration were numinous symbols...."<sup>1</sup>

What were these "numinous symbols"? Simply the same objects and events that constitute *our* material environment, but within which mythopoeic man was far more able to feel the power of divine intent and find exhibited the orderly processes by which it operates into nature. Granted—with Jung—that "because, in our civilized life, we have stripped so many ideas of their emotional energy, we do not respond to them anymore," still we are not so "civilized" that we are wholly unaffected by the symbolic aspects—the evocative and suggestive qualities—of material objects and events. We may be embarrassed by our spontaneous responses to such mere things;

---

1. .

yet our lives would be more sterile still—more emptied of feelings, values, meanings—without them.

Which is most real: the thing that our physical senses touch, or the aspect of the thing that touches our thoughts and feelings? The question is meaningless; each is fully real on its own plane. And if, in our attention to the tangible reality of the thing, we lose the recognition of meaning in it and the capacity to be moved by its numinosity, that loss is as *real* a loss as the loss of the object itself.

In fact, the loss of the physically real thing may be *less* grievous. Material events immediately recede anyway into the past and—in terms of our physical sensations—cease to be. Objects, too, are transient and changing: relativity theory views the seeming permanence of anything to be a series of distinct “space-time events.” But once sensation has impressed the image of a thing or event upon the memory, that image becomes a permanent possession of our minds—not merely as a literal or objective representation, but with its spatio-temporal orientation, its meaning or significance for us, and its feeling-evocative numinosity, all intact.

The discovery of the unconscious mind brought with it the realization that no experience—of stimulus, of our response to it, or of its part in our later responses to new stimuli—fails to make its permanent impression somewhere in us. Every sense-experience, whether consciously or subliminally assimilated, every birth or death of a cell in us, every alteration in ourselves or our sensed environment, and every feeling or thought response, makes an indelible somatic impress on us which has its corresponding impress at every level of the mind: imaginative, mnemonic, sensual.

Those experiences are not subject to our voluntary recall which were not at first assimilated consciously, have not been subsequently been brought into consciousness, have been reabsorbed into the unconscious, or from lack of interest or relevance to consciousness have been misplaced (“forgotten”) in some dusty corner of the memory. But even those impressions which we never consciously have known, or have forgotten or repressed, may influence our present moods, thoughts, and responses. They may be evoked as specific memories by somatic stimulation, as when a weak electric current is applied to some point in the brain.<sup>1</sup> They may return as feeling-tones detached from any specific recall of an event: a common effect of music. A lost episode of early childhood may be brought back by a long-forgotten scent not even consciously associated with it.<sup>2</sup> *Deja vu* experiences startle us by endowing a new scene with the intimate familiarity of an old scenario. And of course we may evoke a mood deliberately, either by physical means (we keep measured mementos near us, as we choose our music, for the moods and memories they restimulate in us), or by a chain of memory-search.

What the neurobiologist can do with an electric probe, then, is constantly being done by every element in the total field of our conscious and unconscious experience of the present. Referring to the findings of the former, Dr. T. A. Harris asserts that “an event and the feeling which was produced by the event are inextricably locked together in the brain so that one cannot be evoked without the other.”<sup>3</sup> But while evoking the feeling-tone, archaic value-content, mnemonic orientation, and sensual aspects of the original experience, the electric probe does not consult the sub-

---

1. .

2. .

3. .

ject's choice or selectivity of recall. While all these levels may be simultaneously evoked by the imposition of the stimulus, consciousness will quickly reassert its options to retain the mood and forget the episode, repress the mood but remember the event, affirm the whole thing to conform to a more acceptable or treasured version, or use the experience to reorder or amend the record.

### ***Survival of the spirit***

The concept of the physical body as the matrix of the mind, which we have found amenable in structure and in process with our other correlations with the mythic formula, has a logical corollary which—while predictably unsettling to the materialistic bias to which we are culturally conditioned—in no way is at odds with any of our certain knowledge, and is wholly satisfying to our inner intuitions and our spiritual traditions:

**Once any matrix has fulfilled its proper functions of containment, shaping, nurture, and protection, it will immediately have outlasted its utility, becomes a constraint and burden upon that which has matured within it, and is sloughed off for the liberation of its charge into the active exploration of its brave new world.**

If there is any validity at all in the interpretations we have given to the heroic metaphor and the Macromythic allegory thus far—psychological, psychohistorical, and especially theological: the view of God as Love, whose purpose in creating is to share love's delights—the supposition that the human mind dies with the body is untenable. Not even the nature frustrates its own creativity by ending the life of the perfected imago in the cocoon just at the point that its wings—pinioned through the stages of their readiness—have become capable of flight. The cocoon is a coffin only should the butterfly fail to free itself from the no-longer appropriate "security" of the matrix, and to pursue the soaring independence and the floral nectars for which its metamorphosis had prepared it.

We have found the mind—our individual, unique complex of feelings, thought, ways of responding—to be the true man. Until we come to know this inner entity in each other, we are strangers. And as we learn to know another's mind, the physical appearances of strength and disability, beauty or blemish, yield to a recognition of his spiritual qualities. We become in fact unconscious of any physical characteristics that are not in correspondence with his mind—unless, of course, our own values and recognitions are mired in merely sensual things. Our mature love for each other—like parental nurture—properly prompts us to a concern for the other's physical well-being: for the sensual nourishment, protection, and pleasures of his physical matrix. But a genuinely human love views those concerns as subservient and instrumental to its nurture of the inner man. Love of the neighbor looks to the fulfillment of that potential which is God's image in him; for we can approach an intimate mutuality with each other only as our minds—on their trinal levels of feeling, thinking, and responding—are brought into a common humanity of God's Love, Wisdom, and Providing.

Can God have intended any less for each of us, and for all of us, than the voluntary fulfillment of our humanity by such an approach to Him, and the attainment of an intimate and vital communion of mutuality in any more reasonable way—accounting for both our natural and our spiritual realities—than as a cosmic seeding-ground and a matrix for the creation, population, and continuing fulfillment and perfection of such a spiritual communion?

If the mind formed in the matrix body requires a lifetime fully to acquire and confirm the will and the capacity for a rich and voluntary participation in the mutuality of love, what purpose of an Eternal Love is served if that mind does not outlast its adventure of metamorphosis? The quest itself is manifestly grueling. What Patron Deity of benign intent would subject the hero in us to its unremitting choices and rigorous tests, its punishing transformations, only to bring out, at best, a fleeting glimpse of the hard-sought goal—before oblivion.

Mankind's expectations of an afterlife have—together with his belief in a Creator—almost universally sustained his aspirations and shaped the evolution of his thought. To the extent that his ideas of the Human Ideal have been fragmented and distorted, so, necessarily, have been his readings of the successive Covenants and his ideas about how their conditional promises will be realized after death. But the universality of that expectation—even in the face of the naivete, literality, grotesquery, and elaborated fantasies in which it has been entertained—warrants better than a summary rejection from any reasoning mind that seeks its own fulfillment, or seeks even just to understand that genesis and relevance of its private and collective spiritual proclivities.

The psychohistory—an understanding of the origin, the evolution, and the divergence into sociocultural variants of mankind's spiritual beliefs—is fundamental to the rational evaluation and assessment of contemporary attitudes about the spirit. In the same sense that, as Freud observed, "The child is father to the man," our common past is parent to the whole complex of human faiths found in our collective present: the survivals of primitive animism and mythopoeia; the many faces of oriental esotery; a spectrum of Judaic and Christian doctrines ranging from fundamentalist literality, through the traditional interpretations of established formal churches, to the liberal accommodations of a social pragmatism; the considerable varieties of spiritualism; the disinterest or disdain of the causal or confirmed empiricist; the passionate denials of dogmatic "scientism" and other (e.g. Marxist) atheisms.

Every human mind on earth, as we will see in this and our next chapter, is influenced at least subliminally by all of these philosophies and expectations, past and present. But the mind to which they are *consciously* presented becomes a *conscious microcosm* of thought and attitudes not merely of its community and culture—as any mind will be—but of the world. The heroic agency of ego-consciousness will tend of course in even such a mind to "dwell mainly among the "mental populations" that image or reflect in it the thought and values that were absorbed earliest and most generously from its own cultural milieu. But it has in its world of mind the opportunity to venture out among what Eliade referred to as "the others," and even to invite and assimilate them into its more intimate transactions. It is for this reason that Eliade assigned to Western man the opportunity and obligation to confront, communicate with, and understand the "ways of thinking that are foreign to the Western rationalist tradition," promising that the effort—especially "to enter into the spiritual universe of 'exotic' and 'primitive' peoples"—will help "Western man better to understand himself" (p. 172).

The persistent conviction of an afterlife—as inherent in the symbolic and explicit covenants—looms large in our spiritual traditions and in the "spiritual universe" of other cultures. Mankind's ideas about it—as depicting the "perfect" state for which he feels intended—reflect or shape the values, petty or sublime, by which in turn his life, his mind, and his society have been shaped. The question of an afterlife is not irrelevant or frivolous, but central to the resolution of our present spiritual dilemmas.

## *Contemporary concepts*

According to Gallup surveys, seven out of ten adults in the United States profess the belief that life continues after death.<sup>1</sup> Like the still more prevalent belief in God, however, this single statistic embraces an incredible variety of interpretations about the nature of that existence and the conditions—where it is construed as a utopia—for its attainment.

Venturing into a cosmopolitan peer society from whatever familial predisposition, young modern western minds personify that confrontation with other traditions and beliefs which Eliade sees as the collective challenge to the West—and at just the time of life that Sheehy finds youth possessed by a “need to de-glorify the parents,” for the “transfer of idealization” to another model, and for the discovery of “a cause greater than themselves” (p. 167). That challenge is at the same time stimulating and unsettling, and the solutions offered to youth’s “yearning for the imprint of an ideal” comprise as complete and accurate a cross-section of global value-systems and expectations as the youth himself is willing to explore.

Obviously not all of these expectations can be valid. The values they present, and stimulate in him, conflict. Some will reawaken his residual mythopoeia, some his need for an “almighty” patron, some his adolescent guilts and fears. Our varieties of hopes and dreads range wide, each appealing to some “part” of us that echoes our racial and cultural evolutionary heritage. Jewish concepts of an earthly Eden, retributive justice, and a subterranean Sheol persist as elements in our collective expectations. Imported eastern systems contribute the expectation of reincarnations and make a utopian blessing of the loss of our individual awareness in a cosmic consciousness (in the Sanskrit, *nirvana* has the literal meaning of “extinction”). Mysticism and spiritualism have colored the doctrines even of traditional denominations.

Christian dogmas themselves present a variety of ideas about the afterlife, based mainly on the literal interpretation of selected passages from Scripture: from the actual raising of the physical body on a day of judgment to the ephemeral persistence of an insubstantial, formless soul or spirit; from perpetual feasting to an eternity of homage and adoration. To the reasoning modern mind, many of the dogmatic representations of an afterlife appear to make salvation dependent on an inferior and capricious justice, and the retributions upon the damned so cruel and arbitrary as to be ungodly. Priests and evangelists have—like some parents of small children—discovered the power of hellfire threats and promises of paradise to coerce unquestioning fealty, and whether from chicanery or zeal have damaged the credibility of man’s immortal destiny. Perhaps even more unsettling than the threats of purgatory are the “utopias” promised to the virtuous or chosen, which are the “utopias” promised to the virtuous or chosen, which strike the vigorous mind as an eternal tedium lacking in those very challenges, creative struggles, and useful accomplishments by which we exercise God’s human image in us—and in which we find whatever heaven we can have on this earth.

It is no wonder that even most of those who hold to a belief in the continuity of life beyond death prefer not to question or address the matter of its quality too directly, and for the most part remain uneasy, apprehensive, or downright fearful in the face of death. Religious expectations, from their archaic roots in both our psychology and psychohistory, bring us into an uncomfortable confrontation with those “alien” and “other” parts which must be entered, reordered, and integrated for the greater cause “in the service of which it will make more sense to be an adult.”

---

1. .

The correlations demonstrated by our graphings of the hero-life, our individual lifetime cycle, and the successive epochs in the evolution of human thought as allegorically presented in the Macromyth, equate the hero's threshold of return with the beginning of an "age of reason": at the end of adolescence for the individual, and at the Enlightenment for mankind collectively.

The same correlations make it clear that in every instance this threshold is a *re-entry* for the hero into an already familiar kingdom, the "far country" of his childhood from which he had departed on his quest. In the topography of mind, this realm comprises the mid-planes of mythopoeic and mnemonic imagery. We have called these the planes of *thought* to distinguish them from the higher plane of *feeling* (motive, purpose) and lower plane of sense-experience or *response*. These mid-planes are essentially the same "reality" on the hero's return to them as they had been in his earlier experience of them. It is therefore these almost forgotten realms, in which the tender hero had been nurtured and given strength and stature for his subthreshold quest, which—on his required return to them—it now becomes his mission to re-enter, rediscover, and restore to order.

This kingdom in need of restoration embraces the whole field of archaic expectations—abandoned and forgotten for the concrete goals and values of the latent/adolescent, Judaic/Christian moratoria—with its populations of mythopoeic imagery and childish absolutes. Because the ego is the only agent of voluntary change, these realms will have remained in the hero's absence under the same tyranny from which he had earlier fled. It is the hero, not the kingdom of his antecedents and his destiny, that has been most changed by his adventure. The prize with which the hero now returns is the realization that competence, the goal-in-itself for which he had set out upon the quest, has its magic power only as the expression or embodiment of the hidden motive at the very center of his being, and its utility only in the further pursuit and realization of his "main purpose...to be human."

This recognition, with its intimations of immortality, becomes the talismanic means by which the hero—on his reconfrontation with the archaic fragments of his infantile and childish wishes as reflected in the imagery of memory and imagination—can distinguish between those expectations that subvert, and those which advance, the heroic task of restoration. These value-judgments are the conscious exercise of reason; and it is only when consciousness has successfully passed through the threshold that an "age of reason" can begin.

### *A leap of faith*

The distorted concepts of life after death presented in our culture—archaic, dogmatic, mystical, or unaccepting—may be equated with the attitudes in the mind of youth, at the end of adolescence, which make the passage into young adulthood difficult. They are induced by those two intimate familiars, the enchantress and the usurper-tyrant, whose powers are broken only when the hero once negotiates the threshold into reasoned judgments. Each works in its own way to prevent the crossing.

The siren (the devouring mother, self-indulgence) seeks by the immediacy of sensual satisfactions to hold the hero in the lower world and make him forgetful of the higher. She is the sorceress of Circe, whose fatal charms turned men to swine and made Odysseus forget his mission; or that deadly whirlpool of sensuality, Charybdis, which invites the dark oblivion of self-indulgence.



The effort to escape the siren brings the hero into confrontation with the “shadow presence that guards the passage,” the illusion placed there by the tyrant (dark side of the father, self-agency) to prevent the return of a matured and tested consciousness which would expose and overthrow his usurped authority. Self-agency rules in defiance of the Deity’s benign intent; to maintain its hold upon the throne it is divisive, punitive, suspicious, and repressive. The many heads of its monster-avatar (the dragon; Cerberus, three-headed guardian at the gate of Hades; Scylla, standing opposed to Charybdis\*<sup>1</sup>) symbolize the fears, doubts, and presumptions by which a pride in self-intelligence defends itself against the conscious effort to achieve a liberated creativity. If these heads are individually lopped off, new ones grow in their place from the main body of the same illusion. It requires the thrust of a magic sword to the dragon’s heart, a sop thrown to Cerberus, a solution that neutralizes the beast himself, to gain passage through the threshold.

The ruse or weapon by which the hero defeats the shadow-guardian is revealed or given to him by the Deity, and symbolizes a renewal of the covenant—and of the hero’s expectations—which encourages the hero to an act of faith: an act which, because the shadow is illusion, cannot but be effective in dispelling the obstruction and allowing consciousness to pass through into a rational (value-judging) exploration of the thinking levels of the mind.

We have identified this as a re-entry into states of mythopoeic thought, of numinous imagery, lost to childhood. The weapon, talisman, or touchstone by which it may be negotiated appears to be *the myth itself*: that is, the recognition of it as expressing our early visions of a greater cause, and as the renewal of our ancient covenant. If this is so, the myth must first of all in its symbolic forms have the power to inspire a “leap of faith” in us; and it must, further, prove to have hermetically accessible in it the essential truths by which the mnemonic and mythopoeic planes of mind can be reordered and restored.

We may have stripped the things and events of our outward lives of their numinosity; we have not so stripped the myths, in which we allow imagination its freedom still to soar. In their colorful and adventurous variety the ancient myths—and their persistent echoes in our modern poetry and drama, storytelling, games, and worships—can help us to reawaken our capacity for that “suspension of disbelief” which faded in our childhood. They help us to re-enter the many remote conceptual and affectional remnant-countries in our world of mind. In that exploration we may be helped to realize our kinship and part in the unity is an inner part of us, and every episode or battle a confrontation or contest between the motives in ourselves, we find those corresponding hopes and fears responding in us to the myth’s *dramatis personae* and formulaic motifs. However distorted by cultural influences or literary inventions, the myths still work their magic on us and instruct us. As Gilbert Murray wrote—or the motifs especially in Hamlet and Orestes—, the archetypes of myth may seem strange to us: “Yet there is that within us which leaps at the sight of them, a cry of the blood which tells us we have known them always.”<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Scylla (many-headed monster) and Charybdis (whirlpool) morphologically dramatize the perverted parental principles. The monster’s heads suggest the phallic thrusts of a persistently self-regenerating and self-erecting “masculine” hubris; the whirlpool represents a “devouring” vaginal vortex, the fatal attractions of a “female” sensual indulgence. The Freudian error lies in construing such symbols as merely erotic, whereas (as we will see later) the sexual aspects are themselves symbolic expressions of spiritual qualities.

2. .

The myth itself forewarns is that it is this specific recognition from which self-indulgence would stay us, and that self-agency (which wants *no* cause greater than the self) would seek—by every possible denial—to exclude from our affirmative exploration. The readiest disparaging claim is that our whole field of archaic expectations is impeached by its content of infantile and childish fancies—an indictment which is by the empiricist equally to our individual susceptibility to mythic thinking and to our collective heritage in the myths themselves.

The psychoanalysts' recognition that the mythic imagery of the mind is "*real*" in its effects—while still held to be "fantasy" in itself—may have been more detrimental than advantageous to man's spiritual progress. Our understanding of the mind has been advanced by the resulting study and interpretation of the symbolism in which unconscious feelings are expressed in myth and dream. But from their insistence on empirical criteria, the psychoanalysts *explain away* this affective imagery—as fantasy—without in any way explaining even the origin or nature of fantasy itself. The principle of Occam's razor (that concepts or assumptions must not be multiplied beyond necessity) suggests that we might better accept that what we sense within the mind is real than introduce the additional—and unhelpful—concept that what we encounter in the mind has no valid basis in reality.

The danger is not merely the possible indulgence in flawed logic. Even our conscious values—personal and cultural—have their origin and emotional force from the unconscious. It is proper to strip our conscious values of any authority-in-themselves, and to transfer that authority to unconscious currents of conviction; but not if these, in turn, are dismissed as primitive or infantile fantasies. Too tentative a leap of faith can launch us from our security in traditional values, but fail to carry us across the void of short-range expectations to new and higher ground.

### ***The myth-makers***

There seems to be little question that our infancy and childhood recapitulate the stages of spontaneous response and of mythopoeia that characterized early mankind. Jung argues "a parallel between the mythological thinking of ancient man and the similar thinking found in children, primitives, and in dreams. This idea," he says, "is not at all strange; we know it quite well from comparative anatomy and from evolution, which show that the structure and function of the human body are the result of a series of embryonic mutations corresponding to similar mutations in our racial history. The supposition that there may also be in psychology a correspondence between ontogenesis and phylogenesis therefore seems justified. If this is so, it would mean that infantile thinking and dream thinking are simply a recapitulation of earlier evolutionary stages."<sup>1</sup>

Karl Abraham wrote, "The myth is...a fragment preserved from the infantile psychic life of the race, and dreams are the myths of the individual."<sup>2</sup> And Freud: "What once dominated waking life, while the mind was still young and incompetent, seems now to have been banished into the night—just as the primitive weapons, the bows and arrows, that have been abandoned by adult men, turn up once more in the nursery."<sup>3</sup> And Jung again: "The naive man of antiquity saw the sun as the Great Father of heaven and earth, and the moon as the fruitful Mother. Everything had its demon, was animated like a human being, or like his brothers the animals...Thus there arose a

---

1. .

2. .

3. .

picture of the universe which was completely removed from reality, but which corresponded exactly to man's subjective fantasies. It needs no elaborate proof to show that children think in much the same way. They too animate their dolls and toys, and with imaginative children it is easy to see that they inhabit a world of marvels."<sup>1</sup>

Here again the value—conflict between “reality” and “fantasy” leaves Jung struggling with a paradox. He cautions that modern man must not suppose himself to be more energetic or more intelligent in his thinking than the man of the past. “We have become rich in knowledge, but poor in wisdom...The center of gravity of our interest has switched over to the materialistic side...All the creative power that modern man pours into science and technics the man of antiquity devoted to his myths.”<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Campbell insists that the primitive (from the Latin *primus*, first) must not be confused with inferiority. “The trance-susceptible shaman and the initiated antelope priest are not unsophisticated in the wisdom of the world, not unskilled in the principles of communication by analogy. The metaphors by which they live, and through which they operate, have been brooded upon, searched, and discussed for centuries—even millennia; they have served whole societies as the mainstays of thought and life.”<sup>3</sup>

“The first attempts at myth-making can, of course, be observed in children, whose games of make-believe often contain historical echoes,” said Jung. “But one must put a large question-mark after the assertion that myths spring from the ‘infantile’ psychic life of the race. They are on the contrary the most mature product of that young humanity...the myth-making and myth-inhabiting man was a grown reality and not a four-year-old child. Myth is certainly not an infantile phantasm, but one of the most important requisites of primitive life.”<sup>4</sup>

Mythopoeia in the child is uninstructed—“naive” or “childish”—largely from the failure of modern society to nourish or direct it; yet the myth-making stage is natural and necessary in the proper development of the child's mind. “One can withhold the material content of primitive myths from a child but not take from him the need for mythology,” Jung said, “and still less his ability to manufacture it for himself.”<sup>5</sup> Myth-making is essentially the assignment of motives and meanings to things and events, precisely the quality of “intentionality” that Piaget finds to govern the child-mind from age three. The western adult has grown almost entirely insensitive to any presence of purpose or intent in his external reality. Where then does the child pick up these affectional vibrations of a universal purpose?

Our tendency is to empathize or feel with those around us. But relative to the adults around him, the child is in a world of subjective, numinous feelings all his own. He may even be suspected of lying by adults who can no longer see what he sees, when in fact—because he cannot distinguish (as Piaget puts it) “between what is spiritual and what is material”—he is incapable of deception. His myth is his most vivid truth, because—like early myths which “correspond exactly to man's subjective fantasies”—it describes precisely the universe of his experience. If there is a

- 
1. .
  2. .
  3. .
  4. .
  5. .

sharing of these feelings and perceptions, it is the adult who is the beneficiary: who delights in receiving from the child a sense of wonder, a quickening of his own faded mythopoeia, the feeling of participation in a motive-animated world.

### ***A world of marvels***

An afterlife is a logical and necessary corollary to our premise that Love's will to share the delights of loving is the mover and the shaper of creation. But this life and that one are the same vitality, animating simultaneously all the levels of the mind. From its inception the mind exists and grows continuously and correspondingly on its planes of motive, mythopoeia, memory, and sense-experience, whether our awareness is absorbed in our metamorphosis within the confining matrix of the body or has been liberated from the material constraints of this world. But even in the body we are only *relatively* "unconscious" of those higher planes of our being into which we will come fully after death.

Our examination of the states of primitive and childish mythopoeia suggests that in our childhood archaic man enjoyed throughout life—a foretaste of what "world of marvels," the immediate environs for which our adventures in this world intend us. In these early stages the tender mind is not yet so heavily encrusted with the overlays of sense-experience that the perceptions of the spiritual senses are closed off. What the primitive and childish minds experience, then, is the living presence of other human minds already freed from this material world, in harmony with his thoughts and feelings, and altogether real, perceptible, and human to his inner senses: apparent to his inner sight, audible to his inwardly directed hearing, and able directly to touch and be touched by his feelings. He lives in both realities.

To accept the mythopoeic quality of childish thought as evidence that there are *planes of reality* to which modern western adults have become almost entirely insensitive is a far more satisfactory explanation of the functioning of mind—even adult minds—than the idea that our feelings and our thoughts are fantasies. It is true, of course, that our inner senses must be as susceptible to error as our physical senses are to (e.g.) optical illusions, and that these *errors* may be properly called fantasies. If the child, from his simultaneous experience of both realities and from his inexperience in either, is unable to differentiate "between what is spiritual and what is material," he will not be able to relate spiritual causes to material effects and so to many of the minds that have passed into the worlds of spirit opted in this life for the illusions that defend self-pride and self-indulgence, we must expect mixed influences—relatively sensible to the child, primarily unconscious in the adult—from those worlds into this one.

The problem at the threshold, then, for youth and for mankind collectively, must be to differentiate—as childish inexperience could not—between these spiritual influences acting into us unconsciously from the worlds of spirit, and the conscious perceptions and responses into which they act; to distinguish *by their effects* between those spiritual influences which advance the human ideal of a creative mutuality and those which—by inducing the forgetfulness of sensual indulgence or the fantasies of self-agency—retard us in the quest; to learn to recognize what spiritual (causal) influences are within the responses to which we are inclined; and, from this recognition of the *correspondence* between these influences from unseen worlds and their effects in this life, to govern consciously which spirits we will invite as our companions and helpers in the quest—and which we will not harbor, "fix," or reinforce in our minds by the thoughts we entertain or the things we do.

We have stressed the principle that the Deity must resolve the hero's dilemma, and renew the covenant, in a way that is appropriate to the hero's need and readiness at each of the critical junctures that define the stages of the adventure. At the threshold of return that principle has its particular and especially relevant implication. Because this is a crossing over into reasoned judgments, no disclosures or resolutions will be sufficient or acceptable to the hero—in this specific state of need—which do not rationally identify the adaptations of the Deity's guiding self-revelations in past covenants, and renew or reinterpret those earlier promises of divine intent—the pledge of a utopian fulfillment of man's humanity—in terms that invite and can be confirmed by the most rigorous exercise of human reason.

Such a rational approach is precisely what Swedenborg asks that we take toward the disclosures he derived from his hermeneutic interpretation of the Testaments and from the extraordinary spiritual experiences he reported, and which he presented as the necessary insights from which the modern thinking mind might “enter *with reason* into the mysteries of faith.” It is evident that a healthy skepticism about any such claim is in fact a necessary protection; as Sheehy points out in regard to youth, it is when the need for a new model or a greater cause is critical that there tends to be the greatest gullibility to charlatans—or, in Christ's words, that “many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matt. 24:11).

From the psychological/psychohistorical parallels we have found in the Macromyth, however, and from our premise of the antetypical Humanity and the purposed Parenthood of God, it is equally evident that it was in Swedenborg's time that western man, pioneering this age of reason, came into a need for a new and rational understanding of God's nature, governance, and purpose. Since the collective is a growing human aggregate of individuals, and since such insight must have its beginning somewhere, it is most reasonable to suppose that a suitable human mind would serve as the instrument for its first reception, and as the means for its uncompelling, cultural transmission to any searching mind that, having made the passage into young adulthood, embraced the new rational criteria of thought which emerged at the Enlightenment: to any individual who, in order to undertake the voluntary shaping of his mind to its potential human ideal, required a clear, instructive, and rationally tenable foreknowledge of the spiritual communion for which this matrix life is given to prepare him.

I have already argued the extraordinary suitability of Swedenborg's circumstances, the range and intensity of his interests, his command of the knowledge of his day, and his unquestioned genius, to such a service. I suggested that only from a deep and panoramic view of natural reality would an understanding have been possible of “the spiritual order” which, as Cirlot put it, “is analogous to the material order.” But the converse is also necessarily true. To discover the correspondences between the two realities would require an exceptional investigation into the inner world of the spirit, for it can be only from the direct experience and rational exploration of both realities that the relationships and interaction of spiritual and material phenomena may be reliably discerned.

Without a direct knowledge of the higher planes of our reality, hermeneutics—“deciphering the meanings of myths and symbols”—is speculative and uncertain; the empirical interpretation of myth and dream and fragmentary visions is fettered by the disenchanting expectations of empiricism. On the other hand, any undisciplined incursions of the visionary into supernatural realms are properly impeached where the motives and the rationality of the spiritual adventurer are suspect, or where his knowledge of natural reality is so limited or faulty that he is incapable of a discriminating evaluation and interpretation of his spiritual experiences.

Swedenborg's discovery of inner meanings in the earlier Covenants can only be as valid as the exegetic key by which he found them out. And that symbolic system, which he called "correspondences," depends for *its* validity on the validity—and, for our acceptance of it, on the credibility—of his claims to an intimate and protracted exploration of the spiritual communion for which he holds us to be destined.

In the next two chapters we will undertake to survey Swedenborg's descriptions of those worlds, their interactions with this world, and the correspondences between our spiritual and material environments from which the imagery of myth and dream—and of course the Testamental narrative—have their symbolic content; we will compare his descriptions with the recent findings of unbiased investigators into recurring but still unexplained phenomena of mind; and we will assess how well Swedenborg's reports and analyses of his experiences satisfy the rational criteria upon which he himself insists.

# Chapter 9 Beyond Sense-Experience

## *Interpreting the myth*

Unfortunately our own reading of meanings and values into thing and act—and myth—is subject to distortion. On the conscious level we continuously deceive ourselves about our motives.

Freud, in his discernment of the subconscious mind, affirmed that we are living a false myth: that is, much of what we do (our personal “rituals”) has correspondences or meanings or motive causes entirely at variance with the motives which, by rationalization, we ascribe to ourselves. His psychohistorical parallels attributed to all mankind’s religious thought the same quality of a false mythology—or a collective “neurosis”—which had its origin in a forgotten social guilt or trauma and was shaped by the collective counterpart of the psychological neurosis-forming sequence of repression, latency, and eventual re-emergence (or eruption) in substitute or sublimated guises. It is in the imagery of dream and myth that the unconscious betrays its original—and for Freud essentially erotic—motives; and the challenge of hermeneutics for the Freudian analyst, as therapist or psychohistorian, is to unmask those guilty motives so that they might be dealt with directly.

Jung assigned a considerably more helpful challenge to hermeneutics. He did not reject Freud’s view that erotic or libidinous drives disguised themselves by the symbolizing processes of the unconscious. He refused to accept, however, that negative or sexual factors were solely—or even primarily—responsible for the symbolic imagery of dream and myth. From Jung we have the insight that what man lost in his progressive cultivation of external consciousness was the ability to maintain “a coherent psychic pattern,” a loss which repeats itself in our individual development of an “advanced” consciousness. The task of hermeneutics for Jung, then, is to recover the means by which archaic man enjoyed the sense of wholeness or integrity, since—as we quoted him earlier—the “organs of assimilation and integration” or which we have deprived ourselves “were numinous symbols.” This is reflected in his “individuation” therapy, which seeks to identify the numinous or affective content of dream imagery and to give conscious expression to the forgotten values and aspirations that dreams symbolically reveal.

Another early disciple of Freud, who also came to reject the wholly erotic origin of neuroses, was Alfred Adler. His villain was the “power drive,” which—frustrated by its ineffectuality in infancy and early childhood, and punished by its error-prone attempts to assert itself—suffered the traumas, repressions, and (in adult neuroses) the disguises of substitute expression that Freud attributed to infantile sexuality. For Adler, then, the task of repressed and fantasized desires for power and to redirect that drive into realistic and constructive channels.\*<sup>1</sup>

---

1. It is interesting that between them these three views identify as the central protagonist all three “principals” of the mythic drama—temptress, tyrant, hero. Freud’s psychosexual scheme puts the emphasis on those libidinal energies which respond, from the “pleasure principle,” only to the *siren-call* of immediate self-indulgence. Adler’s power-drive is readily equated with the jealous and repressive rule of presumptuous *self-agency*. Jung emphasizes the *heroic role* of consciousness (as the only agent of voluntary change) in the restoration of integrity to the psyche.

My intent here is not to evaluate the relative merits of these contrasting interpretations, but to show that the yield of hermeneutics depends on the prior assumptions—the predisposition or personal mythology—of the interpreter. Freud has been called a classic victim of the sexual repressions of his day, and his own “oedipal complex” may have accounted for his erotic emphasis. Jung experienced vivid psychic visions that influenced his archetypal life, but it is not unlikely that personal problems with the power-drive inclined him to identify it as the cause of all neuroses.

Freud has the grace to characterize his system as his “mythology,” although he increasingly resented any who questioned it. Jung conceded that what he called the “collective unconscious” is both speculative and inaccessible; thus his archetypes are, in effect, the pantheon of his myth. The relevant point is that any conscious effort to rebuild the myths, or to apply the hermeneutic method to them, must be at least in part defeated by the limitations of the interpreters own private mythologems or unconscious predispositions. No exploration of symbolic meanings, however industrious or sophisticated, can discover in the myths meaning that is rejected *a priori*—or presumed to be at best unknowable—in our personal mythology. As we argued in Chapter 4, our creative efforts cannot carry us to discoveries that transcend the limits of our expectations.

Even by Jung’s empirical standards, the prime movers in the mythologies of Freud (sexuality) and Adler (power) are merely “isolated instincts and purposive mechanisms” (von Franz) that are subordinate to the drive to become “human.” But Jung’s own premises precluded the discovery of any evidence of a reality that transcends the Self. He argued the pragmatic efficacy of *believing* in such things. But his mythology—the expectations from which he assessed and hermeneutically interpreted vision, dream, and myth—prevented him from seeking evidential confirmation of the reality of a higher power or divine intent: “since we are dealing with invisible understanding, and there is no means of proving immortality), why should we both about evidence.”<sup>1</sup>

Swedenborg reasoned that a Deity who was unknowable or beyond human understanding—who would not or could not make Himself known or understood—must be unpurposed, uncaring, or incompetent. He therefore assumed that man, to avoid the pitfalls of fashioning God in the image of his own flawed values and expectations, is intended to use his divine gift of reason to search out the evidence of God’s presence, purpose, and providing in this universe of His making. He sensed the pressing need for such a search, as the nascent sciences tended increasingly to make empiricism the only valid standard of truth, and nature’s laws the only valid guide in the pursuit of a utopian society.

Swedenborg’s search therefore began with a readiness to credit all human experience as divinely given, and to accept as evidence what the empiricist—from the premise that the inward visions of the mind are fantasy, and that myth is the fantasy of collective man—has arbitrarily disallowed. His judgments of that evidence were no less discriminating than the scientific judgments that had earned him the respect of Europe’s intellectual community. And his credulous approach, while it quickly eroded his scientific standing, also led him to a view of hermeneutics that was invulnerable to the restrictive biases of a personal mythology.

---

1. .



## *The question of evidence*

We devoted Chapter 7 to the theorem that any genuine love can be satisfied only by a free or unforced mutuality, and to an exploration of the means by which an infinite creative Love might build into the fabric of creation—and keep inviolable—the conditions for a free response.

The question of a valid evidence and sufficient proofs can only be considered in the context of the creative purposes and means that they are given to affirm. The same Creator who wills not to coerce by the unmoderated power of His *love* cannot coerce by any proofs that would make His *truth* compelling. Such “proofs” would—*reductio ad absurdum*—constitute a *disproof* of His purpose (a *voluntary* reciprocity) or of His wise provisions for it.

But this does not mean that world (a universe) of evidence, and even proofs, cannot be made *as fully accessible as is His love* for those who earnestly desire and seek it.

A Creator such as Swedenborg describes cannot allow faith to be coerced by sense-experience; but neither would the truth about Him be inconsistent with or contradicted by the knowledge that our physical senses impart to us. A valid faith must be given to find its grounding and its effective application in a material reality that harmoniously corresponds, on its plane, to the motives and the means of its divine Source and Sustainer: in a physical universe that exhibits in its least and greatest forms and functions its inherent harmony with and service to the divine end of a spiritual communion of human minds.

The challenge and the opportunity for hermeneutics—and for reason—is therefore the recognition and affirmation of the functioning correspondences between

- God as creative Mind Itself,
- the spiritual realm as the purpose of His creation,
- and this physical universe as matrix.

The premise requires that the correspondences or analogy be absolute. The matrix universe itself must be created in every least respect to serve the divine creative purpose: nothing in it can be extraneous or fortuitous, or fail to correspond to a specific intent within the divine Mind—within the universal scheme—from and for which it has its existence. And, in turn, there can be nothing provided in this perpetually evolving matrix that does not have a corresponding effect upon the spiritual beneficiaries of its shaping function—upon the individual and collective minds that in it are conceived, and by it are protected, nurtured, and given the permanent parameters of their individuality and potential.

Many modern authorities are satisfied that the analogy or correspondence between the two lower planes is readily demonstrable, as reflected in Cirlot’s reference to the “immense weight of testimony...*proving* that the invisible or spiritual order is analogous to the material order” (my italics). Such an analogy can be adduced from a sufficient knowledge of both orders, however, without solving the question of why they are analogous or how they are related.

Swedenborg’s premise of a purposed universe accounts for the analogy by showing both to have a common origin in the divine intent, which therefore each analogously or correspondingly exhibits, manifests, or “evidences” on its own plane. And that “immense weight of testimony” which for Cirlot “proves” the analogy between spiritual and natural phenomena must have a similar evidential weight in affirming a rational understanding of the Creator and His purposes.

For Swedenborg, then, hermeneutics was not merely the discovery of fortuitous analogies between the conscious and unconscious, but the discernment of functioning relationships in cre-

ation itself by which an intending God effects His purposes, accommodates His love, and adapts His guidance to His creatures' readiness and need.

As might be expected, Swedenborg came to feel that he had exhausted the potentials of science for the solution to the problem of the interactions between the mind or spirit and the body, between the spiritual and material realms. With the scientist's disdain for abstract philosophical speculations, he chose what was for his purposes the most truly empirical course. He sought the direct experience of his own "inner processes"—the term of Wilson van Dusen, a psychologist who has systematically related Swedenborg's reports of his experiences with a broad spectrum of modern searches within the mind.

The intellectual climate of Swedenborg's time was distinctly without encouragement or help in such an undertaking. The Cartesian wedge between the spiritual and the material had been firmly driven in. The unconscious mind had not yet been rediscovered. The eastern philosophies were little known. Familiarity with the myths was largely limited to the literary fables of the Greeks, and the mythical substratum of alchemy and astrology had been obscured by literality and pragmatism.

A study of Swedenborg's private diaries shows that in this new search he first applied his proclivity for scientific observation and analysis to his dreams. His interpretation of these, over a remarkably fruitful period, anticipated modern dream theory, reflected the symbolism of myth, and foreshadowed the system of correspondences that was to serve his later exegesis. Gradually, and virtually on his own, he discovered techniques of meditation (including controlled breathing) which—unknown to him—had long been practiced in the East.

As he persisted in these new explorations, the inner realms of his mind became increasingly available to his conscious apprehension, and he was able to identify the relationships between that normally unconscious arena of his mind and his world of spatio-temporal sense-experience. Throughout this search—which continued through the balance of his life, for almost thirty years—he kept meticulous records, which never lost the flavor of analytic objectivity that had characterized his scientific work. Not for more than a century would the systematic studies of dreams, myths, and psychic experiences, of esoteric eastern systems, and of primitive ways of thinking converge to offer sufficient data for an informed evaluation of his psychic travelogues.

But today there is a considerable body of relevant data from which to assess the quality of his experiences.

### ***Witness to other worlds***

According to Van Dusen, Swedenborg's earlier psychic explorations have been duplicated by modern investigators through the use of meditative techniques (for the most part borrowed from the East) and controlled experiments with chemical agents. The nature of many of the "inner processes" as Swedenborg described them has been fully confirmed by analysis and clinical experience. "If even the beginnings of his method are followed by average persons," Van Dusen said of Swedenborg, "they will make the same surprising discoveries that he made."<sup>1</sup>

But in his later explorations, Van Dusen wrote, Swedenborg is unique, for "the whole inward journey for others to follow." Over the full period of his protracted adventure, Swedenborg passed repeatedly through the gateway which had been opened in his mind to pursue his travels

---

1. .

through the worlds of spirit. Jung described even the path of individuation—his psychotherapeutic system—as “a razor’s edge.” But he was warning of encounters with unconscious inner forces that Swedenborg knowingly confronted in full realization of their quality and power. “Swedenborg,” Van Dusen asserted, “knew personally, at first hand, that Self which Jung knew only by speculation on its symbolic manifestations.”

The term Self (capitalized) is Jung’s, and has only a qualified relevance—Van Dusen would agree—to the far grander spiritual realms that Swedenborg describes. By it Jung speaks of the whole but strictly individual psyche, comprising *consciousness*, the retrievable and subliminal levels of the *personal unconscious*, and what he called—somewhat misleadingly—the *collective unconscious* (p. 54 and *passim*). Jung himself identified his collective differences between his concept and that of Swedenborg are at least as great as their similarities. For Jung, the collective unconscious is only “collective” in the sense of a commonly possessed, genetically transmitted part of the psyche (much as we “share” the digestive system and its functions) with a common origin in our ancestral past. The imagery or visions by which its content is expressed, and that feeling content itself, are in Jung’s view intrinsic to and wholly within the psyche.

Swedenborg accepted what he experienced spiritually as being precisely what it seemed to be: planes of human existence that have for identifiable reasons come to be beyond the direct recognition of earth-bound consciousness, constituting a genuine and all-inclusive “collective” or communion of human minds. He found no inconsistencies or uncertainties in his experiences that required him to resort to alternative explanations. And his descriptions of those worlds of a collective higher consciousness—the quality of human life on those planes, and the influences of those spiritual realms on our unconscious and conscious feelings, thinking, and responses—present a wholly self-consistent resolution of the paradoxical phenomena, the continuing “confusion between the psychical and physical,” that has been more compounded than explained by modern theories.

I hope to show that Swedenborg’s experiences are consistent also with those of mankind throughout the ages, including the psychic adventures—aberrant, commonplace, or visionary—of our contemporaries. All of these fall within the uniquely comprehensive range of Swedenborg’s exposures and explorations, and are fully accounted for in his concept of a unified and interfunctioning collective mind.

It was Swedenborg’s report that no one who has so much as drawn a breath in the physical universe community of human minds. There are no other spiritual entities. (The archangels and demigods of vision and myth, as we will see, have a far more reasonable explanation than the creation of especially favored beings.) Everything that the mind of man on earth sees in its inward visions presents—or symbolically represents—real worlds, populated by other living, feeling, thinking minds that without exception received their first awareness and their individuality from a prior life in a matrix body.

Especially in our time, especially in the west, and especially in adulthood, man’s physical senses have normally commanded his attention and he has perceived his spiritual environment only dimly and fragmentarily. But upon his release from the body and its senses, Swedenborg says, man comes into the clear and full “sensation” of spiritual things.

The imagery of the mind, which clothes man’s feelings and gives form to his thoughts, is wholly and exclusively acquired through sense-experience. Because it is that mental imagery which becomes the substantial reality of his spiritual life, what he perceives with his awakened spiritual senses appears essentially no different than the things of this world. This applies to the

way in which each spirit perceives himself and other spirits. The mind is *human*. To the sight and touch of mind, that humanity is apparent as a wholly human form and presence, just as in imagination even in this life we can—though far less vividly—see and feel the human qualities of others.

As Swedenborg describes that other life, there are of course the important differences that might be expected when the laws of nature are replaced by those of mind or spirit. The aphorism that “beauty is more than skin deep” (as also is ugliness) refers to the truer vision of the mind’s eye. The reality that is perceived directly by the mind—without the meditation of the physical senses—is sensed as to its spiritual dimensions, colors, textures, and dynamics. Every physical sense has its spiritual equivalent. We have the capacity to touch or be touched by the feelings of others. We can harken or be deaf to encouragement or guidance, or the songs of sirens. “There is none so blind as they who won’t see” affirms the absolute analogy between the physical function of the eye and the understanding of the mind. The spiritual senses, like their physical counterparts, are cultivated by dint of exercise and discrimination; and it is to the extent that we cultivate them in this life that they can serve us in the next.

Swedenborg strove constantly to make his reports clear, definite, and understandable. That effort lends an almost this-worldly normalcy to many of the accounts of his encounters, conversations, and associations with spirits—benign and malignant—and his descriptions of their lifestyles and environments. In other instances he admits his inability to express in spatio-temporal terms the “ineffable” thoughts and feelings that his mind experienced through his spiritual senses. He stressed continually that what the mind perceives immediately is far more intense and lucid than physical sensations, and far more alive and responsive to shifts of mood and interest. Appearances of space and time have that fluidity which we find to govern in our minds, and the imagery that accurately presents to mind its proper “objects”—thoughts and feelings, our own or others’—can in that world of collective mind appear and disappear, and change in form or relationships, position or proximity, with the “speed of thought.”

Although, while we are in the body, our consciousness is captive to immediate sense-experience, we live even now on all the levels of our mind. If we could readily elevate our awareness into the higher levels, we would be conscious of the collective mind—on the corresponding planes—and of the spiritual populations present with us there. Since we are disinclined to do this, and unable to do it with any clarity or persistence, our imitations of those spiritual environments is normally at best subliminal. But Swedenborg reports that the influence of spirits—on and through those levels of our minds of which we are unconscious—is continuous and pervasive; and is in fact the source of the feeling-value and meanings we ascribe to the things and events of our conscious life.

### ***Modern searches***

These spiritual influences may clearly be identified with the image-making processes—the “subliminal aspects of everything that happens to us....the almost invisible roots of our conscious thoughts”<sup>1</sup>—of which Jung found ample evidence, but which he viewed as forces generated by the mind itself. All of the discernible manifestations of unconscious functions are valid data in

---

1. .

determining whether they are most reasonably explained as intrinsic to the mind or, as Swedenborg testifies, extrinsic influences acting upon the mind.

These valid phenomena range from the subliminal undertones of our conscious thoughts, through daydreams, the “satori” states of deep meditation, and hallucinations, to the vivid visions of a profoundly spiritual nature. While Jung—spontaneously and by his deliberate effort—had some experience of visions, his data and evaluations were derived primarily from dream analysis. The universality of dreams unquestionably makes them the richest readily accessible source of material for the study of unconscious symbolism and mythological correlations. But the unreal quality of dreams—which Jung conceded to be “flimsy, evasive, unreliable, vague, and uncertain fantasies”<sup>1</sup>—may have unfairly colored his assessment of the deeper processes that dreams only ephemerally express. The unconscious influences themselves are better judged from the study of those psychic experiences that bring them most vividly and directly into consciousness.

Many scholars, recognizing that the very fact that these phenomena occur makes them a requisite area for psychological research, have attempted to approach with a new objectivity the frequency, varieties, psychological and physiological conditions, and other facts about them. The results in many cases have been surprising—especially the indications, reported in recent years by a number of investigators, that there is a higher plane of existence on which man appears to live after death.

What has most impressed the researchers is the common patterns into which these psychic phenomena consistently fall, the sense of absolute reality they have for those who undergo them, and the fact that they are by no means restricted to pathological minds. In the past, it has been primarily those whose minds have been confused and lives disrupted by such episodes who have come to the psychologist’s attention. As several of the researchers point out, the individual who can “manage” them finds it wiser to keep his own counsel in an unreceptive society. It is therefore in terms of the unsatisfactory *response* that the experiences themselves have come to be judged pathological. As the incidence of psychic episodes among wholly rational people has been explored (for whom the patterns hold consistent, and the conviction of *reality* is no less strong), such terms as “psychosis” have come to seem less generally applicable. A growing number of qualified researchers—even at the risk of their “scientific” standing—have therefore refused to foreclose the possibility that these experiences are indeed real, and that it is a limitation of science that its instruments have not been able to detect or its theories to account for them.

The phenomena themselves may be roughly divided into two broad categories. In what are called “out-of-body” experiences, awareness leaves the body and its physical sensations behind and breaks through into the psychic realm. In the second category, to which I will restrict my use of the term “hallucinations,” psychic influences invade a mind still present in and conscious of the body.

Of the former, the most extensively documented have been the experiences of those who have “died,” and (in growing numbers because of new medical techniques) have been brought back to life. The best known study of these phenomena, *Life After Life* by Raymond Moody, Jr., M.D., Ph.D., recounts and analyzes the remarkable experiences of many who were adjudged dead by the accepted clinical standards, but were resuscitated subsequently, or who had extremely close brushes with death.<sup>2</sup> The findings of other researchers—including Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross,

---

1. .

noted for her work with the terminally ill—are virtually identical with Moody's, as is also their almost universal inclination to accept those clinical-death experiences of a psychic reality as evidence of an afterlife.

Of equal interest to us—in regard to the second category, the “invasion” of psychic influences—will be the conclusions drawn by psychologist Wilson Van Dusen from his intensive work with “hallucinating” patients. Van Dusen's factual results were essentially harmonious with those of other clinical psychologists. But from his thousands of in-depth interviews with a wide range of subjects, Van Dusen was led increasingly to doubt that the “hallucinations” could be satisfactorily explained as merely allowances in his clinical approach for the possibility that they had an existence independent of their victims.

These non-traditional points of view of Moody and Van Dusen enabled them to discover data, patterns, and correlations that, from other perspectives (or a closed perspective), had not and could not have been noted or seen as relevant. The further fact, that both men—subsequent to their researches—discovered and reported parallels to their findings and conclusions in Swedenborg's accounts of his experiences, make their studies especially relevant to ours. Although several of Moody's fellow researchers in clinical death experiences have also quoted Swedenborg's descriptions of the spiritual world, as strikingly consistent with those given by their subjects, Moody's correlations are at the same time more careful and more extensive.

Van Dusen had arrived at his major conclusions several years before he discovered the parallels in Swedenborg's accounts, a startling similarity between what Swedenborg described as the influence of spirits and the experiences of Van Dusen's patients. On further study (“I deliberately looked for some discrepancy”), Van Dusen found that Swedenborg—from his strictly personal explorations—had described virtually the full range of phenomena that Van Dusen had encountered among his patients over the years; and that Swedenborg's exhaustive treatment “not only is an almost perfect fit with patients' experiences, but even more impressively, it accounts for otherwise quite puzzling aspects of hallucinations.”<sup>1</sup>

### *The experience of dying*

Of the published studies on clinical-death experiences, Moody's is probably the most objective. It describes and analyzes such episodes, compares them with similar accounts from other times and cultures, explores possible explanations. Moody admits and defends his inclination to accept the reality of these phenomena, but cautions that there is no way to make “scientific” judgments. His fact-reporting is not colored by that private view; and he makes no speculations that are not invited by the material itself.

In very much the same way that Raglan developed his composite of the hero life from the many myths, Moody discovered a common pattern in his subjects' descriptions of their experiences. He reports a number of “separate elements which recur again and again in the mass of narratives that I have collected. On the basis of these points of likeness” Moody constructed “a brief, theoretically ‘ideal’ or ‘complete’ experience which embodies all of the common elements, in the order in which it is typical for them to occur.”<sup>2</sup>This is his composite:

- 
2. .
  1. .
  2. .

A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor. He begins to hear an uncomfortable noise...and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long dark tunnel. After this, he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body,...sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator....and is in a state of emotional upheaval.

After a while, he collects himself and...notices that he still has a “body,” but one of a very different nature and with very different powers than the physical body has left behind. Soon...others 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, nonverbally, to make him evaluate his life and helps him along by showing 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 the earth, that the time for his death has not yet come. At this point he resists, for by now he is taken up with his experiences in the after-life and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love, and peace. Despite his attitude, though, he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives.

Later he tries to tell others, but he has trouble doing so...he can find no human words adequate to describe these unearthly episodes (and) finds that others scoff....Still, the experience affects his life profoundly....”

Moody found and cited parallels to these experiences in the Bible, Plato, and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* which show the essential agreement of such reports to be independent of time and culture. He quotes most directly and extensively from Swedenborg, noting that his “works abound with vivid descriptions of what life is like after death....the correlation between what he writes of some of his spiritual experiences and what those who have come back from close calls with death report is amazing.” The following quotes Moody’s observations about the similarities, together with his (further indented) citations from Swedenborg:

Swedenborg (says Moody) describes how, when the bodily functions of respiration and circulation cease,

Still man does not die, but is only separated from the corporeal part which was of use to him in the world....Man, when he dies, only passes from one world into another.<sup>1</sup>

He claims that he himself has been through the early events of death, and has had experiences out of his body.

I was brought into a state of insensibility as to the bodily senses, thus almost into the state of the dying; yet the interior life with thought remaining entire, so that I perceived and retained in memory the things which occurred, and which occur to those who are resuscitated from the dead....Especially it was given to perceive...that there was a drawing and...pulling of...mind, thus of my spirit, from the body.

---

1. .

During this experience, he encounters beings whom he identifies as “angels.” They ask him, in effect, if he is prepared to die.

Those angels first inquired what my thought was, whether it was like the thought of those who die, which is usually about eternal life; and that they wished to keep my mind in that thought.

*Yet, the communication which takes place between Swedenborg and the spirits is not of an earthly, human kind. It is instead almost a direct transfer of thoughts. Hence, there is no possibility of misunderstanding.*

Whereas spirits converse with each other by a universal language....Every man, immediately after death, comes into this universal language...which is proper to his spirit....

The speech of an angel or a spirit with man is heard as sonorously as the speech of a man with a man; yet it is not heard by others who stand near, but by himself alone; the reason is, because the speech of an angel or spirit flows first into the man’s thought...

*The newly dead person does not realize that he is dead, for he is still in a “body” which resembles his physical body in several respects.*

The first state of man after death is similar to his state in the world, because then in like manner he is in externals....Hence, he knows no otherwise than that he is still in the world....Therefore, after they have wondered that they are in a body, and in every sense which they had in the world...they come into a desire of knowing what heaven is,

and what hell is.

*Yet, the spiritual state is less limited. Perception, thought, and memory are more perfect, and time and space no longer pose the obstacles they do in physical life.*

All the faculties of spirits...are in a more perfect state, as well their sensations as their thoughts and perceptions.

The dying man may meet with other departed spirits whom he knew while in life. They are there to help him during his passage into the beyond.

The spirit of man recently departed from the world is...recognized by his friends, and by those whom he had known in the world...wherefore they are instructed by their friends concerning the state of eternal life....

His past life may be shown to him in a vision. He remembers every detail of it, and there is not possibility of his lying or concealing anything.

The interior memory...is such that there are inscribed in it all the particular things...which man has at any time thought, spoken, or done...from his earliest infancy to extreme old age. Man has with him the memory of all these things when he comes into another life, and is successively brought into all recollection of them....All that he had spoken and done...are made manifest before the angels, in a light as clear as day...and...there is nothing so concealed in the world that it is not manifest after death...as if seen in effigy, when the spirit is viewed in the light of heaven.

Swedenborg describes too the “light of the Lord” which permeates the hereafter, a light of ineffable brightness which he has glimpsed himself. It is a light of truth and understanding.



These similarities that Moody brings out between Swedenborg's reports and those of contemporary near-death subjects are particularly interesting in view of the difference in Swedenborg's circumstances. According to Swedenborg, he was given this experience of dying as an instructive demonstration of what entry into the other world through death is like. He had already had extensive experience in the spiritual realm. He was expecting this specific adventure. He was therefore more alert to the spiritual presences and nuances of his passage.

But easily the most important difference relates to that "barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life" (p. 262), which is common to the near-death experience, had already seen what was on the other side of that final transition; and would continue to explore those farther realms for the rest of his life on this earth, observing the "unconscious" influences of the spirit-worlds on the minds of men in this one.

### *Spiritual intruders*

Out-of-body episodes shift the point-of-awareness itself away from its seat in the physical senses, making the mind to seem wholly independent of the body. Because the mind is no longer in the body it cannot be influenced by its sensory mechanics or influence its motor equipment. And since the mind is the medium of other spiritual influences, the body—without the mind—no longer has the means in it for receiving or responding to those vital influences from the spiritual realm which, alone, animate the physical.

Where the separation is relatively complete, then—whether induced by "clinical death," hallucinogens, illness, or the trance states of meditation—the normal operative (cause-effect) relationships between "unconscious" spiritual influences and external consciousness are broken. The way in which spirits in the other world influence our conscious life can therefore not be seen in such states. On the other hand, those influences *are* unconscious in our normal waking states, and thus the connections are not apparent in those states either: all feeling and thought descend into our awareness through the unconscious planes (from "within" ourselves), and appear our own.

It is in states of mixed, divided, or partial consciousness that it is sometimes possible to sense the influence of other spirits *as* "other," and to identify their effects on our conscious thoughts, feelings, and responses. Van Dusen shows that as to thoughts and feelings (and even audiovisual phenomena) it is possible to invite and identify unconscious influences as "other" *deliberately* during hypnogogic states (between sleep and waking). But by far the most dramatic instances of "alien" influence are found in those psychic experiences that intrude, uninvited, on the awareness—and even into the responses—of those who are at the same time conscious of the body, its sensations, and its physical environment.

Van Dusen discovered early in his clinical work with hallucinating patients that such intrusions may readily be identified as either malignant or benign; he called these "lower order" and "higher order" hallucinations. The same distinction has been noted by other observers, and is wholly consistent with the picture Swedenborg presents of the interactions between the spiritual and the natural worlds.

According to Van Dusen, the lower-order hallucinations are far more common. This could be only the appearance, for the destructive influences of such spirits are more likely to come to the attention of the therapist. Swedenborg, on the other hand, points out that spirits whose values never transcended the corporeal and sensual are those who—unable to reenter their own bodies—will seek to "take over" the sensations and motor controls of men still in a body, and are therefore

constantly probing the “conscious” mind for any vulnerability that will allow them access. Such access, Swedenborg said, is provided when man overindulges his fantasies or withdrawals from society (or both, since the two tend to come together). “This would conform,” Van Dusen noted, “to contemporary social withdrawal, which is the earliest aspect of schizophrenia....(Swedenborg) gave much description of possession by spirits and what they did. Hallucinations look most like what Swedenborg described under the general heading of obsessions (to be caught in false ideas) and possession (to have alien spirits acting into one’s own thought, feelings, or even into one’s bodily acts)....All of Swedenborg’s observations on the effect of evil spirits entering man’s consciousness,” Van Dusen wrote, “conform to my findings.”

The following briefly summarizes some of the points of agreement from Van Dusen’s fuller treatment (which cites statements of like substance from Swedenborg).<sup>1</sup>

Low-order hallucinations, Van Dusen reported, attempt to destroy their subject; they cause anxiety or pain; they try to undermine conscience and all higher values: all these efforts and effects are ascribed by Swedenborg to evil spirits. To avail himself of its influence, a spirit will assume the guise of a known individual (already imaged in the victim’s mind), according to Swedenborg. (“This accounts for one puzzling aspect,” Van Dusen noted. “Patients say voices can shift voice quality and identity as they speak.”) Hallucinations claim to be scientists, engineers, physicians, Christ, the Holy Spirit; but they have limited vocabularies and—as Swedenborg said of evil spirits—no more knowledge than the subject.

They deny an afterlife and oppose all religion (yet paradoxically some boast of being demons or from hell); they draw attention to things sexual, obscene, and filthy, and then condemn their victim for noticing them. They indicate they will take over the world (“which bit of bragging Swedenborg noticed”). They threaten, cajole, insult, shout and nag interminably, and may loudly plot between them the subject’s death. They often “gang up” on the victim. Most are coarse, dull, stupid (Van Dusen likened them to “drunken bums at a bar who like to tease and torment”).

They may work for long periods to possess a part of the victim’s body (“One voice worked two years to capture a patient’s eye, which went visibly out of alignment....Parts involved in my experience have been the ear, eye, tongue, and genitals”). They claim other powers, but can produce no more than is in the subject’s own memory or within his sense-experience, and unusually no more than what has entered the memory since their arrival.

There are exceptions to this, for which Van Dusen borrows Swedenborg’s explanation. The memory and personality of the victim can be displaced by those of the possessing spirit when, “in the deeper degree of schizophrenia,” as Van Dusen put it, “the spirits have taken on more of their own memory.” In such instances the victim’s body may actually be alternately governed by multiple personalities, only one of which is his own. The same phenomenon (an invading spirit who has come into his own memory) accounts for those cases in which the patient exhibits knowledge of the past, or of facts and languages he could not know, from which men have drawn the idea of reincarnation.

Van Dusen’s investigatory technique is especially interesting. “My patients,” he said, “were in relatively good condition....An unusually cooperative patient led me to ask her if I could talk directly with her hallucination.” It was that direct address, in this and subsequent cases involving many patients, which yielded much of Van Dusen’s more striking material. The method would

---

1. .

seem to be valid even if the hallucination is considered merely a fragment of the psyche. Van Dusen spoke directly to the hallucination, and received its answers verbatim through the patient. He had no difficulty in distinguishing between the two. Sometimes the subject's voice—when speaking for the hallucination—actually changed in pitch and timbre. Van Dusen even gave ink-blot tests to his subjects and then to their hallucinations, and found that “the lower-order hallucinations appeared to be much sicker than the patient.”!

### ***The higher order***

“In direct contrast,” Van Dusen wrote, “stand the rarer higher-order hallucinations....perhaps a fifth or less of the patients' experiences.” In appearance, quality, and influence on the patient, these prove to be very like the “beings of light” encountered by Moody's subjects, and may be readily identified with the spirits Swedenborg calls “angels.” Van Dusen suggests that they relate to the lower order much as Jung's sublimer archetypes of the unconscious relate to the perverse and compelling repressions of Freud's subconscious id.

This higher-order manifestation tends to be non-verbal, respectful of the subject's freedom (withdrawing if the subject is afraid), and wholly benign. It is, Van Dusen said, “likely to be symbolic, religious, supportive, genuinely instructive; it can communicate directly with the inner feelings of the patient.” He cites “a lovely woman who entertained (a gas-pipe fitter) while showing him thousands of symbols....(and) showed a knowledge of religion and myth far beyond the patient's comprehension.” This was one of the “hallucinations” with which Van Dusen communicated directly through the subject. “At the end of a very rich dialogue with her (the patient reporting her symbols and responses), the patient asked for just a clue as to what she and I were talking about.”

All of these qualities Van Dusen discovered in the higher order are consistent with those that Swedenborg ascribes to angelic spirits and their influences, perhaps especially the mythic or symbolic nature of their affectional communication, which Swedenborg frequently reported as ineffable (inexpressible in words). Again, this is a quality that Moody stressed, especially in regard to the “beings of light” but also to the out-of-body experience in its entirety.

Van Dusen reported two other principles—conveyed to him through his patients by the higher order—which he later found to be essential to Swedenborg's descriptions and explanation of the other life and its relation to this one. The first of these is that a single entity of either order—the compelling “voice” of a pathological psychosis or the illuminating vision of religious character—may be the representation or personification of large groups of spirits who manifest “as one” their “single” quality. Swedenborg describes this phenomena as a single spirit serving “as the subject of many.” As the focus for such a greater spiritual collective, such a spirit must be expected to have that extraordinary force that many such entities—malignant and benign alike—exhibit. It is as such collectives that Swedenborg describes the “angels” of the Bible, and also the personifications of the “devil.” (It should be noted that this reconciles the traditional accounts of “superhuman” entities with Swedenborg's insistence that all spirits in the other life are the minds of men who had lived in a body, and that God created no favored class of beings.)

The second principle that Van Dusen reported—also indicated to him by the higher order—is that the obsessive and possessive intrusions of demonic hallucinations are permitted for the subject's benefit, and that “the usefulness of the lower order is to illustrate and make conscious the patient's weaknesses and faults.” Conversely, the higher order appears when the subject's spiritual freedom requires the moderation of the influence of the lower order, or he needs support in

his contest with it. Van Dusen also reported that the higher order is quite as thick to insist that its powers are from the divine, and not its own, as the lower order is to claim god-like powers it does not possess.

In all these respects Van Dusen's findings, like Moody's, find their counterparts in Swedenborg's accounts. But it must be kept in mind that the phenomena available to these investigators—or sufficient incidence for quantitative and qualitative analysis—are limited to the kinds of unconscious (psychic, spiritual) influences that most readily break through into or displace normal consciousness. While “common” within their genre, and more common than had been supposed, they are nonetheless relatively *uncommon*, and presumably (like the visible tip of an iceberg) provide only fragmentary clues to what lies more deeply hidden. It is not surprising that these phenomena, viewed without a knowledge of their context in the whole, are difficult to interpret and assess.

Swedenborg's uniquely deeper, more wide-ranging and protracted experiences provide the overview or context that is necessary for an understanding of all the spiritual influences active in our lives, whether they break through into consciousness as “psychic” episodes or are experienced imperceptibly (subliminally) as if they are our own “self-generated” thoughts and feelings. His exploration of all the planes and reaches of that other world show it—together with our plane of worldly consciousness—to be a single, macrocosmic mind. This great spiritual communion can therefore be understood, as to its topography, its “countries of the hero,” its growth and commerce, and its interactions with this world, by reference to the same structured graphing of the hero's life in terms of which we examined the form, development, and functioning of our individual minds.

In Chapter 10 we will compare contemporary ideas about the etiology of the unconscious mind—the causes of its several levels, and their consequent qualities and interactions—with Swedenborg's descriptions of the spiritual world or collective mind, both from his hermeneutic reading of the myth and Macromyth and from his direct experience of the other life. Our effort will be to see how well Swedenborg's disclosures satisfy the psychological and phenomenological evidence about the laws of mental growth and functioning; how his spiritual world conforms to the mythic formula that describes the individual mind; and—especially—how well his universal spirit-world satisfies the premise of a purposed creation of which the sole intent is a mutual communion of human minds.

# Chapter 10

## *Infant amnesia*

We have found that the impress or image of every past experience, together with its feeling-content, is permanently retained in the individual mind (p. 219). Much of this material is “forgotten” (becomes unconscious) simply because it is casually mislaid in the memory. It seems to lose relevance to advancing consciousness and is displaced by more recent or more pressing experiences.

But Freud discovered another kind of forgetfulness, which he called “infant amnesia” (p. 147), that is caused by painful or “traumatic” associations with the original event. The memory is “repressed” from a fear of recalling or repeating the painful experience. The feelings (still unsatisfied wishes or drive-fragments) that produced the injury are repressed together with the memory in what is therefore a “*sub-conscious*” part of the psyche, where they build up increasing pressure as “psychic complexes.” Unacknowledged by consciousness, they seek release in disguised (substitute or “sublimated”) ways. The earlier the experience, the more deeply it is repressed, the larger is the shadow that it casts, and the more unconscious and inaccessible it is. “All these traumata belong to early childhood,” Freud said, “the period up to five years.”

According to Erikson, each developmental stage features its particular “nuclear conflict” (Fig. 15). In effect, these are basic crises in the management of the modality that governs each stage. Definitive traumas—especially strong, common to the human experience, and produced by the abuse and frustration of each succeeding basic mode—are therefore to be expected at the points of modal shift. It is these that in our mythic metaphor are represented by the salient events in the hero-life. Each “country” itself—its way of life, or responsive mode—abandoned; but the “population” of feelings generated by sense-experience on that plane remains behind as its “unconscious” content.

Freud concluded that all the material lost to the infant amnesia was repressed because of its painful or frustrated association for advancing consciousness. Others have accepted his principles of trauma, repression, amnesia, and complex, but have denied that the content of the unconscious was exclusively frustrated instinct-fragments or repressed eroticism. Erikson’s views are essentially Freudian; yet he discerned in the infant mind a propensity for trust and mutuality that is only subsequently subverted by mistrust, and that leaves an early impress of favorable experiences which continues to influence the individual’s feelings through all the later stages. Jung adopted many elements of Freud’s libido theory, but found “untenable” Freud’s view of the unconscious as (in Jung’s pejorative terms) “a mere appendix of consciousness...a trash can that collects all the refuse of the conscious mind.”<sup>1</sup> Jung’s archetypes are unconscious content of profoundly creative and continuing effectiveness.

Philosopher Colin Wilson, comparing the systems of Freud, Jung, and Swedenborg, put the question thus: “...if the mind has its subconscious ‘cellar,’ may it not also have a superconscious ‘attic,’ a part of the mind that possesses deeper insight and higher knowledge than the ‘everyday self’?”<sup>2</sup> A similar distinction has been deduced by others (e.g., Van Dusen’s “higher order” and

---

1. .

2. .

“lower order”) from the difference between the integrating effects of positive (awareness-raising) psychic experiences and schismatic effects of negative (compulsive or inhibiting) hallucinations. Presumably the more pervasive influences that act subliminally into consciousness—the almost invisible roots of our conscious thoughts” (Jung)—must also be attributed, according to their qualitative differences, to the same “superconscious” and “subconscious” sources in the mind.

For our most recent graphing of the mind (Fig. 30), we had arrived at the terms *motive*, *imagery*, *memory*, and *sense-experience* to identify the stages/levels/modes of the mind’s creative functioning as described by Freud, Erikson, Piaget, Jung, and Bruner. The influence of the higher planes, as levels of the unconscious, is essentially unifying. This is true especially of the highest or motive plane with its residual sense of hallowed (hale, healthy, holy, whole) presence and its spontaneous responsiveness. But it is also true of that “world of wonders” in the mind, the plane of mythopoeic imagery; and of the emulative awe for the “almighty” exemplar by which role-sequences and “global” rules are inscribed on the memory. For the modern adult whose consciousness has descended into the plane of sense-experience, these integrating influences act from above the “threshold” of consciousness—seemingly out of his own forgotten infantile and childish states—and may together be identified as his “superconscious ‘attic.’”

But where are we to locate his “subconscious ‘cellar’”? The four modes we have identified are entirely sufficient to the creative process for which the mind is constituted. There can be no mode below that of sense-experience, since next below sensation must be that which is sensed: not mind, but matrix; not psychical, but physical. And if these and only these four modes are traversed (“encompassed” or “embraced”) in the *complete* creative cycle, certainly an *incomplete* embracing of the mind’s potential creativity—a failure to “come full circle”—can *add* nothing to the mind. This means that, having assigned the higher modes of motive, imagery, and memory to the “attic” of the mind, we must look for the “subconscious ‘cellar’” in the one remaining mode on the plane of sense-experience.

This is, of course, the same plane to which consciousness has been reduced. In itself it is obviously no mere “trash can,” but a proper and essential mode in the creative process, the plane on which all the imagery of the mind is generated and by which motive and imagination are effected. Consciousness is the voluntary agent of these functions in this lower-world of sense-experience. But even while it is immersed in sense-experience, consciousness *makes* conscious—or *retains* as conscious—only a small fraction of what is sensed on this plane and (as Jung put it) “translated from the realm of (physical) reality into that of the mind.”

All the feelings that are shaped in response to sense-experience, and elude conscious notice or pass out of consciousness, find their place somewhere in the unconscious. Those feelings (wishes, drives, impulses, urges) which on their encounter with physical reality retain their creative integrity with the mind’s “intrinsic motivation” or “main purpose...to be human” will seek a place within the mind in which they can continue to influence its creative thrust. They transcend their matrix in sensation, operating into sense-experience from their “attic” planes of motive, mythopoeia, and learned example.

But what of those feelings which, by their negative nature, are incompatible with the integrated functioning of the “superconscious” levels of the mind? It is significant that Freud and Jung disagreed over the higher-order—which Freud denied—, but not the lower; and that Van Dusen’s lower-order, too, is characterized by sensuality, eroticism, a “pleasure-principle” that displaces mutuality and seeks immediate self-indulgence and self-aggrandizement. Feelings incapable of rising above the momentary gratification of the senses will—as unconscious—down into the

service of their obsessive hungers. They create nothing, but only *subvert the creative function* of sensation—and its pleasures—which are proper to our quest for a fulfilled humanity. As an infestation of sense-experience they lurk unseen within sensation, making of this plane the dark and threatening underworld that our questing consciousness finds it to be.

The “subconscious ‘cellar’” of the mind, then, was not intended as such, not was it such in “the Beginning.” Its acquired quality and content is owing to the principle that impurities sink to the bottom, where they accumulate as impediments to free circulation. These are the traumas, repressions, complexes, and amnesias (the monsters, sirens, trials, and tests) that obstruct the passage of consciousness through the lower level. Yet it is this “settling” process which also preserves the possibility of an ultimate transcendence, for its positive effect is to maintain the untainted and harmonious integrity of the higher levels of the mind—the “superconscious ‘attic’”—as the potential habitation of a consciousness that successfully negotiates the hazards of the quest.

The importance of this principle will become increasingly apparent as we now pursue again the parallels between the individual mind and the collective mind, to seek a fuller understanding of the latter.

### ***A collective “superconscious”***

When we first discussed the concept that every functioning “body” of men serves a collective purpose and possesses a collective mind, and that aggregate humanity may therefore be viewed as a single great collective man, we had not yet entertained the question of an afterlife. We consequently considered this greater collective as comprising only the diverse evolving cultures in this material world.

It was in this restricted context that we quoted Eliade (p. 171): “If the discovery of the unconscious has compelled Western man to confront his own individual, secret and larval ‘history,’ the encounter with non-Western cultures will oblige him to delve very profoundly into the history of the human spirit, and...admit that history as an integral part of his own being.” Since every functioning “body” of men has its collective mind, Eliade’s implication that among the populations of this world the western cultures relate to goal-oriented “consciousness,” and the primitive and esoteric cultures perpetuate the relatively “unconscious” feeling values of aggregate humanity, is no less valid because it is limited to life on earth.

But if every generation of men survives its life in the material world, we must also accept that there is a larger collective mind which embraces all those minds that have ever inhabited this mortal realm. In this greater context, those still in body at any given time must be understood to constitute only that plane of the collective mind which corresponds to our individual “consciousness” of material reality; and the “unconscious” planes of this greater collective mind must be identified with the minds of those who, having passed from this world, can no longer be directly perceived by the mode of sense-experience to which the consciousness of men in the material world has been reduced.

It is simply a logical extension of psychohistorical/psychological parallels we have already drawn to expect that these “unconscious” planes of the collective mind will constitute—on this grandest scale—the equivalents of the three unconscious levels we have identified in the individual mind; that these three collective levels which transcend sense-experience will be governed respectively by the same three responsive modes that govern the three levels of communion in the

world of spiritual reality will have been successively formed and populated—and successively closed off to the minds of men in the material world—in the same way that our individual unconscious planes of mind are formed, acquire their content, and become “unconscious.”

Just as they anticipate the phenomenological researches of Moody and Van Dusen, the spiritual worlds that Swedenborg reported satisfy in all respects this expectation that they must exhibit “in large” the features, growth-processes, organization, and interfunctioning of a single human mind.

He describes the three utopian communions to have been originally populated by those who lived in the material world during the psychohistorical epoch in which each of the responsive modes prevailed, in much the way that the unconscious levels of the modern mind each acquires its content during the successive stages of psychological development.

He showed each of the higher communions to have been closed off to the direct awareness of those who, in the subsequent psychohistorical epoch, abandoned the ways of perceiving, feeling, and responding that had governed it; and described each modal shift as a crisis in which Freud’s concepts of trauma, repression, complex, and amnesia— and a consequent “subconscious ‘cellar’”—prove as applicable to the collective as to the individual mind.

What Swedenborg discovered about these other worlds in the course of his spiritual adventures is wholly consistent with the principles he was at the same time discovering hermeneutically in the Testaments. As magnifications of the symbolic events in the hero-life, the Macromythical episodes by which Swedenborg identified his evolutionary stages or “great worships” are descriptive also of the shifts from each psychological stage to the next (Fig. 31, from Figs. 26 & 30). Interpreted allegorically, these episodes present as altogether strikingly similar the early changes in “primitive” human thinking and those in the individual mind through infancy and childhood (pp. 124, 141-51). The qualities of perception and response that Swedenborg attributed to his first two “churches” (Most Ancient and Ancient) are directly comparable to the motive spontaneity of the infant’s earliest responses (to age 3), and the subsequent stages of mythopoeia (“world of wonders,” ages 3-5) and learned rituals (“sacred” rules, ages 5-7). In both cases it is evident that the quality of each stage derives from the modal plane on which it is lived, and that experiences during that stage will generate the content of that plane in the collective and individual minds alike.

Since the “three” planes or communions of the afterlife comprise these same modes, and are further distinguished by the origins of their spirit-populations in the corresponding epochs, the realms of spiritual existence Swedenborg experienced in his otherworld adventure presented for his observation—as ongoing, living systems—the full spectrum of man’s possible responses to the gift of life precisely as these are covenanted, and the covenant perpetuated, in the Testamental allegory.

### ***Three heavens***

Just as he shows the unique thrust of each psychohistorical “great church” to have appeared successively within an evolving “universal church,” (p. 129) Swedenborg described the three distinct planes on which the spirits of each church have their continuing existence as specific “heavens” within a “universal heaven.” The universal heaven embraces all of those who have accepted any degree of willing participation in its pursuit of the common good. Swedenborg calls this uni-



versal communion of mutuality "Maximus Homo," the Greatest Man, the collective human spirit functioning as a harmonious human mind.

While the three component heavens operate in harmony within this single, macrocosmic mind—as do the responsive modes within the creative process, and the "unconscious" functions within the integrated individual mind—, each heaven is distinctly (Swedenborg uses the term *discretely*) separated from the others, since the utopian life for any given spirit—the way of life that is *for him* a "heaven"—can only be at that level of mutual participation on which he can exercise and fulfill his chosen mode of feeling, thinking, and responding. A participation either more intimate or less full than he already seeks can have no paradisiacal delights for him, but only the sense of imposed coercion or constraint which deadens love and mutuality.

We will examine the spiritual law by which this stratification of the heavens is effected, and the fullest free expression of mutuality assured at every level and throughout the whole, in just a moment. But first it will be useful to discover how exquisitely the several heavens, as Swedenborg described them from his direct experience with their spirit-populations, exhibit in their "lifestyles" precisely those modes that we have identified in the creative process and as the levels of the individual mind.

The names by which Swedenborg identified these three distinct realms are—in ascending order, or according to their increasing degrees of mutual commitment and participation—the *Natural* heaven, the *Spiritual* heaven, and the *Celestial* heaven. (Fig. 32 equates these with the corresponding modal planes of the individual mind.)

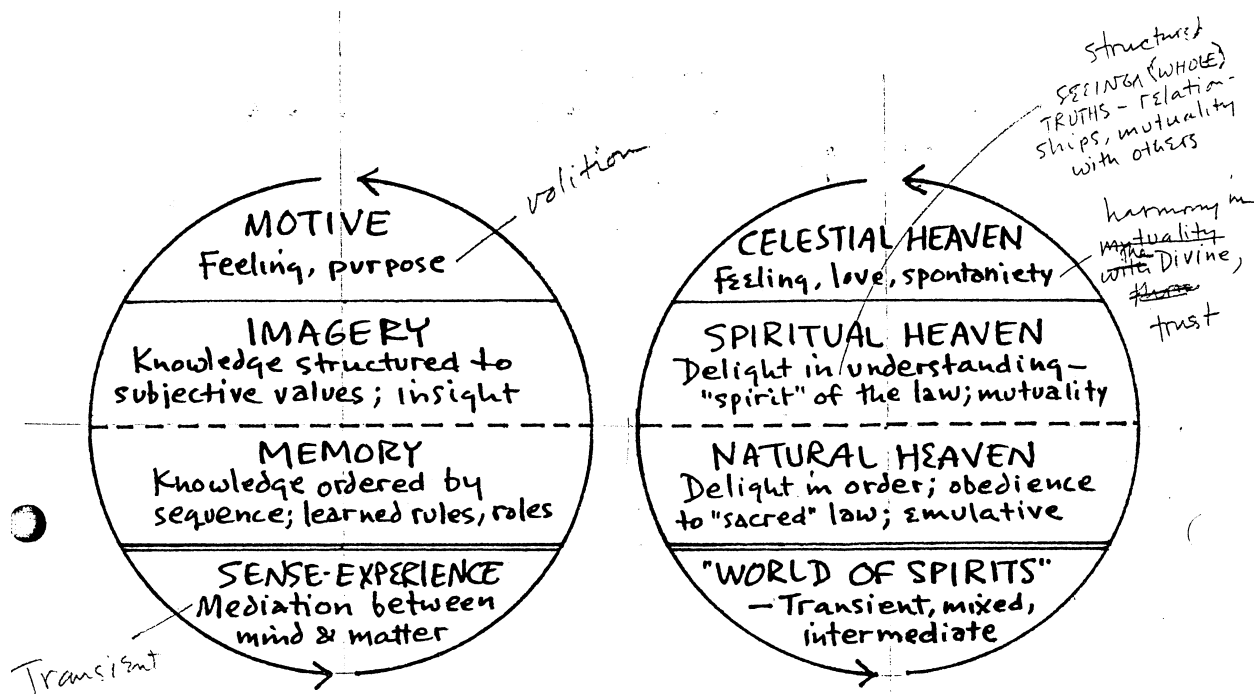


Fig. 32

- The lowest or *Natural heaven*, Swedenborg found, is the spiritual home of those who in this life welcomed and strove to observe Love's laws of orderly and harmonious cooperation. They accepted the "social contract" from a natural good will, and cultivated an obedience to it as an effective guide without feeling the need to understand the "*spirit* of the law," its reasons or intent. The God of these spirits is the Lawgiver, the "almighty" Exemplar or "model" of right behavior, to whom one may safely trust the shaping of one's life by learning and acceding to His inviolable and "sacred" code. From this commitment, the spirits of the Natural heaven are liberated ("saved") from their inclinations to disorder, protected from the consequences of acts or aspirations that are contrary to the purposed rhythms of divine creation, and rewarded by the relatively external security, harmony, and nurture to which they have assigned their highest values.
- In the middle or *Spiritual heaven* are the spirits of those who not only accepted the authority of the Law which rules the lower heaven, but sought a closer communion with its Source, a deeper and more intimate cooperation, from an understanding of the spirit within the letter of the Law. Their God is the divine Wisdom from which the Law proceeds and governs. This is clearly a further liberation—from a constant dependence on literal obedience, from the need to learn what law or rule applies in every case—; for, from an insight into meanings, there is an intuition of appropriate responses: when the destination is understood, there is no need for signposts at every turn. But this *freedom* from the literality of the Law—from a dependence on external guidance and constraints—rewards the more complete *submission* of the spirits of this heaven to God's guidance: the wish to have Him govern not only their actions but also their thought or understanding, thus *in their understanding* to become the images and willing agents of His Wisdom.
- The spirits or angels of the highest or *Celestial heaven* are those who have transcended the need even to understand the workings of the divine intent in their lives; and who respond spontaneously—empathetically—to the immediate promptings of the creative Love itself to which they have subordinated all appearances of self-agency. Because their responses are therefore richer, fuller, and more appropriate to life's offerings, their yielding of self-agency makes them in fact more fully the agents of God's creativity and more wholly aware of God's gift to them of a unique and individual role in His creation. It should be understood that such a motive spontaneity does not exclude thought and understanding. But instead of reflecting in advance about what response is appropriate, these spirits have reflected back into their minds and thoughts the delights that their response from Love has given to others of God's creatures. Thus their thought does not intervene between the motive impulse and the act—as in the middle heaven, where the understanding directs response—; but instead it follows, retains, rewards, and prompted by the motive *feeling*, or from an openness to the divine Love.

As realms of the afterlife, these heavens are of course the homes of mature minds—men who have had in this world the opportunity to develop and confirm, each in his unique way from his own experiences and responses, modes that in our examination of the stages of psychological development we have viewed as immature potentials. The angelic spirits Swedenborg encountered in the Celestial heaven, then, had the rich and unspoiled wisdom that might be expected of men who through a lifetime had found a pristine nature—and their fellows—"mutually trustworthy" of their spontaneous, open, affirmative responses to the rhythms of their lives, and had come

to know its nurture as a “hallowed presence” within its dependable and rewarding regularities. As we will see later, the very fact that this early humanity gradually turned away from this condition is its own proof that—while analogous to instinct in their harmony with natural processes—human responses had within them from the beginning the element of choice, the potential for deviations, that purely natural or instinctive drives do not allow. Infant mankind—and Swedenborg’s “Celestials”—are therefore to be understood as no less *human*—in the meaning we have given to that term—than the individual newborn, but rather as having matured to a more spontaneous humanity on a level of less confused, more voluntary choices.

This distinction applies also to the other heavens in comparison to the corresponding psychological stages. As Jung said of our “myth-making and myth-inhabiting” ancestor, whom Swedenborg encountered in the middle heaven, he “was a grown reality and not a four-year-old child” (p. 235). And it is that same mode of mental *structuring* (Bruner), of “intrusive” curiosity and “initiative” (Erikson), of “the why’s” (Piaget) which, when matured, produces *understanding*.

### ***Spiritual “proximity”***

It is evident that any of these planes-of-being can be a heaven or utopia for those who inhabit it only if there is a sphere of protection which allows them to exercise their chosen way of life in freedom and safety.

This appears to be particularly true of the spirits of the highest heaven, who—from their openness and spontaneous response to feelings—would be deeply troubled by and even vulnerable to the inferior or perverse feelings of lesser spirits. But the lower heavens have an equal need for their own integrity. If the open trust of the Celestial heaven must not be violated by the intrusion of a lesser trust, neither may the inhabitants of the Spiritual heaven have their understanding—the thinking-values by which they have chosen to respond—imposed upon or “smothered” by the direct influence of spirits whose feeling-values transcend their understanding. Only those who share the level or mode of trust peculiar to each heaven will find their heaven in it, or can properly be welcomed by it.

The stratification of the heavens is therefore neither arbitrary nor imposed, but is the mutual attraction of like minds at every level according to their spiritual affinities. We noted earlier that each of the physical senses has its corresponding spiritual sense in the world of mind (p. 254); there must clearly be a correspondence, also, between the appearance—to these two “sets” of senses—of *what* they sense, or between the laws that govern in space and time and those that govern in the mind. Swedenborg reported that the equivalent of the physical dimensions in the spiritual world—the appearances of space and time—is the perfect representation of spiritual relationships. Thus spiritual proximity or distance is according to affinities or disparities of spiritual points-of-view, attitudes, and interests. It is this spiritual law which replaces in the other world the fixed dimensions of this world as the organizing principle of social interactions and relationships.

Even in this life, of course, we can discern the operation of this spiritual law, which allows us the choice of compatible associations. Despite the physical constraints of this world—the impediments of time, space, inertia, and fixed matter—we can seek the company of those whose values seem most nearly like, and most complementary to, our own. We gravitate toward those of similar interests and aspirations. We tend to avoid those whose presence diverts us from our goals, or awakens in us inclinations that are contrary to our deeper wants. We find ourselves “distant” from those, however physically proximate, with whom we have no purposes or dreams in com-

mon; and “close” to those, even a continent away, who share our values, our mental “position,” our spiritual “stand.”

It is true that the physical dimensions of this material world impede the free association of kindred minds and force unwelcome associations: there is often little correspondence between our private wishes and the company we must keep. But the quality of spiritual freedom can only be appreciated if we understand that even the apparent constraints of space and time are instruments of freedom appropriate to the matrix function of this physical universe. That functions to offer us a choice, the opportunity to test and confirm our choice, and—according to our choice—a fully formed and furnished mind which, liberated from a matrix, can find its place and free expression among kindred spirits on its chosen level of participation in the life of the collective mind.

All imagery in the other world, as we have seen, derives from the experience of physical reality in this one—phenomena “translated from the realm of (physical) reality,” as Jung put it, “into that of the mind.” It is our experience with physical space and time that provides the mental images or symbols by which the mind sees, pictures, or represents those spiritual proximities or distances which far more truly express the relationships between mind and mind. But physical phenomena are also the medium by which, while we are captive to the body’s senses and the fixed dimensions of this world, we are brought into situations that require us to choose between alternative responses—and so, quite literally over the course of a lifetime, to “make up our minds” between the spiritual influences and values that we allow to govern those choices.

The constraints of time, space, and material reality in this world, then, expose us—willing or reluctant—to the choices by which we cumulatively and from our own free will shape our minds to a spiritual environment of our choosing. We will explore more fully later how this apparent coercion serves free choice. But it is clear that once our essential choice had been decided and irrevocably confirmed, a continuing forced exposure in space and time to unwanted alternatives—redundant confrontation in which the spiritual issue has already been resolved—could only chafe, not change, the spirit. At this point the material matrix of free choice, the body and its physical environment, becomes a confinement which has no further utility and can only inhibit the free exercise or expression of the spirit.

What Swedenborg’s experiences in the other world affirmed is that when the mind or spirit—the essential man—is liberated from his no longer serviceable matrix, and from obedience to nature’s laws, he is subject and responsive wholly to spiritual laws or the laws of the mind. Thus, as Moody’s subjects also reported, “time and space no longer pose the obstacles they do in this life” (p. 264). And each spirit finds his “place” in that world according to his spiritual affinities, among other spirits of like mind.

Our premise, that what God intends is man’s free participation in the delights of a mutual creativity—of bringing happiness to others—, demands that heaven provide a spiritual place or home for any spirit who has chosen to respond creatively to Love’s solicitations, whatever the degree to which—or by whatever mode—he has freely elected to participate. As a truly universal image of the divine Mind, the heavens must be a creative whole in which there is such a role for every spirit whose free wish is to contribute to the common good.

That shared wish—however unique in degree and kind with every spirit—is the fundamental spiritual affinity which, like a universal, all-pervading field of gravitational attraction, makes the heavens one: an expression, in their incalculable multiplicity, of their Creator’s divinely singular Humanity. Spiritual relationships within that universal integrity may be understood as constel-

lations of interest—of which the greatest spiritual collectives within the whole are the Celestial, Spiritual, and Natural heavens.

While these heavens—like the modes or levels in the individual mind, and in every instance of creativity—interfunction as a harmonious whole in the realization of their common purpose, they nonetheless appear to the spirits in them as distinctly separate in space. This is, of course, because relative proximity according to the spiritual affinities implies the converse, relative distanti-  
antiation.

This must be true of every spiritual relationship. Each spirit has his individuality from the uniqueness of his “point of view,” a spiritual position that can no more be occupied by a second spirit than two bodies can occupy exactly the same physical space in this world. Even to approach the spiritual position of another—his feelings, attitudes, and thoughts—, a spirit must change his own position and “close the spiritual distance” between them, which—from the imagery borrowed from sense-experience—appears an actual intervening space. It is because his movements correspond exactly to his interests and concerns—because his spiritual relationships are precisely as intimate or “close,” and precisely as enduring—that “time and space no longer pose the obstacles they do in this life” (Moody, p. 264.) His range in spiritual space and time, however, is limited by his range of mind, the scope and quality of his wish for mutuality, his wish to feel and think with others. Even in this life we feel most free to “be ourselves” with friends who share our values, or within the family, community, or culture. It is that freedom which is effected and protected in the other world for every spirit: the freedom to express his thoughts and feelings openly without fear of disturbing or being disturbed by states too different (or “distant”) from his own; the freedom to reinforce, by intimate mutual associations, that sense of a secure “place” of belonging from which to reach out the more confidently into expanding spheres and associations; the freedom, especially, to be what he has chosen to become, and to feel that sense of who he is which is requisite to sharing what he is.

Any spirit’s perception of his relatedness and mutual influence with other spirits, and of his community of spirits with others in the spiritual macrocosm, is—like gravitation—inverse to the “distance” that separates them. This is a law which obviously applies in our own minds: we are aware of those things that occur on the level of perception, that influence us subliminally, or that occur beyond the range of our directed attention and immediate concern. This is true not only of external things and events, but of the contents and the operations of the mind. Entirely apart from any traumatic blockages or schisms, there appears to be an altogether normal kind of forgetfulness that results from the progressive shifts in the perceptive/responsive modes through infancy and childhood, from the degree of intensity or relevance (or loss of relevance) of earlier experiences, and from the displacement of things in memory by more recent, pressing, or relevant experiences.

Forgetfulness according to intensity, immediacy, or relevance is *quantitative*; that is, it can be measured on a continuous scale. But the forgetfulness that results from a modal shift is *qualitative*: we do not move on a smooth continuum from one mode to the next. In fact, the more intensely we engage one mode the less aware we are of the others. As we have quoted Jung, “thinking almost automatically throws out feeling values and vice versa”; and intense sensations clearly tend to blot out memory and thought. We therefore do not need to make recourse to conflicts, traumas, or repressions to account for the levels of “forgetfulness”—of the unconscious, or of a “superconscious ‘attic’”—in our minds. Swedenborg’s experience of the heavens affirmed the collective correlate of this psychological principle: that even if no spirit had chosen to refuse participation in the universal communion of mind at any level, the heavens—according to their

governance by the respective modes—would be harmoniously interfunctioning but *discretely separate as levels of awareness*; and that the awareness of the spirits in one heaven of the influences and values of another world would be relatively subliminal or “unconscious.”

“Forgetting,” Jung said, “...is a normal process,” in which “attention has been deflected....just as a searchlight lights upon a new area by leaving another in darkness.”<sup>1</sup>“This capacity to isolate part of one’s mind, indeed, is a valuable characteristic,” he pointed out. “It enables us to concentrate on one thing at a time, excluding everything else that may claim our attention.”<sup>2</sup> If such discriminate distinctions have a creative utility *within* the mind, a provision for their equivalent must be necessary also for the creative functioning of the universal mind: a “normal” sort of “forgetting” *between* minds or spirits, which can serve to “isolate its parts,” both according to its modal levels and by the orderly constellation—in “spiritual space”—of the spirits on each of the levels. In allowing the concentration of the energies of individual spirits and communities of spirits on the roles of which their unique experience and choice of responsive mode have suited them, this kind of forgetfulness is in effect a focused attentiveness which, in strengthening the parts, increases the bonds of mutual attraction and influence between them and thus strengthens the creative interfunctioning of the whole.

### ***Psychohistorical traumas***

But every source of evidence we have so far consulted indicates that—in addition to the normal kind of forgetting that is necessary for a directed or selective attentiveness—mankind suffers also from a collective “infant amnesia,” like that attributed to the individual mind by Freud, which from its origin in traumatic episodes in our archaic past has resulted in the repression of those unpleasant racial memories and of the collective inclinations associated with them.

Certainly neither Freud nor Jung have any hesitation in applying the psychoanalytic principles of ontogenesis to the phylogeny. As a common referent, the mythic metaphor of the hero has demonstrated a consistent correlation between the two growth-processes. The indications of an “attic” and a “cellar” in the individual and collective minds alike imply for both a realm that is open and aspiring, though beyond the immediate reach of consciousness, and a lower region that is dark, repressed, and threatening. In contrast to the supportive, instructive, benign, and freedom-respecting qualities of Moody’s “beings of light,” Van Dusen’s “higher order,” and the positive archetypes of Jung’s unconscious, the likeness of Van Dusen’s “lower order”—eruptive, compulsive, obscene, sensual, tormenting, immoderately vain, power-seeking, life-threatening, undermining of creative values—: the likeness of these to the repressed contents of Freud’s subconscious is unmistakable.

In the individual mind, unconscious influences—both creative and pathological, both subliminal and as psychic breakthroughs—are quite literally the influences on his feelings generated by conscious life of the *spirits* of his past experiences, which have been perpetuated in his mind beyond his conscious reach. There is a striking likeness between Freud’s “psychic complex”—the clustering of repressed feelings associated with the same frustrated drive-fragment, which consequently build up accumulating pressures to break out in atypical and disorderly behaviors—and the inclination of lower-order hallucinations (as Van Dusen reported) to “gang up” on their victim.

---

1. .  
2. .

In the collective mind, the irrational behaviors of great segments of society—mob actions, cult movements, irrational wars, moral collapse, class pogroms—may be viewed as reversions to the perverse residual primitivity of mankind that social order seeks to hold under conscious control: that is, as vastly greater associations of the lower order “ganging up” on human society from its collectively repressed “subconscious ‘cellar.’”

For the individual mind, the effect of these lurking influences in his psychic underworld is to make him mistrustful of motive and imaginative influences from any unconscious source. As Van Dusen pointed out, the lower order is remarkably capable of misrepresentations and disguises. Subliminal influences must be far more difficult to unmask. And having been repeatedly deceived and betrayed by our subjective judgements we become suspicious of all influences in ourselves (and others) that cannot be “proved” by reference to our one remaining mode, sense-experience. We dismiss not only the negative but also the positive contributions of the unconscious as “infantile,” “childish,” “fantasy.” And collectively we have done the same thing.

Mankind, then, is suffering from a collective case of “infant amnesia” which denies to consciousness in this world—not just from a normal change of mode or deflection of our attention, but from a pathological blockage—what might otherwise be a readier recognition of (and even access to) the higher levels of the collective mind as our own spiritual environments, and of the constant presence with us of their spirit-populations.

The inference that these realms were successively closed off to men on earth by collective “psychic traumas” or spiritual crises is warranted by the unmistakably traumatic character of the Macromythical episodes that Swedenborg identified as the ending of each psychohistorical period and the beginning of the next, a traumatic quality that must pertain also to their allegorical significance: the destruction of a corrupt race in a universal deluge; the “scattering abroad” and loss of a common language for all mankind at Babel; the drowning of Pharaoh’s forces in the Red Sea. While each of these divine judgements redeemed a surviving remnant—Noah with his family, Abram with his, and Moses with his followers—it also closed off to that surviving remnant not only the negative or threatening aspects of the prior way of life, or worship-mode, but all access to its positive aspects—the sense of belonging, the security and nurture it had provided—as well.

These traumas—from our premise that creation looks to a universal communion of mutuality in the context of free choice—must be understood as a means provided in the divine ground-plan for the attainment of such a communion, despite the choice of some minds to exclude themselves from it, which at the same time assures the integrity of that communion for those who choose it and respects also the freedom of any who choose to refuse the mutual commitments that govern it. If the heavens—the collective “superconscious ‘attic’”—provide a place for any spirit who has chosen a participation in the common good on any of the modal levels, there must also be a realm—a “cellar”—in which the pursuits of exclusionary self-interests is allowed to those who, in this matrix of choices, have unalterably closed their minds to Love’s solicitations.

The collective traumas—allegorically represented successively by deluge, dispersion, and deliverance from Egypt—appear to be hard judgements visited on errant man by an implacable divine power. There is value, inevitability, and freedom in that appearance; but in fact Love could no more judge or punish than do the creative rhythms of nature, in violation of which man punishes—or brings down hard judgements on—himself. What these spiritual crises in the psychohistory have accomplished is in every case the response of Love to the problems posed by mankind’s own intransigence, and is according to the spiritual laws—the laws of mind and mutuality—that we have already identified.

That response must meet the needs of men in both worlds. It must liberate the spirits of those who have departed this world-of-choosing into the exercise of their chosen way of life—those whose idea of “utopia” is the indulgence of their private prides and pleasures no less than those who seek a communion of service to the common good. This separation of spirits, each into his chosen sphere, is of course a “judgement”; but rather than imposed, it is the provident operation of the spiritual law of attraction and association by choice and according to affinities.

This law serves to protect each sphere from the unwelcome intrusion, and even from an unwanted awareness, of contrary or conflicting thoughts and feelings, values and intentions. And

if we accept that this protection of their chosen sphere is provided equally for those who seek not to serve within society but to prey upon it, we are led to the remarkable conclusion that the collective realms of negative response—called “hells” in our tradition—are their own ideas of heaven to the spirits in them, and the fullest ideas of heaven to the spirits in them, and the fullest measure of Love’s unstinting gift of life they will accept.

### ***Fire and brimstone***

Contemporary concepts of the hells are so shaped by the literal interpretation of myth and Scripture that belief—where it survives—is manifestly inconsistent with the premise of a loving God and a benign creation. Love’s ends can in no way be served by unrelenting punishments or eternal torments. Fire and brimstone, wailing and gnashing of teeth, divine vengeance, the wrath of God, must obviously have other meanings. Even supposing that man damns himself, to ascribe the consequences of that damnation to a pride or jealousy, an ire or vengefulness in God is to make Him the source of just those evils which invite damnation.

At the same time, there is no mistaking the fact that in our own minds we encounter just that kind of imagery by which our spiritual traditions describe the hells. Even in our waking life we can be plunged into dark moods, sense the fires of consuming passion, be taunted by fugitive lusts, fall into mistrust or suspicion, be driven by envy. We normally ascribe these private “hells” to the external stimuli—the threatening or seductive “object” of our roused response. Yet the same external circumstances may at another time call up an entirely different response, according to our different *state of mind*. The sense of darkness, conflagration, taunt, falling, or being driven thus images inner realities that are almost independent of the object. We recognize the truth of this especially when we see someone else endowing objects or other people—whom we know to be altogether harmless—with the very feelings (pride, greed, purulence, envy) that are stirred up in his mind. He is experiencing the fires, the darkness, or the demons of his private hell, of which the Testamental allegories are exquisitely descriptive.

These dark influences—like their contrasting, creative counterparts from the “superconscious”—are subliminal when consciousness is in control. Daydreams are the relatively conscious admission of feeling values, creative or perverse, into the control of our thoughts. Fatigue or illness yields further to their control. In nocturnal dreams, some kinds of hallucination, and visionary states, awareness has withdrawn from conscious control and fully entered a realm of spiritual imagery: the reality of mind replaces that of sense-experience. These aberrations are generally temporary explorations, which permit the return of conscious control and its choice of what influences will be allowed to carry over into conscious life.

But when death completes the separation of the mind from its matrix body and its physical perceptions, the world of mind—which then perfectly images the feelings, points-of-view, and



expectations acquired and confirmed by conscious choices of response made in this world—becomes the sole reality. If the life of mind in which we have confirmed ourselves—which we have made the “utopia” of our choosing—is one of dark lusts and consuming hatreds, Love’s covenant of freedom requires that we be permitted to live among the spiritual fires and filth and darkness we have chosen....

But what Swedenborg discovered in his travels through the hells was that Love does not require those who have chosen such a life to change their values or their points-of-view, to see themselves—from values they have rejected—for what they are. Here is their heaven, and they are free to pleasure in it. There will of course be torment, since pride will bruise itself against reality and lust is never sated, and the cruel man must fear the cruelty—or the thieving man the thefts, the punitive man the punishments—of others of his spiritual kind: in fact, he will imagine those threats even where they do not exist. The best that Love can do is to protect him from the reality that he has repudiated for false values and delusions. Thus (even in *this* life) the glutton does not see himself as a pig among pigs; the thief pleasures in his cleverness; the tyrant thinks himself superior; the slave to sexual excesses and inventions believes himself to be “liberated.” But to any witness not possessed by these blind passions, the imagery of swine, nocturnal predators, self-consuming fires, stench and decay—the stuff of nightmares and the netherworlds of all the myths, the reality of hell—may be almost palpably evoked by those indulging them.

The character and behavior of Van Dusen’s lower-order spirits—which, with a qualification I will reserve for later, may be identified as spirits of the hells—adds confirmation to Swedenborg’s reports. They are permitted to retain their towering delusions of superiority and power; delight in their own cruelties, deceptions, and power, and to obscenities; and even if they withdraw from the approach of a higher-order entity (flee self-exposure in the true light of reality) they can later return with their perverse passions and delusions undaunted, and continue to deny—with unshaken self-certainty—the existence of any values higher than their own.

The imagery, then, by which the hells are described in our religious traditions—and which is so readily equated with the elements of dream and myth—, presents the appearances in which the realities of spiritual denial and abuses stand forth to the perceptions of the mind. But for the spirit who has confirmed himself in negative values, those perceptions have been distorted so that what he sees is what he wants to see, and his spiritual “reality” is that world of illusions which supports and justifies his self-exclusion from and opposition to the common good. The love of self perceives as true and beautiful whatever serves inflated pride and private pleasure, turning every virtue into its opposite. He who sees all others as his proper prey will also see them as intending predators upon himself, and interpret another’s innocence or kindness as stupidity or subterfuge. Once he has confirmed himself in his hostility to others, and has distorted his perception of reality to defend his spiritual position of self-primacy, he will shrink from any light that would expose his fantasies, and cringe from the mutuality implicit in the touch of love. Obviously his life will continue to depend on the divine Love, as the only source of nurture; but the obligation that his recognition of that dependence would force upon him is forgiven, and the universal covenant of a *free* participation in Love’s mutual communion is not dishonored in his choice to refuse it.

Within the universal cosmos of spirit, then, there is no imposed repression of the hells or of the spirits in them. The same law of association or proximity according to affinities and of distance according to disparities that governs the heavens *permits* these spirits their voluntary withdrawal into negative states of the collective mind. It is their own desires and fantasies which

create their separate milieus and prevent—by their own aversions—their intrusions into the spheres of heaven.

At the same time, it should be understood that by their own choices they have limited their freedom. The horizons of mutuality are perpetually expanding; the horizons of exclusive self-interest are obstructed at every turn by the conflicting self-interests of others. Suspicion is immobilizing, and every lust—greed, sensuality, hatred—becomes fixed upon and captive to its object. Small-mindedness in the other world becomes small-worldedness, and self-centeredness becomes a tether on the movement of the spirit in its spiritual environment. Who makes himself the center and the focus of his universe brings his universe down to his own small dimensions and confines himself within it. The tyrant is the pawn of his own power-lust, the lusting man is puppet to his genitals, the glutton chained to his table, the intellectually prideful imprisoned in his treasure-house of fools' gold.

Each man makes his own hell by the kind of indulgence to which he commits himself and the protective illusions by which he shuts out the realities that conflict with his obsessive self-concern. Swedenborg showed that in every case the “ruling love” of a malignant spirit is the abuse, for selfish satisfaction, of a creative gift with which he was endowed for its intended contribution to the common good—which was, in other words, intended for his use in heaven. This insight has its implications, relating to the origin and nature of evil, which we will explore in Chapter 11. It also has implications relevant to our immediate concern—the “place” and organization of the hells as realms of the universal spiritual cosmos or collective mind.

If every spirit in the hells is the abuse of a role which has its proper place in heaven, the hells collectively may be understood as the collective abuse of all the creative roles for which places are provided in the heavenly “human form” that images its Creator. The sphere of heaven, mutuality, devotes the self to others; the hells invert that principle and seek to force others into the service of the self. The hells may be seen, then, as an inversion of the heavenly human form, a negative image in which all creative values are turned upside-down or into their opposites.

Swedenborg's explorations of the hells revealed them to be just such an inversion of the heavens. As the heavens are stratified by the commitments of the spirits in them to the modes of useful participation, the hells are stratified by the abuse of those modes. Since what is most sublime may be most debased, the perversion of the mode that governs the highest of the heavens produces the most wholly malignant and the deepest of the hells. For this reason, Swedenborg assigned to the descending hells the inversely parallel names he applied to the ascending heavens—the hell opposite the *Natural* heaven, the hell opposite the *Spiritual* heaven, and the hell opposite the *Natural* heaven.

- As the shallowest of the infernal realms, the hell opposite the *Natural* heaven is more disorderly than diabolical. It is the state of those who have confirmed themselves in a resistance to any authority or rules, have acquired a “natural” aversion for what is true or useful, have made habitual their preference for dishonest gain—by cheating, theft, or bullying—and illicit pleasures. The spirits of this hell are thus collectively the spirit of denial toward the “sacred law,” “Almighty Exemplar,” and “social contract”—which express the *forms* of mutuality—that govern in the *Natural* heaven.
- Swedenborg found the hell opposite the *Spiritual* heaven to be a realm of perverse rationalism: the use of twisted reasoning to gain power over other minds. If the faculty of understanding is used to justify or “prove” whatever suits or serves for self-advantage it produces fantasy, falsehood, and self-delusion. Its most grievous product is the

towering illusion of self-intelligence, which blinds the mind to truths antagonistic to its proud pretensions and selfish purposes. It becomes a tyrant in the mind which brooks no challenge; and the Spiritual hell collectively seeks to impose a similar tyranny of self-intelligence—and the destruction of all values that would expose its vain pretensions—upon the collective mind.

- In the hell opposite the *Celestial* heaven, it is the *feeling*-values of the Celestial heaven that are turned into their opposite. The full yielding to a “hallowed presence,” the sense of a perfect “mutual trustworthiness,” is replaced by the sense of self-life which is therefore malevolently—and with an equal spontaneity—mistrustful of whatever impinges on the desires or appetites to which these spirits have yielded all discrimination or constraint. A consuming self-love interprets all resistance or failure to be gratified as inimical; and since it is insatiable it responds to the gifts of Love—no less than its self-induced frustrations—with hatred, rage, and undiminished lust.

We have already found correlations between the basic creative cycle and Jung’s levels of the unconscious (Fig. 18), which make those levels correlates also of the heavens identified by Swe-

denborg (the upper circle of Fig. 33). There is a further striking likeness between Swedenborg's

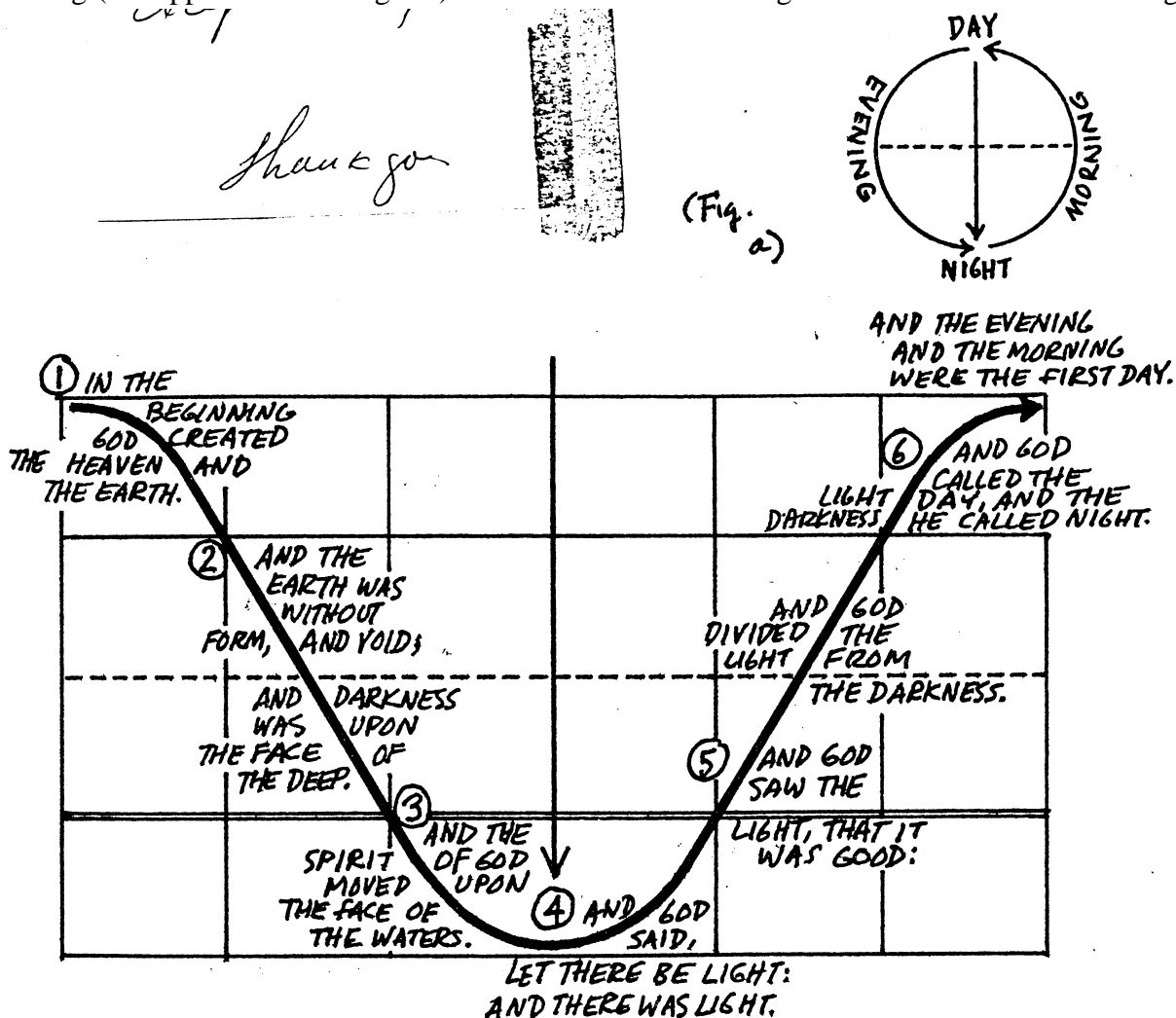


Fig. 33

33

The first of the six days of creation charted as a cycle in itself. Each phrase finds its place; note especially that the gift of this day, light or illumination, appears appropriately at the nadir where the Prize is won. The text explores these correlations, including the mandala figure (upper right).

descriptions of the stratified hells, as we have just summarized them, and the "parts" that Freud hypothesized for the individual psyche to account for subconscious influences on consciousness (cf. the lower, dotted circle of Fig. 33). The hell opposite the *Celestial* heaven reflects the characteristics of Freud's deepest psychic entity, the id: a raging furnace of seething passions, blind hatreds, and consuming appetites and lusts. The hell opposite the *Spiritual* heaven exhibits within the collective mind the tyrannical qualities of Freud's superego: a despotic arbiter and repressive censor, with a presumptive but persuasive claim to infallibility, which from limited experience and past abuses, and illusions of self-intelligence and self-agency, imposes punitive and repres-

sive prohibitions on creative aspirations and initiatives. The hell opposite the *Natural* heaven has features comparable to those of a subconscious aspect that Freud assigns to the ego, which—since below the reach of conscious choice or disposition—is readily influenced by the libidinal hungers of the id and the tyrannical controls of the superego.

Unlike the heavens, these infernal realms are not stratified, unified, or organized by the mutual attraction of the spirits in them to each other. The affinities by which they are brought into uneasy associations are instead their competitive attraction to the common *objects* of their private lusts. Each such lust seeks to dominate, despoil, or feed upon some part of the “body social,” and thus can only find its “place”—even in the pervasive anarchy of hell—according to the ordered structure of the collective human form which is the object of all anti-social passions and predations. Within that form—and only within it—there is a place for every spirit who has chosen to abuse his unique endowment of a part in the creative communion—the genuine humanity—of the heavens.

Infernal spirits are led in the “bondage” that the myths and Testaments attest to only by their own lusts, and by the constraints imposed by the competitive cravings, cruelties, and power-lusts of those like spirits into whose company their own perversity has brought them. While they do not therefore feel themselves as bound, since their chains are of their own free choosing, their bondage is apparent to any spirit who has rid himself of his compelling prides and self-indulgences. And yet the one essential freedom that is inherent in Love’s covenant—the absolute freedom of every human spirit to be what he has chosen to become—is every bit as inviolate in the hells as in the heavens.

But if man’s choices are to be honored in the other world, they must first be made in this one. The making of a choice requires a different kind of freedom, in which free-will cannot evade the confrontation of alternatives between which it must choose. As the matrix of the cumulative choices by which man ultimately “makes up his mind,” the realm of sense-experience is the arena of the mythical adventure. And it is consciousness, on this plane, that suffers the amnesia and traumas that beset the mythic hero.

# NOTES

## *Corresponding cause and effect*

The fact that there are three planes of reality, not just two, and the unity of these planes by correspondence, is evident in any work of art. Each brushstroke presents all three levels. The daub itself, as a manifestation, materialization, or *effect*, corresponds directly to something in the artist's concept, imagery, or thought which—in electing the color, shape, and placement of it—is the *cause* of it. And in that choice there is the artist's *motive purpose* of expression or communication.

Cause and effect, alone, are a mindless chain, without beginning or end. In all creative activity, *purpose*—the necessary third plane—is the *sine qua non*, the Alpha and Omega, the single turning, universe, gestalt.

Nature itself is the plane of the brushstroke. It is from our inner senses, our spiritual perceptions—from the light that shines through the soul upon the material world—that we can know the shaping way and the motive power of which the daub is the effect. The fact that the empiricist has confused these visions with instinct and fantasy does not invalidate Jung's observation that "What we call civilized consciousness has steadily separated itself from the visions."

The correspondences that we no longer are able to see and feel in nature—the motive meanings of the Artist that we cannot feel directly in the brushstroke, as our ancestors did—are still discoverable by reasoning of understanding in the myths *which gave those meanings a fixed, symbolic, self-perpetuating form*, a form which could outlast the loss of love's inner vision.

The true myths speak to us on any of the levels of our being and of the universal being—motive purpose, shaping concept, and material effect—to the extent that our awareness has been freed or opened to accept them. We can view the myths as naive dramatizations or personifications of natural processes, and derived from them. Or we can allow them to tell us allegorically of spiritual relationships and causes. Or we may let them—like the artist's work—move our hearts directly and influence our motive affections. As with art, we may read our own meaning into the canvas of myth, or deny it any meaning. But if we wish, from the faint memories of a vast, glorious canvas once seen whole, we may reconstruct its message and learn how to renew our sensitivity to it.

Our natural experience affirms the mythic metaphors by which the record of those lost states of innocence and trust have been preserved. We think and express ourselves in terms which echo those correspondences that link the worlds of spirit and of nature, and in which myth is given to us. The speech of man in all his languages is rich for them:

Love is warm. Indifference is cool. Hate burns.

To see is to understand. Ignorance and delusion are darkness. To hear is to obey; turning a deaf ear is willful disregard.

Faith is a rock. The hand is power. The heavens are of the spirit, earth of nature. Up is inspiration; down, debasement.

We thirst for truth; and like water, truth falls to us from above, or wellsprings from below: cleanses and refreshes us, flows in streams of thought and currents of conviction into the retentive seas of memory.

These are not verbal games, or merely cipher. Each corresponding “set” expresses like qualities at different levels. For every tangible thing that serves us physically, there is an actual if intangible counterpart—something ideational or affectional—that serves us inwardly in an identical way.

Love *does* warm the spirit, as physical heat does the body. We feel love as an inner warmth; and so close is the correspondence that we often feel an answering physical warmth.

Understanding *is* the vision of the inner eye. Comprehension is a light lit in the mind; ignorance is darkness. Inspiration *is* the life and breath of the mind: we are exhilarated when we receive it freely; become almost dizzy with an abundance of it, as from breathing too hard; are made heavy and stale when inspiration is denied us.

Faith *is* the rock on which our philosophies are built; and when our faith is shaken, our whole structure of thought can tumble...

### ***The Artist's message***

From statistical correlations of dream motifs and dream elements with the life situations of the dreamer, Jung developed relatively fluid guidelines to the reading of dream and mythic symbolism. To what extent is it possible to *know* the correspondences in which myth speaks, and draw out their inner significance with certainty?

The key to an understanding of the meanings hidden within the myths can easily be misunderstood by minds no longer sensitive to the numinous content of physical phenomena, and in an age in which the true harmonies of spiritual causes with natural effects have long since been distorted. The harmonies of beauty are in the eye of the beholder; and given an audience intent on reading its own literal meanings into his painting, or denying meaning to its representations, the artist has small hope that the feelings from which he created his work will be intuitively drawn from what he has put on his canvas, however perfectly the form and movement, the color and composition, are in fact the outward expression of his intent.

The artist can *explain* his work. He can spell out what feeling values the elements of it have within them. And to the extent that his feeling for hues and movement, form and symbol possess an inherent integrity, and if in his explanation he can reawaken that same integrity of harmonies in an affirmative viewer of his work, the painting may after all fulfill its purpose of communicating his felt vision.

But the process is laborious, and when the spontaneous expression of feelings must be translated into definitions of the symbols, and their relationships explained in concrete terms, the appearance of spontaneity is lost: there is the suggestion of an artificial, calculated, and even arbitrary use of more symbolic devices.

I stress this point because, as we undertake the rediscovery of the meanings of our mythic heritage, we will be forced from our own loss of spontaneous recognition of their inherent harmonies to deal with Correspondences as though *they* were no more.

??

### ***Lost meanings***

The correspondences between the things of mind and matter are not always so clear as in the examples we examined, especially where the spiritual quality is one grown unfamiliar or strange

to us. But those we can identify suggest that there is no spiritual law or process, no thing or element or aspect of our unseen spiritual environment, which does not in this world have its natural clothing by which its substantial but immaterial reality is terminated and expressed through a corresponding natural function.

Different colors rouse different moods in us because there are different affections—*spiritual* qualities—which join eagerly with specific natural wavelengths or vibrations that correspond to, harmonize with, and (we almost must conclude) are actually caused by them. The inexorable and almost imperceptible growth of a stately tree brings our inner feeling of *becoming* to the threshold of conscious awareness. Different beasts, fowl, fruit, topographical features, basic shapes, numbers and their relationships, concepts like path, barrier, opening, pit, spire, vista, various human roles and types: all things that we give the conscious recognition of our *understanding* to serve also to strike secret harmonies with our hidden realm of *feeling*, and extend their corresponding emotional chords an opportunity to sound in us.

*The numinous power of mythic symbol to which the psychologists refer is the result of the harmonious relationship between such parallel functions in our two environments.*

But because purpose has been erased in modern thought from the equation, instinct—which belongs to the lower or natural order—has been assigned the role of cause. And it must follow that if the feeling values of the higher order are thought merely to be the effects of the physiological processes, the psychic world will be considered one of fantasy, however necessary it has become to our psychological functioning.

The creative process, which makes motive purpose the highest and original activity, sees these roles in reverse. Purpose acquires the imagery which shapes thought; and thought—whether reasoned or, as in dream and myth, symbolic—becomes the means or cause which is reproduced as the brushstrokes of physical and physiological phenomena on nature's canvas.

The psychologists' reversal of the cause-effect relationship—their assignment of the role of effect, and so of fantasy, to the psychic—is the gross downgrading of what reason insists are the highest values. It thus presents a paradox for which no consistent answers have been found. Working from an empirical base in the low-order phenomena, the psychologists can no more than speculate about the “analogous” realm of spirit.

What is remarkable is how far their studies *have* taken them toward the discovery of valid meanings within the symbols of dream and myth.

But it is noteworthy that their greatest achievements in this effort of interpretation have been in those areas where they have borrowed most freely from the remnant “secrets” of the archaic systems whose traditions of ritual and symbol have (however imperfectly) been preserved, and from the world's religions in which (however inimically, as Jung complains) the ancient iconographies can still be found.

The principal problem, even here, is that the “secret mysteries” as preserved in the Masonic, Cabalistic, Rosicrucian, and several eastern philosophies, are not without their own distortions; that remarkably valid esoteric insights within astrology and alchemy are inextricably confused today with medieval and still earlier efforts to apply the “harmony of the spheres” expressed in them to mundane purposes; and that once a great religion has run its course its original motive inspiration is largely lost in the rigid elaborations of a codified dogmatic system. From each of these sources, what has been written down tends always to be the final, fixed, and relatively dead forms of its dying days. And it is the written records upon which the investigator must rely. An



exception is the modern primitive traditions, transmitted orally and by rituals meticulously repeated; even of these, few fail to evidence an appalling degradation.

The true interpretation of our mythic heritage, and our understanding of the relationship between the natural and spiritual realms, depends on our identification of the definitive and still viable myth, through which creation's purpose clearly shines; and on the rediscovery of those genuine correspondences in which myth speaks and by which it reveals its meaning.

### ***Myth's remnant magic***

The rumors of a once and future king, the remnant echoes in your memory of the love and trust, and of the persistent promise of its return, are true.

You are the hero, the hope, the fallible but favored heir, the promised future king and restorer of the kingdom. But that exiled protagonist is only the kingdom. But that exiled protagonist is only the *conscious* you. What our explorations have discovered is that you are also all the lands in which the drama of the myth unfolds, and all the *dramatis personae* by whom the universal story is enacted.

Father-king and mother-queen, dark sides of both; the agents of the gods, the temptress, and the tyrant; helpers, the monsters, each in his time or times on the stage of your mind through its changing scenes is an aspect of yourself. Only that Author-Prompter who, appearing in often enigmatic guises, directs the course of the adventure and guides the hero through his moves and with his lines, is not a part of you. And though the script is written on the unwinding scroll of all reality, and is the shape of it, the denouement of this drama in six acts—though performed innumerable times on other stages by innumerable casts—has not yet been written, nor is it dictated by the Author. Its ending is left to the hero in you.

But that hero-you is no blind actor, without aid or precedent readily available.

In their colorful and adventurous variety the ancient myths can help us reawaken our capacity for the "suspension of disbelief" which faded in our childhood. They can help us to realize the many remote conceptual and affectional remnant-countries in our own world of mind. In that recognition we can be helped to realize our kinship and part in the unity of mankind past and present. In them we may be able to discover specific monsters to which we are hereditarily and culturally most vulnerable—for, as we have seen, each creature of myth is an inner part of us, and every episode or battle is a confrontation or contest between the manifold motives in ourselves.

However distorted by cultural influences, literary inventions, or the quirks of primitive mythopoeia, myth works its magic on us and instructs us. As Gilbert Murray wrote of the motifs especially in Hamlet and Orestes, the archetypes of myth may seem strange to us—"Yet there is that within us which leaps at the sight of them, a cry of the blood which tells us we have known them always."

At their deepest level of meaning, the myths are so completely descriptive of feeling values that they elude our efforts to interpret them. How can we know the meaning of a symbol for a motive current in us to which we are consciously insensible? Yet to the extent that they have been able to make correlations, psychologists have found valuable insights. Those psychologists who have accepted that there is "shape" in those feelings deeply rooted in us have discovered that they are actually the *source of the structure* in our thought, both imaginative and reasoned, and in our behavior both spontaneous and deliberate.

But the incredibly rich variations on the themes and motifs of the myths, from their simplest forms to the sophisticated fables of the Greeks, present a problem of interpretation that is almost insurmountable. Even the thorough scholar may be misled by cultural embellishments and needless repetitions, the incompleteness or the omissions in certain myths or groups of myths, misplaced emphases, euphemisms by which “unacceptable” material has been laundered, episodes thrown out of sequence, and distortions brought about by a variety of causes (*e.g.*, the effort to force a historical personage inappropriately into the heroic mold).

The discovery that dream experience presents motifs reflecting those of myth has enriched our treasury of recurrent themes and symbol. But again, from the infinitely greater range of imagery that dreams draw from the life-experience of countless dreamers, this wealth of material invites elaborate psychological conclusions from what may be fractional or frivolous patterns, or from motifs analyzed apart from their proper context within the structure of the myth in its entirety.

### ***Problems of interpretation***

The degrees to which the individual myths, and man’s own dreams, have been distorted by mankind’s descent from his origins in a Creative Love is probably best suggested by the almost incredible and elaborate cruelties into which ritual reenactments of the death-rebirth or regenerative cycle have been debased: mutilations, amputations, animal and human sacrifices, ritual rape, incest, and cannibalism. Eliade makes unmistakable the source of those degenerate practices—during the puberty rites and other initiations of cultures primitive and advanced practices—in the sublime concept of a spiritual rebirth! Yet the grossest of misinterpretations—such as that there is a dark and cruel side to God, or that love could not exist without its obverse face in hate—have been persistently expressed through these distortions of the essential myth and of its ritual expressions.

Here, too, a principal element in the problem is the failure to grasp the essential process, with its sequential stages, that the universal myth *in its full transformative cycle* originally expressed. The myth is a whole, and must be so understood. While Campbell’s insights and his eloquent explication of the psychological correlations of the myths cannot be overvalued, and while we are especially indebted to him for his development of a structured process in them, the fact is that in his nuclear development of the hero round he stressed only the adventure. Yet it is in our incorporation of Rank’s and Raglan’s material, relating to the hero’s birth and childhood and to his old age and death, that we were able to build our model of the complete heroic life. And it was in that higher level, required by the addition of this material, that we discovered in our model *the motive origin and purposed destiny inherent in the mythic form*. Small wonder, then, that Campbell—excluding these—found finally in the cycle of the myth only an endlessly repeated exercise in futility.

A composite biography developed from the statistical identification of common elements screens out individual distortions, and it is only by doing this that we have been able to find in the hero myth a structure that expresses with striking symmetry and simplicity a universal process: familiar, dynamic, and despite its essential unity susceptible to an examination which leads us into the multiplicity that exists in the lower orders of reality as we know it.

Reduced to this graphic form, the hero life is reconstructed for us to a degree of unprecedented wholeness and fidelity. Probably the zodiac, not without reason also called “the wheel of transformation,” is the graphic form which next most nearly expresses the mythic elements and

process told by the heroic biography and our model of it. The mandala of which the zodiac is a special expression, of obviously also involves certain of these representations.

But the hero round has an advantage for us over both of these in the fact of its human protagonist. Especially it offers modern man, in his rationalistic literality, the opportunity to relearn the path and the destination of spiritual renewal in ways with which he may more readily identify, and in which he can more easily recognize the combative aspects of his inner self.

And yet the gain in accuracy, in graphics, and in the sense of process that the model offers is not without its cost. A composite biography is too skeletal to evoke that response of which Murray wrote "which tells us we have known them always," or for a deeply felt discovery, in the mythic process, of representations of our individual and collective, physical and psychical, experience. We met with this Scylla and Charybdis choice in our attempt to find the origin of the wish, in ideation, in the myth of the hero's birth (chapter three). In the composite biography there is insufficient detail to bring alive the motive sense of creative aspiration, and the interacting feelings which produce it. And yet no one myth can be accepted with certainty to present, in its wealth of narrative detail, an undistorted or an unembellished basis for interpretation, for no one myth is altogether true to the composite by which we must make our judgment.

Our assumption that there is a guiding purpose, however, requires, a continuity of guidance. There must be a definitive record of the Patron Deity's Self-revelations in the past, from which and in which His newest manifestation to us may be recognized as a fuller illumination of the same Path, an immediate expression suited to our present needs of the same Divine Word from the Beginning, and a new vision of the Promise by which to know His voice when next He appears to us and speaks to us.