

LIVING ALCHEMY
THE CREATIVE SPIRIT IN PROCESS

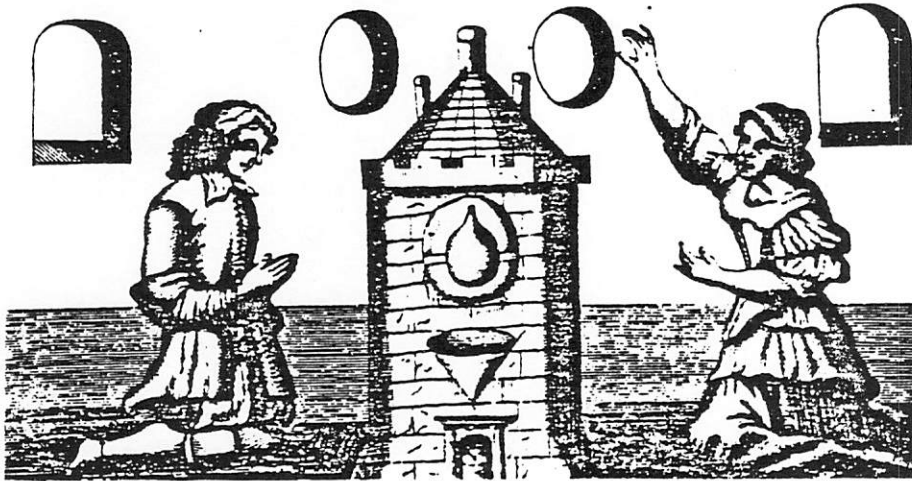
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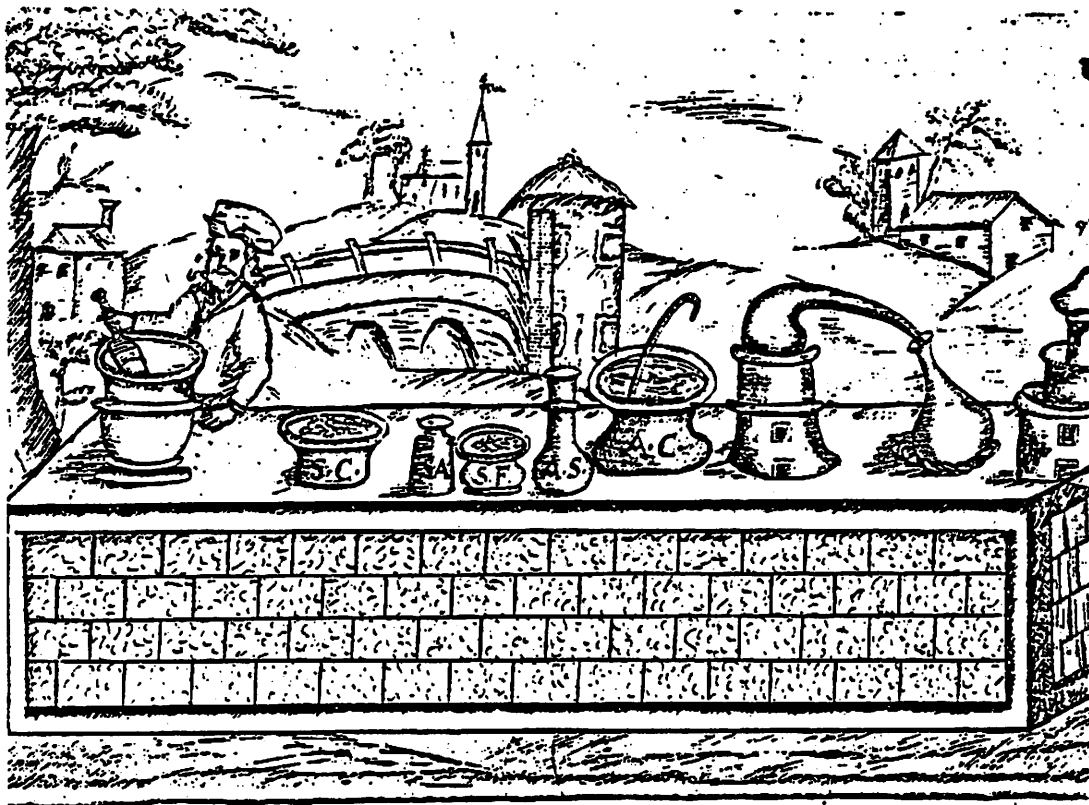
1. Alchemists kneeling before their furnace and praying for God's blessing before beginning their work. (Mutus liber, 1702)

To
Army

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2. Careful preparation for work on the Opus.
(Speculum veritatis, 17th century)

Introduction

Alchemy is a science or pre-science which comes to us from ancient times. Its principal doctrines have been recorded in Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Christian European, Islamic, Hindu and Taoist texts, but a great deal of alchemy probably occurred in preliterate times and has never reached us. Alchemy has gone through many rebirths and redefinitions and the contradictory and coinciding claims of alchemists from different centuries and different parts of the world indicate that there is no single alchemy, but rather an underlying and shared alchemical process. Defined in the dictionary as a "medieval science chiefly concerned with turning base metals into gold,"¹ it was indeed much more than that.

C. G. Jung was responsible for the illumination of the psychic nature of the alchemical process. He was struck by the similarities between the symbols in the dreams and fantasies that his patients produced and the symbolism of alchemy. These startling connections re-affirmed, for Jung, the existence of the collective unconscious, a storehouse of certain primordial images which human beings inherit and share.² He was certain that

alchemy, so barren a field for the chemist, is for the psychologist, a veritable gold-mine of materials which throw an exceedingly valuable light on the structure of the unconscious.³

Anyone studying alchemy today from a psychological standpoint is indebted to Jung's discoveries and I make frequent references to his work and expound upon his ideas throughout this paper.

Jung, however, studied mainly the symbols of alchemy. In this work I draw upon Jung's symbolic amplifications and add further life to his research by demonstrating how the alchemical process serves as a pattern for the creative psychic growth processes of the individual and how a knowledge of alchemy can assist the modern psychologist in his or her work with clients. The alchemy I discuss is primarily that of the Christian Europeans as they practised it during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I have found that those alchemical processes in particular shed light on the ever-changing and sometimes unfathomable processes which occur during therapeutic sessions. I also refer a great deal to eastern alchemical traditions, especially to the internal alchemy of the Taoist yogins, and show how these more spiritually-oriented body and meditation practices may be useful tools for the psychologist, as well.

In the past, alchemy functioned on several levels. For the adepts, the practitioners of the art, it was practical, religious, philosophical, scientific and more. It taught techniques to ensure health, wealth and longevity. It

provided explanations about human beings' place in the universe and secured for individuals a rewarding experience in the afterlife. It gave human beings the means to a direct knowledge of God. And for some, it was a genuine attempt to understand the chemistry of material things.

Because its language was mainly symbolic and requires unveiling, it has drawn people from various disciplines into its study. Modern chemists discard it as chemistry's error-filled predecessor which fell with the rise of modern science. People in underground and esoteric circles honor it as a profound and magical science. And one of the most radical alternative energy groups in the western world has named itself the New Alchemy Institute, based on their debt to Taoist and Christian hermetic scientists for their expression of an underlying coherence of mind, matter and human responsibility.⁴

Any westerner studying alchemy today from any perspective, begins with the very fundamental question of whether the practice was actually a spiritual or a material quest. Were the adepts interested in transforming their psycho-spiritual condition or were they interested in turning base metals into gold? Even those alchemists who claimed to be purely interested in gold-making demanded of themselves a sound physical constitution and a purity of mind, before they could begin the work.

But according to Jung, the question itself is wrongly put because,

there was no either-or for that age, but there did exist an intermediary realm between mind and matter, i.e., a psychic realm of subtle bodies whose characteristic it is to manifest themselves in a mental as well as a material form. This is the only view that makes sense of the alchemical ways of thought, which must otherwise appear nonsensical. Obviously, the existence of this intermediary realm comes to a sudden stop the moment we try to investigate matter in and for itself . . . and it remains nonexistent so long as we believe we know anything conclusive about matter or the psyche. But the moment when physics touches on the 'untrodden, untreadable regions,' and when psychology has at the same time to admit that there are other forms of psychic life besides the acquisitions of the personal unconscious-- in other words, when psychology too touches on an impenetrable darkness . . . then the physical and the psychic are once more blended in an impenetrable unity. We have come very near to this turning point today.⁵

In accordance with the questioning spirit of Jung, Dr. Arnold Mindell, a researcher, teacher and analyst in Zuerich, Switzerland has, for the last fifteen years, been investigating this mysterious territory where the physical and the psychic are intimately connected. Based to a large extent on the findings of Jungian psychology and theoretical physics, but also drawing from a broad spectrum of other fields as diverse as Taoism and neuro-linguistic programming, he has developed a theory called "process-oriented psychology." According to Mindell, its application, "process work,"

is generated from the client and is devoted to following his or her individual nature. . . . Since it is developed on the phenomenological theory of signals and channels, psychology now becomes less fragmented and is closely related to its twin, theoretical physics. Process science answers some of the questions in post Einsteinian field theory. It introduces the idea that dreams organize body phenomena, relationship problems and the accidental behavior of the inorganic world.⁶

Mindell uses the terms, "dreambody" and "dreamfield" or "dreamworld" to refer to these phenomena.

I've come to my interest in alchemy through my studies in process-oriented psychology. Alchemists would find kindred spirits among their modern day colleagues, process workers, who cook and amplify hidden processes in the office. Letting nature dictate what happens, process workers allow and encourage transformations to occur at their own speed and observe the phenomena closely. Like their predecessors, they experiment with a beginner's mind, trying not to pre-program solutions. And above all, process workers experiment in the "psychic realm of subtle bodies" which the alchemists intuited years ago. Process workers, benefiting from a modern day knowledge of physics and psychology which their earlier colleagues lacked, take over where alchemists left off. Let's take a brief look at some of the recent radical discoveries of theoretical physics, which have enabled process workers to substantiate the alchemists' early intuitions.

Shortly before Jung began studying alchemy in the late 1930s, the illusive nature of objective reality was proven by quantum mechanics, the study of matter in the sub-atomic realm. Early in this century, experiments were made by physicists which indicated that light could appear either as waves or particles depending on how the experimenter chose to measure it. Thus the properties of light were

found to be dependent upon the physicists' interaction with it, that is, on the experiments they chose to make. The idea of a scientist standing outside of a phenomenon and observing it "objectively" was challenged.⁷

The wave-particle duality led to one of the most distinguishing characteristics of quantum mechanics, the notion of probability waves. Probability waves are mathematical formulations which express a tendency for an event to occur. The tendency exists whether or not the event actually occurs in time and space and the probability of its occurring is predicted. Werner Heisenberg said that probability waves "introduced something standing in the middle between the idea of an event and the actual event, a strange kind of physical reality just in the middle between possibility and reality."⁸

Heisenberg went on to discover that there is always a degree of uncertainty about what is happening in the physical world because we cannot observe something without changing it. For example, we can never know simultaneously the position and momentum of an electron, because our attempts to observe it, and the experiments we make, alter its behavior. Heisenberg wrote, "what we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning."⁹

These and other radical physical theories¹⁰ have shaken up conventional western logic and challenged the validity of causal thinking. Psychological ideas such as

Jung's notions of the collective unconscious and synchronicity¹¹ have challenged rational thinking in a similar way and it is reasonable to suspect a meeting ground between psychology and physics. Process-oriented psychology bridges the sciences by investigating their common ground and giving empirical evidence to the notions of physics in the world of the psyche.

Gary Zukav, author of Dancing Wu Li Masters, an overview of the new physics written for laymen, says that the fact that the human psyche plays a crucial role in the determining of reality should be the foundation on which psychology is based.

According to quantum mechanics, there is no such thing as objectivity. We cannot eliminate ourselves from the picture. We are part of nature, and when we study nature there is no way around the fact that nature is studying itself. Physics has become a branch of psychology, or perhaps the other way around.¹²

Until recently, it seems as if the creators of most psychological theories have held fast to the belief that their particular findings indicate what constitutes reality. The theorists seem to forget that they may be measuring and observing only a certain aspect of reality, be it individuals' patterns of behavior, their repressed unconscious contents or their body armour.¹³ Thus they fail to see that their theoretical formulations reflect their experiments and their prejudices as much as they do "reality." This one-sided

insistence on particular theories has, in part, led to psychology's present day state of fragmentation, as well as to its ambivalent status as a true science.

Jung realized this problem in 1935 and told the London Psychological Society the following:

I know what Freud says agrees with many people, and I presume that these people have exactly the kind of psychology that he describes. Adler, who has entirely different views, also has a large following, and I am convinced that many people have an Adlerian psychology. I too have a following . . . and it consists presumably of people who have my psychology. I consider my contribution to psychology to be my subjective confession. It is my personal psychology, my prejudice that I see psychological facts as I do. . . . So far as we admit our personal prejudice, we are really contributing towards an objective psychology. . . .

Psychotherapy is a craft and I deal in my individual way. . . . Not that I believe for a moment that I am absolutely right. Nobody is absolutely right in psychological matters. . . . Never forget that in psychology the means by which we judge and observe the psyche is the psyche itself. . . .¹⁴

Mindell carries Jung's conviction even farther. He introduces the notion of "process" as a unifying principle or pattern, a very special, unpredictable energy which runs like a river through the myriad of an individual's dreams, relationship crises, body problems, parapsychological happenings and outer world situations.

By redefining and applying the idea of process to body phenomena, dreamwork, relationship problems, parapsychology and physics, a neutral and semi-mathematical basis is created which enables the student of psychology, medicine and physics to deal with him or herself and with outer events within the boundaries of one system and practice. This psychology should be considered as one possible suggestion as to how a human being can deal with the wide spectrum of behaviour . . . and the natural environment.¹⁵

As well as including the theories of quantum physics, process-oriented psychology includes the findings of many other psychotherapies, as well.

It enriches gestalt by adding scientific enquiry to experience. It amplifies encounter by asking the therapist to search his own dreams for his reactions. It extends psychoanalytic programs by admitting the usefulness of given routines while encouraging the therapist to be more fluid. Bio-energetics is discovered in the spontaneous breakthrough processes of the client and extended by showing how these often lead to creative dance and art. . . . Brief therapy and family counseling appear as phases of development. Jung's idea of individuation and archetype become broad spectrum concepts through their application to body work. The idea of following the dreaming process is extended . . . to following the entire spectrum of psychosomatic behavior.¹⁶

The dark "intermediary realm between mind and matter" in which the alchemists experimented in their laboratories is an arena which process psychologists explore and illuminate in their daily lives and in their work with clients. They are modern day alchemists attempting to discover and scientifically formulate the laws which structure psychic and physical reality.

Jung was the first to point out the mythological and archetypal impulses behind the investigations of the alchemists, Marie-Louise von Franz, Jung's collaborator, points out that these archetypal impulses survive in the great scientists of today and that the investigation of the mysteries of matter by physicists may be a desire to find out more about the spirit or the divine thing which stands behind all existence. She notes that when Einstein

was appalled at some findings which indicated the chance aspect of events in the sub-atomic realm, he remarked to his friend Niels Bohr, "God does not play dice."¹⁷

Alchemy sheds light on our natural urge to understand the mysteries of the world in which we live, reveals meaning in the strange and symbolic images which appear in our dreams and fantasies and provides us with additional courage and comfort in the recognition of an old and kindred philosophy. And the study of alchemy can enrich the practice of process-oriented psychology, as well.

The Christian European alchemists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries imagined and wrote about very specific stages which the chemicals went through during their transformation from base metals into gold. Empirical evidence indicates that these stages mirror the stages of development which any individual experiences on the life-long journey towards wholeness which Jung calls the "individuation process."¹⁸ I have found that, in addition, the stages of the alchemical process mirror momentary and short-term learning and growth processes.

By studying the alchemical process carefully, process psychologists gain a basic understanding of the underlying structure which stands behind many of the mysterious, painful, humiliating, amusing and seemingly chance processes, both long- and short-term, which occur in inner and outer life. Studying alchemy helps process workers invest meaning in

what appears to be the meaningless and teaches them to allow processes to cook, and transform at their own speeds, only raising and lowering the heat when the soup gets cold and the process itself calls for it. With alchemy as a guide, they learn to trust processes and understand some of their deeper implications.

I have a deep respect for the alchemical process and I use the exact structures of alchemy, as it was practised by the Christian Europeans, as the basic framework upon which this work is built. As such, each chapter describes a stage of the alchemical process and amplifies its corresponding psychic condition. By doing this, the reader can organically gain a clear sense of the deeper alchemical process, that is, the natural and creative transformation process of the psyche.

The first chapter, called "The Prima Materia," refers to the base metals in their impure form. The prima materia was for the alchemist a chaotic mixture which needed to be worked on and transformed. It represents a psychic condition of minimal awareness, when a person's internal experiences and external behaviors are incongruent with one another. All perceptions and awarenesses are intertwined, jumbled and undifferentiated. In this chapter the reader is introduced to the alchemical conception of the prima materia as well as the process worker's attitude towards, and ways of working with, the prima materia of a client.

The second chapter, which corresponds to the second stage of the alchemical process, is called "The Nigredo." At this point, the alchemical fire melted the metals into a black liquid. The goal of this change to a liquid state was the disruption of the homeostasis of the prima materia and the start of a process whereby the component parts of the material could be differentiated. Psychologically, this is usually a very depressing and gloomy condition. It represents the first painful stages of growing when individuals become aware of "what makes them tick," and are thrown into a battle with opposing parts within themselves. Much of the alchemical nigredo is expressed through symbols and allegories. This chapter contains amplifications of these symbols in religion, shamanism and daily life, as well as illustrations from process work with clients.

The next chapter is called "The Albedo." During this whitening phase of the work, the metals in the alchemical vessel, which had been melted in the nigredo, recombined into what was considered a better and purer form. The albedo refers, psychologically, to a time when individuals, having gained some new insights, are able to live a little bit more in accordance with a deeper inner principle which has been discovered. I discuss the Christian and Taoist understandings of the albedo primarily through the use of creation myths, stories about how new worlds came into being. These

myths contain motifs which mirror the processes of individuals who are on the verge of creating new awarenesses.

"The Rubedo," which comes next, is the work phase. The rubedo referred to the red color of the burning fire over which the metals had to cook for days, months or even years. The rubedo represents a time in a human being's development when he or she works very hard, in analysis, alone or in a group, in order to integrate the new awarenesses that have been gained. In the first part of this chapter I discuss the alchemists' efforts to intervene in nature's work in order to speed up her processes. I show how various peoples, through the ages, have attempted to interfere with, collaborate with or change nature in order to transcend the ordinary world. In the second part of the chapter I give a concise account of an analytic session that was clearly patterned by the alchemical process, in order to illustrate one way in which process work is carried out.

The last chapter and final stage of the alchemical process is called "The Coniunctio." Although it seems to me as if the alchemists themselves never quite reached this goal, it is here that the gold is supposed to have been created. The coniunctio refers to an enlightened psychological condition in which the individual is highly aware of his or her inner processes and is simultaneously able to live congruently in the outer world. I discuss the

alchemical conceptions of the coniunctio in the East and the West and put forth my ideas about the goals of process work and the notion of enlightenment.

I have structured this paper in a rather unconventional way. Following the alchemical process, I have often presented ideas at an unexpected or nontraditional time or place. I tell light and simplified stories, in order to bring much of the heavy, mystical mythological and obscure material to life for the reader. The coniunctio has been the most difficult of all the stages to convey because although I have had a great deal of experience with all of the other phases of the work, personally, at seminars and in my work with clients, the experience of enlightenment is one which my awareness has embraced during only a few fortunate moments.

My primary goal is to show the reader just how it is that people learn about themselves. Using the alchemical process as a pattern, I apply alchemy to life in what I think is a new and creative way by showing how its various stages actually function in our daily existences. I hope to lift the veil of obscurity from eastern alchemical body practices and show how they too have their practical application for westerners seeking understanding. I'd like to expose the reader to the notion of process as a useful concept in unifying the worlds of spirit and matter. I hope to demonstrate how process work can help individuals participate

in and uncover the deep and hidden meaning behind many of the things that happen around and inside of them. Finally, I hope that you, the reader, will enjoy this paper. It is my wish as well, that it will offer you new ways of understanding some of your own mysterious experiences.

The Prima Materia

"There is in our chemistry a certain noble substance, in the beginning whereof is wretchedness with vinegar, but in its ending joy with gladness."¹ The alchemist Michael Maier was describing the highly valued substance known as "the prima materia." According to the alchemists, the prima materia contained secret powers, worked miracles and was in and of itself capable of transformation. The first work of the alchemical process was the quest for this prima materia, which was also called the Stone of the Philosophers or the "lapis philosophorum."²

The alchemists had many names for the prima materia. The original substance was sometimes identified with quicksilver, sometimes considered to be iron, lead, salt, sulphur, vinegar, water, air, fire or earth. In general, it was referred to as the primordial chaos or the microcosm. They symbolized it as the Greek "uroborus," the tail-eating dragon that created and destroyed itself. They personified it as the great spirit Mercurius.³

The goal of the alchemical process, which was generally agreed to be the creation of gold, the Divine Child or the Philosopher's Stone, was said to be contained and hidden within the prima materia itself. The prima materia was an

impure substance and in order to fulfill their goal, the alchemists had to work on this substance and perfect it.

The Spirit in Matter

The Christian alchemists asserted that the prima materia was uncreated, existent from the days of eternity and destined to exist throughout all of time.* They attributed to it a quality of ubiquity, as well. They said it could be found anywhere and everywhere.⁴ The fifteenth century English alchemist, Sir George Ripley, wrote that "birds and fish bring us the lapis, every man has it, it is in every place, in you, in me, in time and space."⁵

Others believed that it was illusive and difficult to locate. For many alchemists in Europe, the prima materia was to be found only in ores and their first work required a trip to the mines. The eastern alchemists purported that it could be found right within the physical body. There seemed to be no consensus of opinion in regard to its actual form. There was a great variety of allegories, metaphors, synonyms and sets of symbols employed in order to describe this mysterious substance, without which the great work could not have begun.

What was agreed upon, however, was that the prima materia contained within it a hidden treasure, a spirit, and the alchemists had to apply themselves diligently to the task of freeing this hidden spirit from the fetters of matter, in

*I discuss the deeper implications of this apparent heresy later in the work. See below, p. 69-71.

the hope that at a later stage in the work the opposites, spirit and matter, could rejoin one another in a higher form.

Of course, the exact nature of the hidden spirit also varied among the alchemists. An important Swiss physician and alchemist of the sixteenth century, known as Paracelsus, called it the "light of nature." His student, Gerhard Dorn, said it was the world-creating seed of the father God. St. Thomas Aquinas, of the thirteenth century, who was suspected of having been an alchemist as well as a saint, called it the feminine aspect of the male godhead. They seemed to agree that the hidden spirit was a living aspect of dead matter which contained God's source of creativity and magical power.⁶

Clearly, the alchemists were, to some extent, searching for inner meaning as well. "I shall suffer difficulty, grief and weariness at first, but in the end shall come to glimpse pleasanter and easier things," said Michael Maier.⁷ "Transform yourself from dead stones into living philosophical stones!" exclaimed Dorn to his fellow philosophers.⁸

The alchemists intuited that by finding the prima materia and transforming it into a living and creative substance in the vessel, they could change themselves as well. Surely on some level the work was a serious effort to elicit the secrets of chemical transformations, but according to Jung it was, at the same time,

the reflection of a parallel psychic process which could be projected all the more easily into the unknown chemistry of matter since that process is an

unconscious phenomenon of nature, just like the mysterious alteration of substances. What the symbolism of alchemy expresses is the whole problem of the evolution of the personality . . . the individuation process.⁹

So the entire drama of the alchemical opus, according to Jung, reflects an inner drama, whose opening scene is the prima materia. The beginning is vague and obscure, highly unknown but highly potent, and the opus finally culminates in the "chymical wedding, the extreme act of union in which the work reaches its consummation."¹⁰

The Prima Materia in Process Work

The process-oriented psychologist has a clearer conception of the prima materia than his earlier colleague, the alchemist, did, and the well-trained and observant process worker has a specific set of tools for identifying and amplifying the prima materia of an individual. A client walks into the office and what is observable? What is the initial condition? Probably, the person has a set of intentions and goals. He or she has sought help for a reason. Most people obtain psychological guidance in order to solve a difficult problem which is plaguing them in their daily lives. Their problem is causing them pain and their goal is usually to become freed from this pain.

Individual problems may be as diverse as are the alchemical conceptions of the prima materia. Maybe the person wants to find the strength to leave a bad job or a bad relationship. Perhaps he or she feels blocked in some area of life, be it academic, financial, sexual, emotional, or

creative. Maybe the person has a very concrete and specific problem. It could be anything from wanting to lose weight to wanting to learn to jog, to itchy skin which the doctors have insisted is psychosomatic. Occasionally one begins therapy simply because of interest in "personal growth," but this is rare. Usually the client has a specific set of goals and intends to invest money in order to fulfill these goals and hence, feel better and live a more satisfying life.

A process worker listens to the content of the client's intentions and notices a great deal more. He or she observes such varied things as the individual's tone of voice, eye movements, body postures, verbs and the subtle and autonomous movements of the parts of the body. Through careful observation and after a great deal of training, the process worker learns to pinpoint various signals which do not seem to be in agreement with the content of what the client is saying. Perhaps the client is a woman who says that she is in pain because her husband treats her unfairly, however she is smiling as she says this. Or perhaps it is a man who says that he has no energy as his fingers tap rapidly on the table. The process worker notices these things, remembers them and determines the nature of the prima materia. Usually he or she sees that the client has a set of intentions which are generally related to the client's identity, but that there is also another personality in the background which appears to have another set of experiences entirely. Hence on first observation it becomes apparent that the prima

materia, in whatever form it manifests, is made up of a set of conflicting tendencies.

Having observed this, having located the prima materia, what are the goals of the process worker? If he or she is a student as I am, then some of the initial goals may involve unspeakable things such as keeping the client and being liked. But if we venture a little bit deeper, another set of goals reveals itself. Process workers like the alchemists want to create "gold." They want to amplify the conflicting tendencies in the prima materia in order to discover purpose and significance in all the parts and find a way to bring the contrasting tendencies into a relationship with each other, in such a way that the client's situation is no longer as painful or meaningless. As in alchemy, it is through the process itself that the goal is reached. As the process unfolds, meaning is uncovered, interpretations are revealed, and client and analyst become enlightened as to the overall process.

The woman who smiles when she says that her husband treats her badly may be suffering, in part, because she identifies herself as a woman who is the victim of her husband's unkindness, when there is another part of her that is in some way happy about his treatment of her. Maybe it makes her more independent, maybe it helps her fight or maybe she is trying to leave him anyway and his behavior serves as motivation. For whatever reason, she has a part that is in some way pleased. She is in pain however, partially because

she has no relationship to, or awareness of, the happy personality behind her pain. The process worker helps her expand her awareness to include the second personality which, when brought into a relationship with her identity, may offer her some new and creative solutions to her predicament.

Process workers can also work with the prima materia of a couple. The couple comes with a set of problems and conflicts which they are trying to resolve. One or both of them is frustrated and unhappy with some aspects of the relationship. Generally, the couple is polarized, each member defending one opposing position emphatically. Through work on the process the answer is often revealed to be, not in one of the sides, but rather somewhere in between. It is as if there is a hidden spirit trying to bring its creative force to the surface by means of the conflict. If the process work can reveal exactly what it is that is trying to be expressed, then perhaps the spirit can be freed to do its dance in a more creative and useful way.¹¹

These simplified examples are meant to convey a basic idea about what the prima materia of a client may consist of and demonstrate how the prima materia itself contains within it solutions. Some therapists fall into the trap of trying to be helpful by making suggestions which are in accordance with a pre-determined therapeutic routine. The client will try these solutions and perhaps they will work if they happen to be right for that client's process. But often they will

fail, provide short-term answers or be rejected from the beginning. The paradox is that the prima materia has within it the wisdom which contains the solutions. And generally the answers are not located in one part of the personality, especially not the part that is closest to the client's consciousness, if he or she is suffering. Uncovering the meaning of the process and making its wisdom available to the client is part of the job of the process worker.

Respecting the Prima Materia

Centuries ago, the alchemists recognized that the work of freeing the hidden spirit was delicate work and could not be carried out by violent purifying procedures or by pre-determined plans. The alchemist was also a process worker who had to follow the process of the metals by watching them closely, observing their subtle changes and determining when to raise and lower the heat of the alchemical fire. Although they had a desire to make the metals transform quickly, they learned that their impetuosity was not profitable in the long run. The hidden spirit had its own inclinations and sense of timing and the alchemist had to develop a method of communication with the spirit, a kind of feedback system, in order not to destroy it entirely.

The alchemist, Thomas Aquinas, personified the hidden spirit in the prima materia as Wisdom, referring to Sophia, who according to the Proverbs, was God's partner at the time of Creation. She was his feminine counterpart and helped him with all of his major decisions. Of gnostic origin, she

represented a coeternal pneuma of feminine nature that existed before Creation and completed the image of the masculine deity.¹²

According to Aquinas' alchemical interpretation of several biblical passages, some time after Creation, Wisdom sunk down into matter where she found herself trapped in distress and darkness. She cried out for the help of the alchemist.

Who is the man that liveth, knowing and understanding, delivering my soul from the hand of hell?⁵ They that shall explain me shall have (eternal) life,⁶ and to him I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in paradise, and to sit with me on the throne of my kingdom.⁷ He that shall . . . obtain me as a treasure . . . and shall not deride my garment,⁹ shall not poison my meat and my drink and shall not defile with fornication the couch of my rest, and shall not violate my whole body which is exceedingly delicate and above all my soul . . . I will keep my covenant faithful to him forever.¹³ . . .¹³

⁵Ps. 88:49

⁷Apoc. 2:7

⁹Turba Philosophorum (ed. Ruska), p. 132.

¹³Ps. 88:27-28

⁶Ecclus. 24:30-31

⁸Prov. 2:3-5

Wisdom, according to Aquinas, had a desperate longing to be freed, but to be treated with respect, tact and honor. Trapped in the depths of the unconscious or matter, she had been alone for a long time, completely isolated from the human world. When treated roughly, she might prefer to escape back into depths unknown to human beings and withhold her gifts.

This may be interpreted as a warning to the psychologist about applying too much pressure in bringing the unconscious

to consciousness.¹⁴ This may be a useful goal in some cases but it is certainly not always indicated.

The process worker, like the alchemist, tries to maintain a high degree of respect, almost a reverence, for the wishes of autonomous parts which are far away from consciousness and express themselves in strange and subtle ways. He or she also tries to respect the client's sense of identity which is often wary of these unknown personalities. The process worker recognizes that all autonomous parts of the personality, whether they are near the surface or far from consciousness, will retreat if they are not given the proper respect. Later we will examine more closely the ways in which the process worker deals with fear and resistance in order to bring hidden parts to light. We will see how a client can be encouraged and even pushed without being defiled and how autonomous parts can be gently persuaded to the individual's awareness.

The general assumption of depth psychology that the unconscious should be brought to consciousness limits the group of people that can benefit from that type of analysis. Mindell has pointed out that people who want to grow and broaden their consciousnesses are only a small segment of the population. He illustrates this point with the example of a man who is dying from cancer. Mr. X says, "I'm sick. My stomach is killing me. I'm not interested in psychology." Process scientists observe this man closely and listen to his language. They notice that he has a part, his stomach, which

for some reason or another is trying to kill at least a part of him. But if his resistance is ignored and he is immediately pushed to identify more with his stomach, he will probably walk out of the office, never to be seen again. Parts of the prima materia cannot simply be ignored. Mindell suggests that it may be best to keep the idea of consciousness aside, bringing it in only when the individual's total process calls for it.¹⁵

Mercurius as the Prima Materia

The irrational and elusive nature of the prima materia was especially clear to the alchemists. They said that the prima materia was of a mercurial nature. Mercury was, for many alchemists, the basic mineral substance which had to be transformed into a finer metal. Mercury's liquid volatility and capacity for transformation made it an appropriate symbol for their projections.

According to Jung, the spirit Mercurius is the god of the unconscious. He is the spirit behind dreams, fantasies and synchronicities. He is the god of magicians and a storm daemon, a magical trickster who can transform himself to suit any situation. He symbolizes the creative spirit which produces all psychic material.¹⁶

In his book, The Dreambody, Mindell shows that the spirit Mercurius is also god of the body.¹⁷ He points out that for the Taoist yogins, the art of alchemy was a procedure whereby the body itself was transformed into a

magical substance. In the Chinese alchemical text entitled Taoist Yoga, Mercury is defined in terms of the word "spirit." The yogins attempted, through meditation, to restore this creative spirit which existed before the known world came into being. Their procedure involved bringing involuntary and spontaneous body experiences under conscious control in order to obtain direct knowledge of the spark behind spontaneous action. By contacting this spark they could achieve "wu wei" or effortless existence and immortality.¹⁸

The Indian symbol for the mercurial spirit in the body is the Kundalini, a serpent who lies dormant at the base of the spine.¹⁹ The Kundalini is said to represent all the attributes of every god and goddess. The Kundalini is awakened through Hatha Yoga and breathing and meditation exercises. Her awakening is experienced through a sensation of great fire, and the exercises serve to kindle this fire and keep it burning as she rises through various centers of the body, called "chakras," which she energizes. The goal of the ascent of the Kundalini is her union with Siva, which brings about the discovery of "primordial spontaneity" by "regressing to the undiscriminated state of the original Totality."²⁰

For the European alchemists the spirit Mercurius was a symbol embracing the opposites. Jung quotes a vivid description by an unknown alchemist, contained in Theatrum chemicum IV, a Latin text from the seventeenth century:

I am the poison dripping dragon, who is everywhere
and can be cheaply had. . . . My water and fire destroy

and put together; . . . But if you do not have exact knowledge of me, you will destroy your five senses with my fire. From my snout there comes a spreading poison which has brought death to many. . . . I am the egg of nature, known only to the wise . . . which was prepared for mankind by Almighty God, but given only to the few . . . that they may do good to the poor with my treasure and not fasten their souls to the perishable gold. By the philosophers I am named Mercurius; my spouse is the [philosophic] gold; I am the old dragon found everywhere on the globe of the earth, father and mother, young and old, very strong and very weak, death and resurrection, visible and invisible, hard and soft; . . . I am the highest and the lowest, the lightest and the heaviest; . . . I am the carbuncle of the sun, the most noble purified earth, through which you may change copper, iron, tin and lead into gold.²¹

It is apparent from the various and powerful conceptions of Mercurius that he is a symbol which penetrates two separate realms--the realm of spirit and the realm of body. In fact, the alchemist Penotus, a student of Paracelsus, said that Mercury was "nothing other than the spirit of the world become body within earth."²²

The ancient descriptions of Mercurius in the East and in the West point to a process-oriented conception of Mercury as the prima materia. The "gold" which the alchemists in the West attempted to extract from the prima materia corresponds to the "immortality" pursued by the easterners. Yogins worked directly on their own bodies and spiritual lives in order to turn their flesh into divine bodies, while European alchemists worked on matter to change it into gold. Both tried to free from matter the spirit which was intimately connected to their individual conceptions of god as a divine and creative force.

Process workers combine eastern and western aspects of the spirit Mercury by sustaining no prejudices about the form in which he may appear. They scrutinize the prima materia and recognize where the mercurial spirit is manifesting in any given moment. He may appear in a client's visions, fantasies and dreams. Perhaps he is trying to attract the client's attention as a strange voice or sound from inside or out. Maybe Mercurius is revealing himself in the body as an itch or a cramp or an illness. He may even be at the source of a client's relationship problems, outer world situations or strange synchronicities. Perhaps the trickster spirit is bursting forth in the office, sitting between analyst and client, causing inexplicable and insoluble fights and disturbances. The great spirit Mercurius has unlimited creativity, is a great masquerader and prefers to appear incognito.

It is the job of the process worker to recognize and uncover Mercurius, to amplify his signals in order to bring them to awareness and discover the hidden meaning behind his clandestine behavior. Sometimes he becomes an ally, ready and willing to share his secrets with the individual whom he has plagued.

Hidden within an apparently chaotic hodgepodge of opposing parts and conflicting tendencies lives Mercurius, a divine spirit who reveals himself only through a great labor which the alchemists called the Opus Magnum. And alchemy has taught that there is only one place to begin

this work, that is right at the beginning--with the prima materia. So here, at the outset I evoke the alliance of my own spirit Mercurius as I raise the heat of the fire and invite you, the reader, to jump into the pot and join me in the discovery of "gold" on the pages that follow.



4. Losing your head--and limbs--in the nigredo.
(Splendor solis mss, 1582)

The Nigredo

Raising the fire under the prima materia immediately unleashed a violent conflict between opposing principles. The alchemist Nicolas Flamel personified the antagonistic forces within the prima materia as animals: the "Corascene bitch" and the "Armenian dogge," and he described their conflict graphically. Put together in the vessel, he said, these rivals

doe bite one another cruelly, and by their great poyson and furious rage, they never leave one another, . . . till both of them by their slaver-ing venom, and mortall hurts . . . finally killing one another, be stewed in their proper venom, . . . to take afterwards more noble and better forme.¹

The initial plunge into the prima materia led to a long and wearisome process of death and decay which was known as "the nigredo." According to the alchemists, the appearance of the nigredo, the "black of blacks," was the first sure sign that they were on the right path, hence the alchemical aphorism, "No generation without corruption."²

It is somewhat shocking to read about the alchemists' positive attitude towards the nigredo. Most of us hate to bear pain and would like to avoid it at all costs. We want to dispose of unwelcome, depressing problems which burden our daily lives. We attempt to get rid of conflicts which make us tense and anxious, in order to avoid suffering.

We try to become unified and whole. But regardless of our intentions, regardless of how much we try to change, it seems as if there are always certain fundamental issues and belief systems which keep cropping up again and again to split us into parts and cause us to despair.

These autonomous parts are, however, a vital ingredient in any recipe for so-called wholeness. Inherent in the notion of anything unified or whole is the notion of the parts which make it up. But many of us, although we claim to hunger for wholeness, are actually intent on fulfilling only a small segment of our total personalities. "How dare autonomous parts which threaten our identities interfere with our goals and cause us pain?" we ask.

The alchemists knew that the confrontation of opposites was essential to the further transformation of their prima materia. In this chapter I explore the structure and meaning of the alchemical nigredo and demonstrate the many ways in which individuals and groups have always and still continue to come to grief in its grips.

The Dual Nature of the Psyche

Consciousness and the unconscious are, according to Jung, the most fundamental polarity in human nature. He never precisely defined consciousness, but today we understand him to mean that set of experiences which we are familiar with and know. For Jung, consciousness includes the individual's identity and is organized by the

ego, which is at its center. The ego, only a small part of the psychic system, serves to light up the system. It is through the ego that unconscious contents become conscious.³

The ego is close to what Mindell calls the primary process. Unlike Freud, who calls unconscious processes "primary," and conscious processes "secondary,"⁴ Mindell's primary process refers to an individual's identity and intentions. It contains the sets of experiences which are primary in the sense that they are relatively close to the person's awareness. The primary process includes those behaviors which are familiar and natural to the individual. In fact, sometimes the primary process is so familiar that the individual takes it for granted.⁵

The unconscious, in the Jungian sense, has two components: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. The personal unconscious is close to Freud's notion of the unconscious. It consists of repressed material which comes from personal experience and is incompatible with the ego and subsequently dumped, so to speak, into the unconscious.⁶

The collective unconscious does not owe its existence to personal experience. It contains material which is more or less the same everywhere and in all people. It contains archetypes, Jung's theoretical term for certain universal images which seem to pattern human behavior. The Self,

according to Jung, is the center of the system, which guides the human being towards becoming more complete.⁷

Mindell has found that it is useful to call the unconscious the secondary process, referring to those processes that are very far from an individual's awareness and outside his or her identity. Secondary processes happen to the individual. He or she is not in control of them. They are experienced as being foreign and distant.⁸

Process science redefines the terms conscious and unconscious because they are not always useful in their present form. Mindell has found that the terms prove inapplicable, for example, to psychotic states, deep body experiences, parapsychological phenomena and near-death states, when the idea of the ego is very difficult to define.⁹

Consciousness, for the process worker, refers to the awareness of any experience, whether it is a primary or secondary process. It indicates a situation where the individual notices his or her perceptions and is aware of what is happening. For lack of a better term, one might call this an "awareness of awareness." Unconsciousness refers to all types of processes which the individual is unaware of.¹⁰ Sometimes the individual is almost as unconscious of the primary processes as he or she is of the secondary ones.

Generally speaking, our primary and secondary processes tend to be opposites. Most of us lead our lives following

the god of the primary process. We try to fulfill the ego's intentions without realizing that we have made a dogma or religious system out of the wishes and goals of only a part of our personality. If something powerful or autonomous comes to our awareness which is outside of our identity, we try to push it aside or rationalize it away, depositing it into what Jung would call the personal unconscious, where it continues to live as some kind of secondary process. For those of us whose total process is satisfied with such a system, there is little outward problem and no real need for change or growth. The fire never gets quite hot enough to dissolve the prima materia and the system remains intact.

But others of us become unsatisfied, bored, ill or depressed. Our secondary processes have a great deal of energy and find ways to flow into our fields of awareness. They become body symptoms, disturbing dreams and fantasies, relationship conflicts, problems in our professional lives or even life-threatening illnesses. Those of us who suffer from our secondary processes and therefore become aware of them, can begin the journey towards wholeness which Jung calls individuation. And the first thing we encounter on the road is these opposite tendencies in our natures.

Jung dedicates an entire volume of his Collected Works called Mysterium Coniunctionis to the problem of the opposites as it has appeared in mythology, religion

and especially in alchemy. On the first page of the book he lists sixteen pairs of opposites inherent in the prima materia which confront one another in the nigredo and are finally transformed in the coniunctio. Sometimes alchemists set up the opposites as a quaternity and for every pair of opposites, they created a wealth of symbols and allegorical stories.

Human beings must somehow develop a practical method for dealing with the opposites inherent in their nature. As Jung groped through endless mazes of ancient alchemical texts spanning centuries and continued to come upon this problem he, like the alchemists, asked what he was to do with these antagonistic forces. Could he throw them out and get rid of them? Or had he to admit to their existences? Jung suggested that it is our task to, "out of the multitude of contradictions, produce a unity, which naturally will not come of itself, though it may . . . with human effort."¹¹

The unity or wholeness which Jung speaks of as the goal of the individuation process is not meant to be a static condition but rather a process out of which new situations and new attitudes continually emerge. And the tension of opposites is part of the energetic structure of the physical and psychic world without which no existence of any kind could be established.¹²

This concept is expressed in the East by the yin-yang symbol. According to the Taoists, the yin-yang forces

represent the two opposing polar forces of the universe which keep the world going. Yin represents the dark, feminine, yielding, receptive power while yang stands for the light, masculine, firm and creative force. Tao, or the invisible way, maintains the interplay between these forces so that they are constantly regenerated, constantly in tension, a constant potential creating the world anew in every moment.¹³

Seen in this light, wholeness, as a state, never quite manifests. In process terms, there is always a condition of tension between two conflicting tendencies, the primary processes, of which we are somewhat aware and the secondary processes, of which we are less aware. The tension is maintained by what Mindell calls the "edge," which is the boundary between the two processes.¹⁴

The edge represents the limits of our awareness. As our awareness grows we cross our edges; we expand our identities and what was once impossible for us to do becomes possible. But soon there appears a new edge to cross, a new and impossible challenge, luring us into still another secondary process. There is always something that is just one step beyond our reach and we must constantly create new awarenesses to try to grasp its essence.

It is in the territory of the edge that a person approaches the alchemical nigredo. Imagine for a moment the situation. One meets an unwanted inner personality: Jung

would call it a "shadow."¹⁵ This personality is in direct opposition to the person's identity and is a threat to his or her stable existence. The personality does not greet the individual directly and ask politely to be known, but rather it plagues the person, perhaps in a dream or in a somatic symptom. A conservative and sexually repressed woman, a nun of the Catholic Church, for example, dreams of a wild whore that gets drunk with sailors. Or a pacifist who believes in positive thoughts and loving his neighbors suffers from violent, stabbing pains in the back.

Upon first appearance, these parts are autonomous and rigid. One doesn't want them yet there is no way to get rid of them. This is a painful and depressing condition because it seems as if there is no solution. Jung says that

confrontation with the shadow produces at first a dead balance, a stand-still that hampers moral decisions and makes convictions ineffective or even impossible. Everything becomes doubtful, which is why alchemists called this stage nigredo, chaos, melancholia. It is right that the magnum opus should begin at this point, for it is indeed a well-nigh unanswerable question how one is to confront reality in this torn and divided state.¹⁶

Apparently, the individual has no choice but to begin by being split. That's why most people come for therapy to begin with. The process psychologist trusts that the splitting process will finally help to unify the individual, and amplifies the splits which are happening. A process worker may encourage the conservative woman to become even more conservative. He or she may ask the woman to exaggerate

her primary process in order to become very aware of it, to explore its nuances and find out why, until now, it has been so important and why it may no longer be useful. By heating up the primary process it often gets "overdone" or "dried-out," so to speak, and it becomes easier for the individual to identify with the "fresher" and "juicier" secondary one.

Interestingly enough, however, when the nun occupies the secondary process with her awareness, she finds that it is not a wild whore urging her into illicit endeavors, but rather a part who wants her to loosen up and have a little fun in life. The parts themselves change with the process. However, no matter how hard people work on themselves, it is always difficult to live with the knowledge of having more than one personality. Ironically, becoming whole may have more to do with living with the inner opposites than it does with getting rid of them.

The Opposites in Relationships

The polarities in human nature may pattern phenomena on the interpersonal level, as well. Often relationships break up because individuals adhere to their one-sided viewpoints rather than having out the battle between the opposites, both within themselves and outwardly with their partners. Or sometimes, if they want to work on the relationship issues, they use concepts and methods which were created to deal with individual problems, with the result that the relationship

difficulties remain unsolved. An expanded set of tools is necessary to deal with complicated relationship phenomena.

It is common that relationship troubles are identified as being caused by "projections."¹⁷ Individuals want to form a unified and harmonious whole within themselves, and would prefer not to fight with their partners, so they decide they should "take back" their projections. This means that they understand intellectually that what they imagine to be their partner's attitude is really a part of themselves of which they are unaware. Individuals then try to "integrate" the split-off parts which have been projected onto the partner. If this technique works, in the sense that it relieves the relationship situation, then it may be an indication that the trouble was not a relationship problem, but rather an individual one. But if the partner "takes back" the projection and there is still tension between the pair, then a further solution is needed.

Slightly different processes may occur between individuals when one partner splits off his or her secondary process which is then picked up and temporarily adopted by the partner. Mindell has labeled this set of phenomena "dreaming up," and he speculates that it may account, in part, for a therapist's so-called "counter-transference" reactions.¹⁸

It occurs when an individual is split and gives off two signals, one of which he or she is aware, related to the primary process, and the other of which he or she is unaware, related to the secondary process. The partner is

unknowingly influenced by the secondary signals, and then actually does take over the role of one of the individual's dream figures. This tends to further the polarization. The individual identifies more and more with his or her primary processes and hates the partner who embodies the secondary process.* A person who is dreamed up does not usually identify strongly with the dreamed-up behavior. As soon as the partner leaves the vicinity of the dreamer, he or she drops the dreamed-up attitudes.¹⁹

Working on dreaming up requires an exploration of the edge which has prevented the person from behaving more like the dreamed-up partner. Clustered around this edge are a whole set of experiences which shed light on the reasons why the processes are split and why another person is behaving like one of the individual's dream figures.

Both projection and dreaming up are essentially person-centered concepts. The therapist focuses on the individual and determines how his or her process is patterning outer problems. Sometimes, however, people take back their projections, occupy their dream figures and persist in fighting with their friends and lovers. This may be an indication that the problem is indeed a relationship conflict and cannot be dealt with using individual therapy only.

Mindell suggests that a relationship is an aspect of a larger field, such as Jung's collective unconscious, and

*It is also possible to be dreamed up positively. A man who hates himself, for example, and is unaware of a loving, supportive mother within him, may dream up women to fall in love with him.

it is useful to study the field, rather than work exclusively with the individual. Sometimes the processes which occur in this dream field cannot be directly attributed to a cause. Often, however, the members of the field share a common edge; the relationship itself has an edge, which structures its primary and secondary process, and this edge is determining the nature and meaning of the conflicts which are occurring.²⁰

Mindell has recently done a great deal of research on relationship processes and has created a set of tools for working with them, centered around this field theory. But relationship work is very difficult partly because causal thinking is no longer adequate. The relationship is patterned by the dreams of both partners and as Mindell puts it: "The important question is no longer 'Who is doing what?' but 'What is trying to happen?'"²¹ This notion presents deep philosophical problems for many people who either insist on adhering to their one-sidedness or have prejudices against very irrational processes. Relationship work is also irksome because it often requires that individuals amplify little known parts, contradict their deepest beliefs and temporarily drop their identities in the presence of their greatest opponents. This type of "public nigredo" can be almost too much for anyone to bear.

Almost everyone has trouble dealing with the opposites. The ability to hold consciously two views at once is a collective problem. In fact, it may be a collective edge,

mirroring many of the world's problems today. Just as we individuals are made up of parts, the world, as it exists today, is an international potpourri. Imagine if the world were one body and all the different countries were its parts.²² Immediately a central conflict of the dominant polar forces becomes apparent. These opposing forces think that they exist completely independently and each side has the power to annihilate the other. Attempts are made to create political organizations to serve as a central ego or dominant conscious attitude through which these parts can make relationships with one another. But as long as each side is one-sided and unaware of itself, the total process remains at a standstill.

Of course, I cannot deal with the present day political situation within the context of this paper. The worldwide polarization however, is blatant and must be mentioned. Hopefully, psychology of the future will begin to have an effect on global problems.

The Antinomy of God

According to Jung, experiencing the conflict of the opposites brings human beings nearer to a knowledge of God. He says that all opposites are of God and that God, in his oppositeness, has incarnated himself into human beings and made them into vessels filled with violently colliding divine conflicts.²³

When speaking of God, Jung is referring to an archetypal pattern for an imago Dei which has pervaded the entire human sphere from the primitive and demanding pagan gods through the unknowable and powerful Jahweh of the Old Testament to modern day notions of Jesus the Savior. As such,

it is just possible that the four hundred year old schism in the Church and the present division of the world into two hostile camps are both expressions of the unrecognized polarity of the dominant archetype.²⁴

According to Jung, the conscious recognition of these opposites within us delivers us from a powerless position in relation to God.²⁵ In other words, by realizing our inner splits and becoming aware of our secondary processes, we gain some potential to generate our fates, rather than be victimized by them. At least we can understand them and our suffering may thus be relativized.

The divine and painful darkness of the nigredo--when the opposites collide and come to the awareness of the individual--is depicted in the Old Testament in a story called "The Book of Job," which was written sometime between 600 and 300 B.C.²⁶

Job, the hero, is depicted as an upright, pious and god-fearing man. He performed all of the rituals which his Judaism called for in order to please his god, Jahweh, who has been understood theologically as a god with a paradoxical nature. Jahweh knew no moderation and seems to have unreflectingly acted out all the extremes of his irrational

personality. One moment cruel, the next loving and kind, he was at once beautifully creative and brutally destructive. For awhile Job, his obedient servant, fared well. He was blessed with health, wealth and held in high esteem among his neighbors.

One day, a split-off part of Jahweh, called Satan, who was "going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it,"²⁷ was feeling particularly devilish and noticed Job. He returned to Jahweh and challenged Job's piety. He insisted that Job was faithful only because of his having been blessed by Jahweh's favors and that if Job suffered, he would surely curse God. Taken by this "doubting thought," Jahweh allowed Satan to experiment cruelly with the life of his servant Job.

Jahweh displayed no compassion as Satan tortured Job. In fact he turned his cheek as Satan violated several of his own laws as he had set them out on Mt. Sinai. Jahweh had formed a covenant with the Israelites on Mt. Sinai. He had promised to protect them as long as they remained faithful to him and obeyed his laws.²⁸ Satan, who in his brutal treatment of Job disobeyed several of Jahweh's Ten Commandments, was not punished. God's innocent servant Job however, was unprotected.

Through it all, through poverty and illness and isolation, Job was not shaken in his faith. Certain of his innocence, he tried to remain faithful to the idea of a just God who would

eventually vindicate him. He wanted a hearing with Jahweh so that he could make the point of his innocence clear.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation. . . . Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.²⁹

Job thought that he would find in God an advocate against God. Apparently through the torture that was being inflicted upon him, he was beginning to recognize the dual nature of God.

But Jahweh did not appear readily before human beings. He forbade the Jews to make any images of him or even utter his name. The Jews worshipped and honored him for his distance and it added to his power. That which is unknown and unseen is mysterious and can always emanate new possibilities. But his autonomy also gave him the ability to act arbitrarily. As a distant God, an archetype outside of the human realm, he could create whatever processes he wished without being seen. Job, however, was desperate to know him.

O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor! . . . Oh that I knew where I might find him! . . . Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and I go backward, but I cannot perceive him.³⁰

The longer Jahweh stayed away, the more Job came to understand him. Job knew God's power and recognized that he was what Jung calls an antinomy, "a totality of inner opposites."³¹ God was not split but he embodied all possibilities, Job realized. "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? What his soul desireth, even that he doeth."³² Jahweh himself

however, as a totality--a God--could not step outside of himself and recognize his own complex and paradoxical nature.

Jahweh finally did grant Job a hearing. He appeared "out of the whirlwind" and demanded, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" Then, in an elaborate display of intimidation, Jahweh reasserted his power to his miserable victim. He pointed out all that he had created and stressed the fact that Job would not even exist if it weren't for him. Jahweh seems to have been overreacting in his effort to prove his omnipotence, which indicates that he may have felt somewhat threatened by Job. After all, Job did not doubt his power. After lecturing Job on his omnipotence, Jahweh returned to him all that he had taken away.³³ However, something had changed as a result of this acute polarization between God and man.

In the foreground, a violent nigredo has been depicted by the suffering of one human being, while on the back burner, an entirely different process has been cooking. Theoretically, this story can be looked at as a power struggle between internal parts within one individual. It can be seen as a process whereby primary and secondary processes, within one person, collide and transform one another.

Job, as the primary process, and Jahweh, as the secondary one, have both changed. The oppression of Job, by the powerful and unknown force outside of himself, Jahweh, has served to amplify the primary process. This means that Job

has come to know his humanness, his so-called "powerlessness," very well. Through this amplification, Job has discovered something worthwhile about being human; he has discovered that through his human awareness he has gained the ability to know something of God. He has seen God's duality. And as a result, Jahweh has been forced to change, as well. If he doesn't learn to know himself as Job knows him, then his omnipotence is challenged. The secondary process can no longer remain distant and autonomous. It flows into the field of the primary process. Something of God becomes human.

This tendency for gods to become human, that is, for unknown and powerful processes to flow to our awareness, is called, by Jung, "the transcendent function."³⁴ He describes it as an inborn tendency to bridge the gaps between the opposites. This tendency, he says,

may pursue its course without the knowledge or assistance of the individual, and can sometimes forcibly accomplish itself in the face of opposition. The meaning and purpose of the process is the realization, in all its aspects, of the personality originally hidden away . . . the production and unfolding of the original, potential wholeness.³⁵

According to Jung, when God, at the time of Creation, created Adam in his own image and breathed himself into all created things, it was a reflection of his tendency to become human. And when he made the decision some three to six centuries after the Job story to actually become human, in the form of Jesus Christ, he did so as a step toward realizing his--as well as humankind's--total potential.³⁶

The nigredo of our hero Job can serve as a model for us. It may be instrumental in our understanding that our inner gods, our secondary processes, need our awareness in order to fulfill their hidden potentials. Without our recognition of them, they are forced to express themselves in covert ways and their creativity may be stymied. By exploring the regions at the outer limits of our identities, we can come to know our inner deities and offer them a fuller life in the human realm.

On some level, the alchemists knew this. They said that as soon as God put on a "human body capable of suffering," he clothed himself in matter, thus forming a parallel to their precious Stone. God trapped his spirit in matter-- in his son Jesus; and according to the alchemists, it was their role to redeem him, through the opus. Like Job, the alchemists were in the elevated position of helping God bridge the gap between the opposites.³⁷

Dissolving the Opposites

The alchemists' first task in redeeming the hidden spirit was to dissolve the opposites of the prima materia. The appearance of a black liquid in their vessels indicated that this process was underway and the nigredo had been achieved.

A regression to this fluid state of matter, where the opposites dissolve, is analogous to a process whereby individuals must sacrifice or in some way confront their primary

processes in order to expand their identities. The opposites serve to hold individuals together and keep their identities intact. Thus a woman who says, "I am not strong," is defining herself in terms of her opposite--what she is not and cannot be. This is important until the moment arrives when the woman is ready to drop her identity and leave her known world.

"One day I found out that personal history was no longer necessary for me and like drinking, I dropped it." These are the words of the Yaqui Indian shaman don Juan, according to Carlos Castaneda's account.* Don Juan also has a very positive outlook on the nigredo, and has no trouble dropping his identity, which he calls "erasing personal history." He explains to his apprentice,

Little by little you must . . . erase everything around you until nothing can be taken for granted, until nothing is any more for sure or real. Your problem now is that you're too real. Your endeavors are too real, your moods are too real. . . . You must begin to erase yourself.³⁸

Don Juan is able to appreciate and enjoy the ultimate freedom and excitement that comes from being unknown to everybody, including himself. Castaneda however, is not yet ready to let go of the opposites which hold him together. He insists, quite rightly, that erasing his personal history would only add to his sense of insecurity. Like many people, Castaneda puts off the nigredo as long as possible.

*There has been controversy as to whether or not don Juan is a "real" person. Because he is real for Castaneda, the issue of whether or not he actually exists is irrelevant to this study.

The dissolution of the opposites and the ensuing nigredo is portrayed in an alchemical allegory from the Rosarium philosophorum entitled "Visio Arislei."³⁹ This important story which portrays the painful and difficult aspects of the nigredo was written down in order to ensure that the alchemical tradition be passed down through posterity.

The story tells of a king whose land is unfruitful because only the "like mates with the like." This means that the opposites do not meet and there is no chance for the growth of consciousness. The king asks for the advice of the philosophers who tell him that he must marry his son Thabritius with his daughter Beya, who stand for the whole conception of the opposites. But when they mate, Thabritius is swallowed into Beya's body, disappears into her womb and is dissolved into atoms. For the alchemists the womb stood for the alchemical vessel, and this mating represented the descent of the spirit into matter.⁴⁰

The king, in retaliation, imprisons the philosophers in the womb of Beya, along with his dead son, where they are left for eighty days and exposed to every kind of terror. According to Jung, the philosophers, who bring about the catastrophe, represent the conscious mind trying to activate the unconscious opposites. It is a dangerous undertaking:

Clearly they have been overpowered by the unconscious and have been hopelessly abandoned, which means they

have volunteered to die in order to beget a new and fruitful life in that region of the psyche which has hitherto lain fallow in the darkest unconsciousness, and under the shadow of death.⁴¹

The terrible fear and resistance which Castaneda, and most people, feel when entering the nigredo is a warranted dread of this journey to hell. Mindell warns that this journey is not for everybody and when the process is attended by a great deal of fear, this fear is to be respected in order to avoid what happened to Thabritius.⁴² The philosophers, who still have their bodies and their primary processes, will be reborn later without much difficulty. Thabritius however, has been split into atoms. This symbolizes a disintegration of the personality analogous to a schizophrenic state and his journey back will be more difficult. No wonder alchemists warned that the work on the Stone was "a place of terror, which has given over many sages to death" and refer to the "infinite number who have plunged to their ruin."⁴³

The place of terror is the realm that exists on the other side of the edge. It is both a terrifying and a freeing region. By going over the edge, we leave our old identities behind. Almost always journeying to this realm brings on a painful nigredo, as well as enlightenment.

In almost every society the ability to withstand the pain of the nigredo has been seen as necessary to achieving

a higher state of consciousness. Buddha had to abandon his princely palace and sit for days under a Bhodi tree, tortured by the devil, before he became invulnerable. Moses was tried and tested before he was illuminated by God on Mt. Sinai and Jesus had to brave the wilderness for forty days and forty nights without food or water.⁴⁴ We have just seen how Job had to suffer in order to know God. Prospective shamans must withstand an "initiatory death" in order to gain their powers, and mythological heroes make a "night sea journey to the underworld" or get swallowed into the belly of a whale or other such monsters.⁴⁵ Christian, Moslem, Indian and Chinese ascetics often inflicted terrible tortures upon their bodies in order to mortify the flesh which they believed came between them and their gods.⁴⁶ Even modern day college students undergo painful and humiliating rituals in order to be initiated into their sororities and fraternities.

Breaking Apart the Body

There are many types of processes which bring on the nigredo and the illumination which usually follows it. Often when clients have "big experiences" during the analytical hour, they come about through "body work." Body work can mean anything from sitting and feeling the body (proprioception), to breathing deeply, to enacting impossible yoga positions, to having brutal wrestling matches, to inflicting torture on one's own body and the experiencing of physical pain.

Through work on the body clients tend to have so-called "religious experiences," which they describe as "out of the body." These strong experiences are "out of the body" in the sense that the individual leaves the old body and its old identity behind.

To understand what this means, try for a moment to straighten your spine just slightly as you are reading these words. Perhaps you were not aware of how you were holding your back before, but chances are, this new posture is not "you." It may feel completely wrong or totally different. Maybe it makes you realize something; perhaps what a slouch you are and what a strong and powerful force you have inside of you. Whatever it is you have learned, you probably had at least a small experience of another personality besides the one you ordinarily identify yourself with. Now imagine what it would be like to really break up your entire body. Remember, that was just a small movement of the spine. Breaking apart the body is one way to annihilate the primary process and allow the psyche a chance to reorganize itself in some new way. Perhaps a severe illness may serve the purpose of reorganizing the psyche in such a way, as well.

Mircea Eliade reports of initiatory dreams of shamans in which the physical body is violently altered. The initiatory death that occurs when the body is broken up corresponds to the mystical darkness of the "first state" or the pre-cosmological chaos. Initiatory death abolishes old created

forms and delivers the prospective shaman's from their failures and sins, that is, from their personal identities.⁴⁷ A Siberian shaman living at the end of the last century described being cut into pieces, thrown into a cauldron, boiled for three years and finally fished out and forged on an anvil where he attained his new identity as a Shaman.⁴⁸

The alchemists projected this initiatory suffering onto mineral substances and expressed it in their motto, "Dissolve the body and coagulate the spirit."⁴⁹ The minerals had to suffer and die in the nigredo in order to be transmuted into another mode of being. They depicted the death and rebirth of their compounds in illustrations of heroes and warriors hacking off the heads and limbs of animals and other men. Images of cutting up, boiling and burning bodies were also common. These motifs were also common in the dreams and visions of the alchemists which took place during the course of their work on the opus.

Among the most famous of these are the visions of Zosimos, an important alchemist and gnostic of the third century A.D., who lived in Alexandria.⁵⁰ The elements in this vision mirror the images conjured up in the dream of the Siberian shaman which took place 2,200 years later. In the vision of Zosimos, as he reported it, a man came to him and said,

I am Ion, the priest of the inner sanctuaries, and I submit myself to an unendurable torment. For there came one in haste at early morning, who overpowered me, and pierced me through with the sword, and

dismembered me. . . . And he drew off the skin of my head with the sword . . . and mingled the bones with the pieces of flesh, and caused them to be burned upon the fire of the art, till I perceived by the transformation of the body that I had become spirit.⁵¹

The vision reveals the violent and powerful nature of the psychic process which was being projected onto the metals. Symbolized by the self-sacrificial act of dismemberment, the identity is destroyed in order for the transformation of the psyche to occur. Clearly, the disruption of the physical body disrupts the primary process and may bring on an experience of the nigredo.

Anchors in the Environment

A disturbance in the environment can also bring individuals the disorientation and despair that is characteristic of the nigredo. People's identities may be anchored in their outer lives: in their families, their jobs, their friends, their political parties or even in their cars or their computers. If any of these outer realities are taken away, through death or divorce or economic hardship or even war, then the individuals may be robbed of their primary processes and be forced over their edges, where they find themselves adrift in unknown secondary processes.

For example, a married woman who lived during World War II identified herself as a loving wife and a kind and giving person. According to this woman, nothing was more important to her than her husband, with whom she was deeply

in love. Sometime during the war she and her husband were in their house together when it was bombed. The roof caved in and the husband got trapped under some rubble. He called for his wife's help so they could escape together from the enemy, but she quickly ran away, pretending not to hear him. When finally he freed himself and the danger subsided, he ran after his wife and cried, "You would have left me there to die." "Yes," she replied in a cold-hearted way. The enraged husband turned around and left, never to see his two-faced wife again.⁵²

This is one example of how, in times of extreme outer hardship, the hidden personality or secondary process may break through. This woman surely did not know she was cold-hearted until the nigredo of the war brought out the other side of her nature. Her loving nature was anchored in her stable environment. Often, the case is the reverse and those who seem weak and selfish under ordinary circumstances access surprising treasure chests filled with strength, courage and reliability under extreme conditions,

Another clear case where environmental circumstances may cause a nigredo is in the situation of children whose parents die or get divorced. These children suffer a great deal after the "tragedy" occurs and often they undergo identity crises. Certainly, they don't always come out of it for the better. But having come from a stable family, I remember, as a young child, feeling jealous of those children

who had to endure so much pain. It seemed as if they were somehow stronger than I and more prepared for the realities of what life would hand them. Never having really known suffering, I felt as if I were missing something. Interestingly enough, I have since learned that my childhood feeling was not an uncommon one. Somehow, even the young and inexperienced know that they need the nigredo in order to grow.

Often we hear about people who "flip out" if their job is threatened, their car is stolen or their house is robbed. These people are thrown into a painful void and forced to find new ways to define themselves. Or what about people who have fetishes about dental equipment, shoes or garments made of leather? They cannot help thinking about these things during their waking life and they dream about them at night. Parts of these people's personal identities, in this case, secondary processes--those they don't consciously identify with--are lodged in these objects. Disturbing or removing the outer object is likely to have an unknown and powerful consequence.

Changing Channels

Split off parts of the personality, that is, secondary processes, always seem to find a channel through which to flow into the individual's field of perception. If the impression is repressed or blocked in one channel, as in the ignoring of a body pain, then the information is likely to find another channel, like a dream, for example, through which to make itself known.

The notion of channels, in this sense, refers to the specific ways in which process information is perceived by individuals.⁵³ Concretely it may be useful to think of a channel as a wire through which a message comes. Individuals or cultures may define their own sets of channels. The ancient Chinese, for example, believed that Tao could manifest itself in one of three channels, heaven, earth or man.⁵⁴ In India, yogins experience Kundalini, mainly through meditation, physical exercise or sex. American Indians know themselves mainly through nomadic and synchronistic experiences with the environment.⁵⁵

Modern psychologies use various channel systems to help people learn about themselves. Freud worked almost exclusively with visual material--dreams. Wilhelm Reich developed the importance of body experiences. Fritz Perls believed that the acting out of dream figures was essential and made it an intrinsic part of gestalt therapy. New age holistic healers use massage, special diets and hot tubs in order to help people discover themselves.⁵⁶

Process-oriented psychology says that given channel systems reflect individual or collective processes; it does not attach itself to any one channel system but tries to discover which channels are carrying information for an individual in any given moment. According to Mindell, the most common channels appearing in one-to-one work with clients here in the West are visualization, audition, inner body

feeling or proprioception and body movement or kinesthesia. Often people's processes are experienced through other people, the relationship channel or flow into the realm of the world channel.⁵⁷

Mindell goes on to say that individuals generally identify themselves with particular channels and disassociate themselves from other channels. Thus a woman who says, "I can imagine my brother skiing but I could never do that," is identified with her visual channel and not with her kinesthetic channel, which is "occupied" at that moment by her brother. In other words, some channels are associated with the identity or primary process and others are associated with the secondary process. According to Mindell, the "unoccupied" channels (the channels not occupied by the individual's primary process in a given moment) bring a person the most powerful and uncontrolled experiences and often the most frightening and irrational ones. Usually the occupied channels must be employed in order for the individual to integrate these far-away experiences.⁵⁸

We have already seen how a typical westerner is likely to have numinous experiences through some form of body work. A non-visual person may be terrified and awed by his or her dreams and fantasies. For a loner, being at a party and relating to people may be enough to bring on a nigredo and a non-proprioceptive person may be absolutely terrorized by the slightest body pain. The woman I mentioned above

may be very comfortable imagining her brother skiing, but if you got her onto her feet and asked her to move, she would freeze. If pushed over her edge, she might go into a bizarre and uncontrolled dance-like spasm. In order for her to understand the meaning and purpose of her wild dance, she would need to visualize it. Through her occupied visual channel, insight about her nigredo might be gained.

Jung talks about channels in a slightly different way. He differentiates characteristic ways in which an individual's consciousness orients itself to life in any channel. He describes two general attitude types, called introversion and extraversion, which are differentiated by their attitude to the object. Introverts set subjective psychological processes above the object and extraverts give the object predominant value.⁵⁹

Along with being either introverted or extraverted, each individual, according to Jung, is also oriented by one of four functions: either by thinking or feeling, which are opposites, or by intuition or sensation, which are also opposites. Thinking types perceive the logical structures and connections in things while feeling types impart value judgments and decide whether things and objects are agreeable. Intuitives sense the whole of a situation without grasping how it is put together, while sensation types are concerned with the details of concrete reality.⁶⁰

Usually individuals identify themselves with their favored or superior function. In this arena they are most

gifted by nature and likely to achieve the greatest social success. As a result, development is one-sided and the opposite or inferior function falls into the background and becomes associated with the unconscious, or the secondary process. Inferior functions generally have archaic and primitive personalities and tend to present fundamental contrasts to people's identities. Naturally, experiences involving the inferior function also tend to bring individuals into the nigredo.⁶¹

The Ally

Don Juan often pushed his apprentice Carlos into experiences of the nigredo in order to help him gain his "personal power." Although these experiences are very painful for the ordinary person, don Juan insists on their importance for a person who is going to become a warrior.

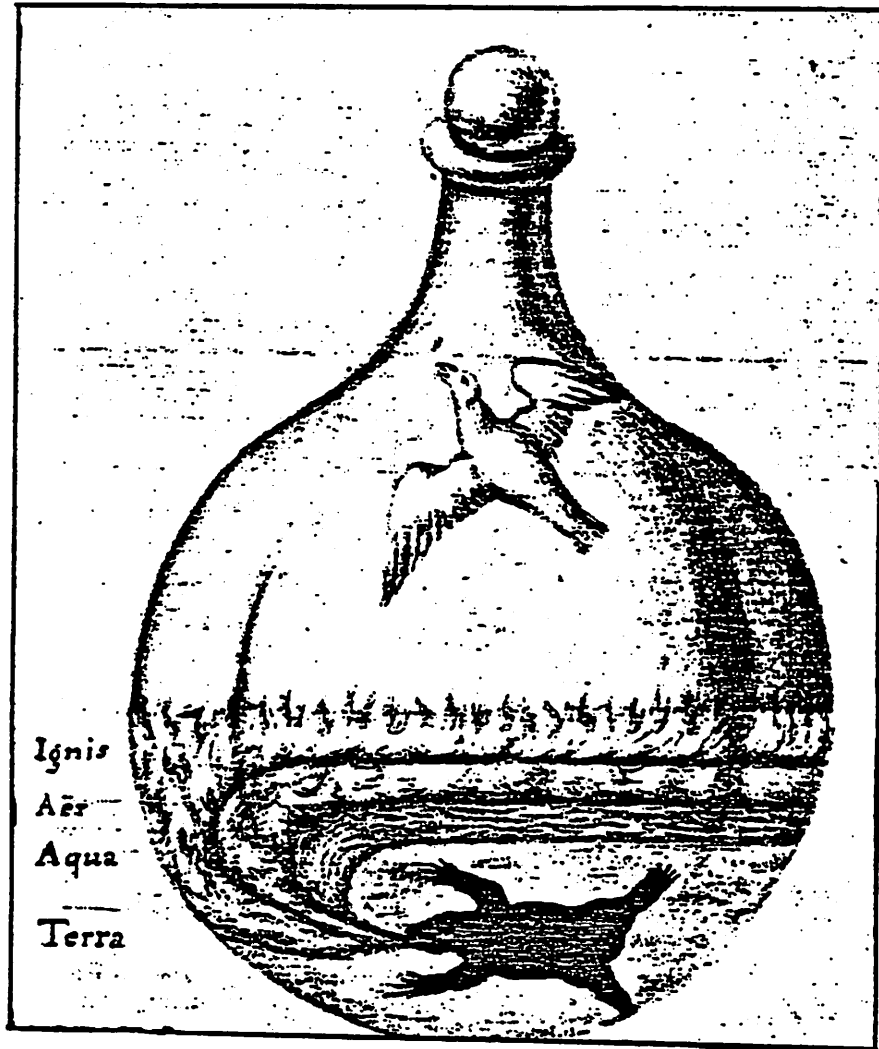
The instant one begins to live like a warrior one is no longer ordinary. . . . I didn't get you a worthy opponent because I wanted to play with you, or tease you, or annoy you. A worthy opponent might spur you on; . . . you may have to make use of everything I have taught you. You don't have any other alternative.⁶²

Don Juan calls these encounters with the dark and unknown forces the meeting with the ally. The ally implies an inner helper who appears and helps a person grow when he or she is blocked and unable to go over an edge. There are all sorts of allies in don Juan's tales, from "death as an advisor" to "little smokes" to wild animals to specific body positions and ways of walking. But the most interesting

aspect of the ally is that it is a potential power which at first appears as a terrifying threat to life, i.e., to the primary process, and is only helpful after it has been fought with and tamed.

The ally, like any secondary process, is in stark opposition to the conscious personality and very extreme in its standpoint. But in the end, the ally is a helper. A relationship to the ally becomes the bridge to the hidden totality of the individual.

Again and again we see that it is only through painful confrontations with those parts of ourselves that plague us the most that we can find our deeper personalities. A person who has battled with the ally in the nigredo gains the seeds of a shaman's wisdom and a warrior's strength which blossom slowly as the process unfolds.



5. The spirit freed from entrapment in matter. (M.S., 18th century)

The Albedo

Darkness in the nigredo of the secondary process does not abide forever. "Thou seeth a wondrous light in the darkness."¹ The transformation of death into a world of light and color was known to the alchemists as "the albedo." In this chapter the moon rises and we enter the whitening phase of the work. At last a luminous principle appears on the threshold of awareness to "purge the horrible darkness of our mind,"² as it is said in an old Latin hymn.

The opposites have been dissolved during the night journey. The dissolution has come about through the divine water, the "aqua permanens," which was described as "an elixir of life which wakens the dead in Hades to a new springtime."³ This wonder-working water which was lured out of the prima materia through the alchemical art has loosened up the rigidity of the nigredo. "The thing will be stronger and better after its destruction."⁴

The courage that has been shown and the ability to have survived the nigredo is paying off. The confrontation with the enemy, the shadow, the inferior function, death or the ally--in whatever form it has chosen--is finally giving rise to something new. The individual has not died completely yet has not been able to remain the same. One has been forced

by fate--by a death in the family, a crisis in a relationship, a life-threatening illness or a powerful dream--to change. One stops resisting fate, downing aspirin and cursing life. The individual has completed the first part of the work, called the "first degree of perfection." At this point the alchemists said that their subject, the prima materia, had acquired sufficient strength to resist the ardours of the fire.⁵

Evidence of the dissolution of the opposites in the alchemical vessel came with the appearance of a "starry aspect" on the surface of the liquid. The star, called Mercury of the Wise, was considered an indication, from within the prima materia itself, that a new child was born in Bethlehem, indicating a new and distant source of guidance from the dark night sky. Within the microcosm of their vessel, the Philosophical Egg, the volatile principle of mercury, which at this point the alchemists imagined as a bird, tried to fly back to the old and familiar life whence it came. But the bird was unable to fly away and was pulled back to a new earth.⁶

According to Mindell, images of Mercury flying away and landing symbolize processes immediately following the nigredo. Glad to have survived the heavy time, individuals think that their work is finished and try to return to life as usual. But fortunately this is no longer possible. The energy of the secondary process attracts the focus of the regenerated ego, which is no longer the director of process.⁷

Again and again, Mercury tried to escape and fell back into the alchemical liquid. As the outer heat of the fire was slowly intensified, a great number of beautiful colors appeared, known to the alchemists as the Peacock's Tail, the transition period which gradually led to the albedo, the "one white which contains all colors."⁸

The Bringing About of Tao

Chinese alchemists referred to the albedo as the "first bringing about of Tao."⁹ In the ancient alchemical manual, The Secret of the Golden Flower, Tao is defined by Master Lü-tsu as "that which exists through itself." Wilhelm's translation of the character for Tao conveys the image of a "track, which, though fixed itself, leads from a beginning directly to the goal."¹⁰ These definitions of Tao bring to mind Jung's concept of "psychic finality," an energetic principle in the psyche whereby causes are understood as means to an end. The final standpoint indicates that psychic energy flows in a definite direction, maintains itself as a constant and follows a gradient of potential towards a kind of goal.¹¹

The first "bringing about of Tao," or the albedo, refers to a time when the ego has loosened its control and individuals are connected to a new power within themselves. The new center, which Master Lü-tsu called the "true energy of the transcendent great One," Jung calls the Self. Mindell calls it the "wisdom of process," which has come to awareness

and has the ability to carry the opposites of human nature in everyday life.¹²

Master Lü-tsu taught that the Tao is contained in the "light of heaven" or the "golden flower." This group of Chinese alchemists brought Tao about through an internal procedure whereby they located this light in their bodies and, using the breath, circulated it through all the centers of the body, in order to include all the aspects of the personality. Eventually, through an internal "melting and mixing," this light was believed to crystallize within the real body into a spirit body, called the "diamond body." The ultimate goal of the "circulation" was to return to the place from "whence human nature and life originally sprang," thereby becoming one with Tao and achieving immortality.¹³

Wilhelm explains that the Chinese philosophy is based on the premise that the cosmos and man obey the same law, that man is the microcosm and is not separated by any fixed barriers from the macrocosm. The Tao, the Way, governs human beings just as it does invisible and visible nature.¹⁴

This "golden flower" then, was for the Chinese alchemist a potential connection to the total universe. In The Secret of the Golden Flower it is written:

The light is not in the body alone, nor is it only outside the body. Mountains and rivers and the great earth are lit by the sun and the moon; all that is this light. Therefore it is not only within the body. Understanding and clarity, perception and enlightenment, and all movements (of the spirit) are likewise this light; therefore it is not just something outside the body. . . . As soon as the light is circulating,

heaven and earth, mountains and rivers, are all circulating with it at the same time. . . . This marvellous magic cannot be fathomed.¹⁵

Through work on their bodies, Chinese alchemists achieved their first experiences of the albedo. With their proprioceptive awarenesses, they contacted the creative spirit of the great One which was said to contain all within it. The European alchemists also believed that there was a light contained both within human beings and in the macro-cosm. They intuited that the further transformation of their metals, after the nigredo, necessitated an opening up to the flows both inside and outside the body. But rather than working directly on their bodies, they worked on metals. They carefully tended their fires and waited for the light to appear within their Philosophical Egg.

The Lumen Naturae

One of the most influential teachers of European alchemy, the Swiss physician Paracelsus, referred to the "lumen naturae" (the light of nature). He claimed it was the source for discovering the hidden and inborn knowledge in human beings. According to Paracelsus, there were two heavens, the firmament in the sky and the firmament in the body, and they both contained the "lumen naturae." He held that the knowledge of the nature of diseases came from this light and he had to determine his medicines by reading the firmament in the sky. Ostensibly for Paracelsus, alchemy was a procedure through which he could duplicate the firmament and prepare medicaments for his patients.¹⁶

Examined within the context of the religious milieu in which Paracelsus lived, his conception of the "lumen naturae" was shocking. Within the concept of the "light of nature" lurked, for Christians like Paracelsus, heretical implications. The light was named "the greatest and most victorious of all lights" and was equated with Christ.¹⁷

The alchemist Khunrath said,

The Stone of the Philosopher's, the Preserver of the Microcosm, is the symbol of Christ Jesus Crucified, Saviour of the whole race of men. . . . From the stone you shall know in natural wise Christ, and from Christ the stone.¹⁸

Whereas in Christ, God became man in order to bring about the salvation of humankind, the "lumen naturae" was extracted from matter by a human art--the work of the alchemists. Jung points out,

In the one case man confesses, 'I under God,' in the other he asserts 'God under me.' Man takes the place of the Creator [italics mine]. Medieval alchemy prepared the way for the greatest intervention in the divine world order that man has ever attempted.¹⁹

The alchemists however, had a Christian consciousness and seemed to have been naive as to the implications of their teachings. It is possible that by working on the stone rather than directly on their own bodies, they managed to avoid a confrontation with their Christian belief system. Because Europeans were not naturally proprioceptive types, we can speculate that a direct experience of the "lumen naturae" or Christ within their own bodies would have pushed them over their edges, bringing direct personal experiences of what Jung calls the Self. The alchemists would have had

to recognize themselves as the equivalent of Christ, making their own flesh, as well as all of matter, holy. This conclusion, although acceptable to Taoism, is diametrically opposed to Christianity.

However, the fact that these heretical ideas were implied philosophically, although probably not recognized consciously, may indicate that simmering within the psyches of these Christian alchemists was an inner Christ principle asking to be stirred and spiced by human effort. Christ, of course, is the major god of the western world and there has been a great deal of literature written on his psychological meaning. Many people try to model themselves after him and the alchemists stressed their own humility and began their work on the opus with an invocation to Christ.²⁰

However, the alchemists seemed to be trying to "work on" Christ or redeem him. I would like to treat Christ only in terms of individual human development and address the one moment in the life of the man Jesus when he may have needed help--his crucifixion--which was the nigredo that ended his earthly existence.

Christ's final words on the cross were "God, God why hast thou forsaken me?"²¹ This powerful question discloses the evil forces of God to be outside of Christ's identity. Jahweh, when he became Christ, apparently incarnated only half of his nature, only his goodness. He created Christ, a god-man free of original sin. Satan, his dark side, was

still free to wander autonomously to and fro on earth. Without a relationship to his own darkness, the secondary process that may have been his ally, Christ lost his human life. He was victimized by darkness and evil which was constellated or dreamed up in the world around him.

According to Jung, Christ represents the Self.²² He says that if theology describes Christ as only "good" and "spiritual," then something "evil" or "material" is bound to arise on the other side to represent his human aspect.²³ It is possibly on this particular point that Christ, as a one-sided internal principle, needed to be transformed by the human hand in order to represent the total Self. Discovering the "lumen naturae" or Christ in their material could have given the alchemists an opportunity to connect with an inner god principle which combined spirit and flesh and encompassed good and evil. Through their art, they may have been searching for their own god-like potential to create all kinds of processes. It is important to stress that this is speculation. The alchemists seemed to have little concrete idea about their unconscious processes.

Hostile Sparks of Light

Let's take a look at how a creative principle which brings about new insights in the albedo may, on first appearance, seem to be an evil or destructive force. Consider the case of a woman who has a tumor in her uterus. Doctors say that it is benign but growing and that it should be removed.

The woman is terrified that she is going to die, believes her body is against her and thinks she should probably have surgery.

The woman says she is unhappy because she is weak, lazy and undisciplined. She hates herself because she is unable to wake up early in the morning, doesn't jog and spends too much time reading cheap novels. She can't help it, she says. Her conscious wishes are to be more disciplined and develop a stronger ego. She has many ideas about how she should be and says that her laziness is "self-destructive."

During process work this woman experiences a proprioceptive awareness of her tumor. She closes her eyes, feels its energy and, believe it or not, she begins to dance. She says that the tumor wants to move and shake and be loose and free. She goes on to say that it is very self-confident and knows what it wants. Although she is normally very inhibited and controlled, she suddenly begins acting like her tumor, reacting spontaneously to the people around her and saying what she is thinking and feeling.

What does her tumor want to be free of? Apparently it wants to be free of her primary process, her ideas about how she should be. It wants freedom from her limited set of intentions. When the woman says that her behavior is self-destructive, she is right. Her body is trying to destroy her ideas about herself and it won't follow her program. The tumor has other plans in mind--like having some fun--

and it may continue to grow unless she herself expands her identity.

You can imagine how shocked this woman was when she realized that her body wanted her to dance, to be self-assured and spontaneous and to expand her rigid ideas. She learned that there was a deeper meaning in the tumor and she could use its energy as guidance. A new awareness entered her primary process and her old identity was challenged. In that creative moment she gained the insight and the ability to change her life based on her new knowledge. The responsibility was hers to become more like her enemy and ally--the tumor.

Through a proprioceptive awareness of her tumor, the woman's conscious attitude was relativized, or in alchemical language, melted. Jung stresses that such processes often give the impression of being destructive.

For those who identify with the dominants or are absolutely dependent on them the melting process appears as a hostile attack which should be resisted with all one's power. Others, for whom the dominants no longer mean what they purport to be, see the melting as a longed-for regeneration and enrichment of a system of ideas that has lost its vitality and freshness and is already obsolete. The melting process is therefore either something very bad or something highly desirable, according to the standpoint of the observer.²⁴

The alchemist Gerhard Dorn, a student of Paracelsus, was a great proponent of such melting processes. He seemed to think they were a sure way to discover the sparks of light that came with new knowledge. "'Dissolve the body and coagulate the spirit,'" he said, "and you will find the

meaning of your life anew." And then eventually,

certain sparks will come. From day to day they will come alive and alight before the inner mental eyes, and slowly these sparks will coalesce into such a light that in time one will always know what one needs and will thus only be attached to that inner truth.²⁵

Apparently, Dorn was also something of a process worker. He was aware that the processes that went on in the retort were very real for human beings. He understood that every small message from the secondary process, every new awareness, helps individuals to develop and create new identities as they are needed.

Creation Myths

The replacement of old psychic patterns with new ones happens naturally during the whitening phase of the albedo. In fact when our paradigms in any area of life are proven to be invalid, new ones are created. We rarely linger very long in the abyss of the unknown. Millenia ago, when almost nothing was consciously understood about the world, our ancestors often found themselves without models, in the face of unknown cosmic mysteries. In such situations, they made up stories and created explanations.

Von Franz says that the creation myths of primitive tribes reveal not the objective origin of our cosmos, but the origin of people's conscious awareness of the world. She explains that in the early stages of our development, we existed in a state of archaic identity with the outer world.

This condition, called "participation mystique," indicates that we did not differentiate between subject and object, between the inner and outer worlds. Then certain mysterious mutations took place in our psyches which disturbed the peace of this identity, made us distinguish what was inside from what was outside and forced us to create new models. These models, the result of our new awarenesses, are reflected in creation myths.²⁶

Today, in our sophistication, we have managed to separate ourselves somewhat from the external environment. Most people no longer look at a tree and say, "That is the spirit of growth," and few people worry about appeasing angry gods when the sky is storming or pity the grass when the lawn is being mowed. In addition, we understand somewhat more, though certainly not everything, about how the world was created.

Despite our worldly wisdom and our clear-headed rationality, we too, frequently find ourselves at the borders of the known world in want of patterns for processes which are highly enigmatic. However, we are learning that the explanations we create about the physical world reflect, as Heisenberg said, "nature exposed to our method of questioning,"²⁷ rather than "objective" reality. It, much to our dismay, might turn out to be an invalid concept.

When we want to understand more about our inner world, we turn to our dreams and fantasies for assistance. They often provide patterns for processes on the other side of

our edges and give us the courage to traverse into unknown lands.

Interestingly enough, the patterns and dramas in our dreams and fantasies, as well as in spontaneous processes which occur during process work, mirror the motifs and events of creation myths. This is especially true of the dreams of psychotics or borderline patients who are on the road to rebuilding their reality, of people who are trying to embark on a creative project and of those who are approaching critical points in their individuation processes and need to make bold steps into unknown territories.²⁸

Our ancestors needed patterns to account for the most fundamental mysteries of the universe. They wanted to answer some very basic and profound questions such as: What was here before anything was? What is the source of all being? How was the world made? Who put it here? What is the purpose of our lives and deaths? They were desperate for some explanations that would exiate their awe and fear. The stories were mainly the result of a search for meaning. Therefore they began to see all manifestations of nature as the result of a willed act with some kind of personified deity behind it.

Every impression that man receives, every wish that stirs in him, every hope that lures him, every danger that threatens him . . . causes him to create a momentary deity. . . . Just let spontaneous feeling invest the object before him, or his own personal condition, or some display of power that surprises him, with an air of holiness, and the momentary god

has been created. . . . The brook, the tree, the rain, contain the willing elements in themselves.²⁹

It seems as if originally cosmogonic myths were created for two basic reasons--to give value and meaning to the inexplicable mysteries of the universe and to provide models and patterns for human behavior. And the myths themselves tended to be stories, dramas placed within the familiar world of time and space, in order to create a bridge to what was known, that is, to the primary process of the culture at that time.

In the myths, supernatural beings created the universe in a variety of ways. Some gods procreated while others masturbated. Some sacrificed parts of their own body, from which they created the world and others destroyed an enemy. Often a unified world had to be divided or separated, or order had to be created from chaos. Sometimes a god's emotion was the motive force behind creation. Creation could be intentional or accidental.³⁰ The variety of metaphors employed was vast.

In addition to providing models and answering questions, creation myths had an important ritual application, as well. In many early civilizations they were repeated under specific conditions. In India, cosmogonic myths were recited every time a new house was built, as if the whole world were recreated with each building of a house. In the early Middle Ages, when Vikings or Anglo-Saxons first set foot in a new country to settle it, they repeated the creation myth, as if the country itself had not existed before their

awareness of it. When towns were founded or new kings enthroned, many cultures repeated creation myths.³¹

Among the Fijan islanders today, the creation myth finds expression whenever the crops are bad. According to Eliade,

Each time that life is threatened and the cosmos, in their eyes, is exhausted and empty, the Fijans feel the need for a return 'in principio', in other words, they expect the regeneration of cosmic life. . . from its recreation. Hence, the essential importance . . . of anything which can signify the beginning, the original, the primordial.³²

The Polynesian cosmogonic myth is uttered whenever something must be done or created. "Let the Waters be separated, let the Heavens be formed, let the Earth be!" said the supreme God Io. These words are repeated during the rites for making a sterile womb fecund, for curing despondent hearts, for inspiration in song-writing and for healing the feeble or aged. They are repeated as well on the occasion of a death or war.³³

The creation myth serves as a model for almost every type of creation, discovery, restoration or regeneration. Every new conscious attitude or new awareness means the death of something old and each time this occurs there is a threat to the old identity. The creation myth serves to restore order by reminding people that creation is indeed possible, that there was a time long ago when a particular reality came into being for the first time and a new order was established.

Creation Stories in Process Work

Specific motifs in creation myths often parallel creative solutions to blocked processes which are discovered in process work during the whitening phase of the albedo. The actors and actresses in creation myths however, are gods and goddesses capable of everything and therefore without edges. As such, processes which in creation myths seem like easy feats, may, for human beings, be difficult and terrifying challenges. The myths themselves do not usually address the issue of the edge.

Sometimes processes are blocked when individuals cannot enter into emotional circumstances or have edges against certain feelings which they regard as unacceptable and have no pattern for.

For example, a woman was very angry because she was always doing things for other people and never got anything in return. She felt that people were selfish and life was unfair. She related numerous incidents where people ignored her needs and basically stepped all over her. She was cold and stuck in her anger which came out in her tone of voice. When asked to amplify her tone of voice without words, she started yelling loudly with a demanding and assertive tone. She made the statement, "I don't know what is going on, I'm afraid. I don't know what I am saying." When people make statements like this, it almost always indicates that they are in the vicinity of an edge. They are afraid or confused

because they don't know what will come next. Suddenly, she burst into tears and announced that she really needed people and was ashamed of her needs. This emotional release was the moment of creation and was the first step towards learning how to ask people for love directly.

There are many creation myths where a god feels sad or lonely or afraid or uncomfortable, and from these feelings, he creates the world. In an Indian cosmogony recorded in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the Purusha, the primeval being, was lonely and afraid and felt no delight. He created the universe in order to alleviate his discomfort. The fear, according to the myth, was the basis of creativeness. Von Franz says that a person who cannot withstand fear will never become creative.³⁴ As we have seen, one must be able to bear the impact of the unknown in order to create something new.

In process work as in creation myths, a thought alone may be the impetus behind creation. In a North American creation myth, Awonawalona, the highest god of the Zunis' was all alone. The myth reports that

There was nothing beside him in the whole space of time. Everywhere there was black, darkness and void. Then Awonawalona conceived in himself the thought and the thought took shape and got out into outer space and through this it stepped out into the void, into outer space, and from it came mists of increase and streams of potent growth.³⁵

From these mists came all the rest of creation.³⁶

How is it that a mere thought can create something new? Every new thought is, in a sense, a creation. Mindell

repeatedly asserts that if people think something about themselves or imagine ways that they could be in the future, then they already have a pattern for that new behavior, indicating that at least a part of them has a personality other than the one they identify themselves with. He adds that if they ask a question, then they probably already know the answer or they would not have had the ability to formulate the question.³⁷ I have seen many people jump over their edges simply by believing in their thoughts or fantasies and acting on them resolutely.

Don Juan calls this "assuming responsibility." He teaches Carlos that if he assumes responsibility by acting rather than talking, then there is no such thing as a lie.

When a man decides to do something he must go all the way, but he must take responsibility for what he does. No matter what he does, he must know first why he is doing it, and then he must proceed with his actions without having doubts or remorse about them. . . .

To assume the responsibility of one's decisions means that one is ready to die for them.³⁸

In other words, if I have the fantasy of becoming a lecturer, and I take responsibility for that, it means that a part of me is already a lecturer and I can work towards becoming one consciously. If Carlos "lies" to don Juan about his knowledge of medicinal plants, it may be in part because another personality within him is much wiser and more knowledgeable than his identity realizes. Assuming responsibility for his "lie" is the first step towards making it into a reality.

We all sometimes think unthinkable thoughts. These are the thoughts that our primary process cannot identify

with or support. Either they are too inflated, too radical or just plain frightening. According to the Zuni myth, these thoughts are creative potentials. As soon as we think them, they can become reality. They may even get inside of another person who may get dreamed up to push us over our edges. How many times have you had the experience that a friend approaches you and suggests that you do or say just the thing that you had been fantasizing about but were too shy to admit? Our most private thoughts seem to sneak out of us and make their way into the environment in the form of friends and foes who push us over our edges.

The implications of quantum mechanics affirm that Awonawalona's thought, in a certain sense, actually could have created the world. That is to say, our thoughts and perceptions not only influence reality, but actually create it; for example, we create certain properties of a particle according to what we choose to measure. As such, our experiments create the reality of a given moment. John Wheeler, a well-known physicist at Princeton, wrote:

May the universe in some strange sense be 'brought into being' by the participation of those who participate?*. . . The vital act is the act of participation. 'Participator' is the incontrovertible new concept given by quantum mechanics.³⁹

Awonawalona's creation by thought is apparently happening all around us.

In many cosmogonies, the motive force of creation depends on the clearing of a middle ground between opposing

*This is an interesting concept next to our having started out in "participation mystique."

forces. In some stories the middle ground is established with ease. In a Chinese myth, the giant creator God, P'an Ku, born of Chaos, was the mediator between Yang, sky, and Yin, earth. P'an Ku stayed in the middle and transformed himself nine times each day, sometimes a god in the sky and sometimes a holy man on earth. Each time he transformed himself, the distance between earth and sky widened further.⁴⁰

However, sometimes the separation requires considerable force, as in Hesiod's theogony. Father Sky refused to lift himself off Mother Earth, allowing the children, who were between them, no breathing space. Kronos castrated Father Sky and violently yanked the couple apart.⁴¹

The violent nature of Hesiod's theogony is, in my experience, characteristic of many processes here in the West. Violent battles between opposing parts of an individual's personality often stimulate change. Merciless outer situations such as severe illnesses or brutal fights between the best of friends can also force a person into further growth.

A typical example of such a creation lies in the case of a woman who was constantly flipping from loving her father and being a good daughter to hating him and rejecting everything that he had to offer. It was not until he was violently torn from her life that she was able to establish a middle ground where she could flow freely between the opposites, loving him and hating him simultaneously.

We have already seen how violence was a necessary ingredient in the transformation of Jahweh and Job, We have

also seen how the unintegrated evil in Christ may have caused his violent death. The violence necessary in order to establish a middle ground between the opposites here in the West may be a reflection of our basic Christian philosophy which, unlike the Taoist philosophy of yin and yang, does not accept the opposites in human nature.

Violence however, appears in eastern stories in other contexts. In another myth, P'an Ku had to sacrifice himself, in order that his own corpse could form the raw material from which he could make the basic things of the universe. His remains formed the five sacred mountains of China. His eyes became the sun and moon; his fat melted into the rivers and streams; and his hair covered the earth with plants.⁴²

This motif of a god's body forming the world is a prevalent theme in myths from all over the world. In the Babylonian "Enuma Elish," the mother goddess Tiamat, the monster of chaos, was slain by the hero Marduk and out of her corpse the world was created. A Hindu cosmogony recorded in the Rig Veda portrays the act of creation as a sacrificial rite in which Purusha, the first man, was the victim. He was cut up and each part of him became a part of the universe. Three-quarters of him remained unmanifest and absolute, while one-quarter of his immense body created the material world, with its creatures and social classes. Ymir, the primeval giant in old Germanic mythology, was slain and his flesh was used in a similar way.⁴³

What does it mean if a god or a giant is sacrificed in order for the world to be created? Why is his or her body cut up and used to become the world? Possible answers may be revealed in the following case.

A woman who was strongly identified with herself as a body person, a mover, was having very vivid fantasies of getting killed by a big truck. In her fantasy, her death was an act of self-sacrifice, and this disturbed her a great deal. She did not consciously want to kill herself. Encouraged to continue her fantasy, she realized that if she were hit, her body would fly into the air and split up into a million pieces. Then she would no longer have her body, but parts of her would be all over the world.

Further work on the fantasy laid bare the fact that the woman was quite fed up with herself. She felt she was overly sentimental and attached to things in her life. She wanted to operate from a much deeper, inner power. She knew she had a mystical and shamanic side that could see inside people and perhaps even heal. But she didn't nurture this deeper personality, and allowed it no place in her daily life.

The woman's self-sacrifice was actually a means by which she could spread herself out all over the universe in order to identify herself with more than just her primary process. The woman's secondary process was to be inhuman and god-like. Understanding her fantasy and further work on the edge which separated her from her shamanistic side, gave her a pattern for how to get into her secondary process.

Because she could enact the self-sacrificial act of creation right there, in her work, it might not have become necessary for her to have a fatal accident, which could determine her fate in order to force her into her inhuman secondary process.

This woman's so-called self-sacrifice is really the sacrifice of the god of her primary process, which in her case is associated with the body. The death represents the destruction of a ruling conscious principle for the sake of the secondary process. Since this god's body spreads all over the world, it may be an indication that the secondary process is one which is intimately connected to the collective. Indeed this was the case, because this woman's shamanic tendencies endowed her with a very unusual feeling of love for other people and a special gift with which she could help and heal them.

The sacrifice of a god's body and the consequent use of its parts in the creation of the universe, indicates a process whereby the ruling deity or primary process must be destroyed in order for the individual to become identified, not with the ego and the personal body, but rather with all of humankind.

Often cosmogonies portray a battle between the forces of good and evil. In many creation stories we meet a shadow or twin creator who is at once an ally and a rival. An Iroquois myth tells of the birth of twins. They quarreled in the womb about who would be born first and how they should

come out of their mother. Maple Sprout went first and he was born in the way that human beings would be born later. The second child, Tawiskaron, did not come out in the normal way, but from under his mother's armpit. The apex of his head was a knife and he pierced his mother and killed her as he came out.⁴⁴

Tawiskaron tricked his grandmother into believing that his mother's death was Maple Sprout's fault. As a result, grandma threw the innocent, human-shaped twin into the bushes and left him to die; the one with the knife-shaped head she raised as her beloved son. But of course, Maple Sprout survived, returned to his brother and fought with him about what should be created. Maple Sprout created all of the good things, including people and plants; and he taught human beings cultural activities. Tawiskaron created crocodiles, mosquitos and demonic human beings who could not walk. He undid much of the positive creation of Maple Sprout. In the end, they had a great battle and Maple Sprout won. Tawiskaron became God of the Dead.

Tawiskaron is a trickster-figure. His function is to undo the consolidation of consciousness and in this sense he is an ally.⁴⁵ As westerners, our primary processes have the tendency to disregard everything that is evil, irrational and archaic in order to keep life under our control, so to speak. Without a counter-position, creation would be impossible. The trickster provides access to that which is

unwanted and unknown, and keeps the door open for new and unexpected possibilities.

Although Tawiskaron, the trickster, can be evil and destructive, he is probably one of the process worker's most vital allies. One of the most unusual aspects of process-oriented psychology is that it is based on the philosophy of an open paradigm. The process worker needs Tawiskaron's tricks as a reminder that no patterns are fixed, and that even a well-trained perceptual system can do little more than serve as a tool with which to grasp a fleeting glimpse of something which may be ultimately unfathomable. As Maple Sprout fills in the holes and the process worker gains temporary understandings of process, Tawiskaron opens up the paradigm in order to confuse things once again. This helps the process worker develop a valuable tool--an open and experimental mind.

There is a poignant creation myth told by the Taoist philosopher, Tchuang-Tzu, which according to von Franz, compensates our tendency in the West to try to order and understand all aspects of reality.⁴⁶ The story emphasizes how creation may be negative in the sense that it destroys a primordial and chaotic condition. This myth provides a counter-position to the many myths which depict the creator god as a talented and enlightened craftsman who creates the world by molding chaos into the ordered universe as we know it today.⁴⁷

The title of the myth is translated by Richard Wilhelm as "The Death of the Chaos-Unconscious," and it goes something like this. The Master of the Southern Sea was called Heedless. He was depicted as a man with many moods who acted on impulse, with no definite purpose in mind. Apparently he had no reflective consciousness. The Master of the Northern Sea, Hasty, seized things very quickly with intention. He seemed to interfere too much with life. In between them was Hwun-tun, translated as Chaos-Unconscious, an unknown, preconscious totality. Heedless and Hasty often met in the middle space of Chaos-Unconscious, who was very nice to them. In order to repay him for his kindness, they decided they would make him human. They would do so by giving him all of the orafices that human beings have in order to see and hear and smell and breathe, because he had nothing of the kind. Every day they drilled a hole into him and on the seventh day he died.⁴⁸

By trying to make Chaos-Unconscious human and conscious, Heedless and Hasty killed him. This myth addresses the inherent and perhaps negative tendency of consciousness to solidify and affirm itself in order to maintain its dictatorship. This typically Taoist text emphasizes the value of the chaotic and unknown, especially as vital ingredients of the creative process. Here in the West, we tend to be one-sidedly consciousness-oriented and we need the alliance of Tawiskaron, the archetypal trickster figure, who breaks

up the consolidation of consciousness and prevents us from losing creativity entirely.

The trickster often causes some kind of an upheaval in order to push us into a creative state. This process manifests itself frequently in relationships where one partner is driven by some kind of inner force to be critical, disinterested or evil, in short, to disobey collective norms in some striking way. No matter how much the primary process of this couple tries to maintain some semblance of normalcy and convention, it becomes impossible. The couple is then driven to find some kind of new and creative way in which to continue their relationship. Many relationships are unable to withstand the tension at this difficult point. But for those that survive, the negative or difficult partner may have been the vessel for the trickster, the ally who has inspired change and growth.

Many creative people live constantly in the world of the trickster. They lead an alternative or Bohemian lifestyle and are continually open to new inspirations. But other creative types conform to collectivity and need a smashing-up of the identity before they can create. Von Franz says that Jung was such a type. Rather well-adapted to collective life, he wrote what he considered one of his best books, Answer to Job, while fever-stricken in bed. Perhaps his ally put him there in order to fulfill his task. When he finished the manuscript he got up and was well again. Goethe always had to fall in love before he could be creative.⁴⁹

I know many people who cannot create until they have hit the depths of a depression.

Naturally, most people try to avoid the trickster altogether. Often people have strange impulses or creative ideas and choose to ignore them. They carry on with their lives, rather than find the time, discipline or courage to set them down on paper or carry them through in some way. Often the holding back has a purpose; perhaps it is a question of timing and the creative seed is not yet ready to be born. But sometimes it is sheer laziness that prevents people from going ahead, or fear of the unknown. Some people even resist becoming creative because it is a deflation of sorts. A would-be creative idea brewing in the depths of the psyche tends to carry a great deal of numinosity and power. The process however, of transforming the seed into a form worthy of recognition, requires a great deal of painstaking work that is not the least bit magical. And this work, which the gods have left up to the humans they created, is the next stage of the process.

We have seen that just as ancient deities created the universe with their supernatural powers, human creatures, by exploring the far-away regions of their own psyches, have obtained the god-like ability to create new worlds, as well. These new worlds, created with expanded awarenesses, appear in the moonlit albedo.

The Philosophical Tree

Let's return to the "Visio Arislei,"⁵⁰ the alchemical allegory which I discussed in the last chapter, in order to find out how the alchemists imagined that Thabritius, the king's son, received his creative power during the whitening of the albedo.

When we left the "Visio," the characters were enduring a terrible nigredo. The king's son had been swallowed by the body of his sister, Beya, during coitus. He had suffered a disintegration of the personality and died. As punishment, the king had imprisoned the philosophers--who were responsible for the mating--beneath the sea. They were exposed to the heat of a terrible fire and have been cooking ever since. Thabritius, the spirit trapped in matter, has been lying in the sleep of death while the philosophers have been searching for a way to bring him to life in order to be freed from their underwater prison.

This painful condition, in which the creative principle seems to be sleeping or dead, has its analogy in modern day creativity theory. Most major psychological theories of creativity, modeled after a theory advanced by Joseph Wallas in 1926, divide the creation process into stages and include a phase called "incubation." Incubation, a period of time which elapses between the initial preparatory stages of the work and the illumination which comes toward the end, is a phase which may last from a few days to several years. During incubation, the creator is consciously passive, but the

collected material, somehow stored in the creator's unconscious mind, undergoes a kind of reorganization, elaboration and eventual transformation. The illumination, according to theory, occurs as a sudden and unexpected intuition, insight or solution.⁵¹

This motif of "passive creativity," is mirrored in creation myths, as well. In a north central Californian cosmogony there are two creators, Silver Fox and Coyote. First they tried to create the world together, but they got bored and were unsuccessful. Later, at Silver Fox's suggestion, Coyote took a nap, and upon awakening, discovered that the world had been created without him.⁵²

Fortunately, a similar fate befell Thabritius. While lying in the sleep of death, the philosophers received a message that a "most-precious tree" had been growing, bearing the fruits of life that bring salvation.⁵³

The "Philosophical Tree," an important symbol in alchemy, represents the opus as a transformation process of life, death and rebirth. It portrays an inner process of development, consisting of the union of opposites that goes on, independent of consciousness and will.⁵⁴ The natural growth process of the tree is analogous to the psyche's natural growth, which occurs despite the temporary passivity of Thabritius, Coyote or any creative person. The German poet Rainer Maria Rilke expressed this process in the following poem:

Oh, I who long to grow
 I look outside myself, and the tree
 inside me grows.⁵⁵

Trees seem to embody the image of eternal life. In winter they die, returning to life each spring when they bud, flower and bear fruit. The fruits drop to the earth and new trees are born. The tree's cyclical process indicates that passivity, sleep and even death may be a part of the creative process which leads to an eventual renewal and completion.

Many alchemists saw tree-like forms in their vessels.

Dorn imagined a

metallic tree in the midst of nature's womb . . .
 its trunk in the earth . . .divided into different
 branches . . . spread through the whole globe of
 the earth, as in the human body the veins spread
 through the different limbs.⁵⁶

Dorn's tree had a system of blood vessels which contained a red liquid similar to blood which coagulated into the fruits of the tree. The rose-colored blood was considered "the sole and perfect Healer of all imperfect bodies and men, the true and heavenly physician of the soul."⁵⁷

This magical red substance was able to aid Thabritius in his individuation process. It brought him back to life and offered him the opportunity to live as a creative man in the world.

The cleansing and whitening phase, the "solutio" of the albedo, has drawn to its end. With the appearance of this red, life-giving substance the sun rises and a new

day begins. A great deal has been learned. A creative principle has appeared. But only further work, the great human effort of the rubedo, will reveal whether or not this new-born creative power can be lived in the world, whether the Divine Child will actually find its life here on this earth, as a human being.



6. As the old king drowns, potential for a new life lies in the hands of the young king.
(Splendor solis mss, 1585)

The Rubedo

"And he maketh all that is black white and all that is white red, for water whiteneth and fire enlighteneth."¹ After the rigidity and depression of the nigredo and the emergence of process wisdom in the albedo, active life, emotion and feeling return, and as a result of the increased heat of the fire, the metals turn ruby red in the alchemical vessel. The principle of consciousness, which the alchemists personified as the red king, appears. He hearkens to the new psychic creation which is begging for succor. The king, the director or ruler of the land, or the primary process, now proceeds from a new center, reacting to the contents of what has been produced. "The rubedo" is a time when great human effort is required in order to integrate, modify and further transform these new creations.²

This type of active intervention of consciousness is easy to imagine in terms of traditional creative pursuits. A painter, for example, paints a picture in a burst of creative delight. She works for hours in a state of fury and ecstasy. Relieved to have released her innermost treasure, she leaves her studio, exhausted and relaxed. But the next day she is shocked at what she finds on the canvas. She can relate to it from some deep and far-away feeling,

but her primary process has a strong reaction. Relative to her memory, the creation is probably a mess.

There is a Latin proverb which says, "parturiunt montes nascetur ridiculus mus": "the mountains have labor pains and a ridiculous little mouse is brought forth."³ If the artist is committed to what has been created, he or she must enter the long and arduous process of transforming the crude expression into a form which the primary process accepts, without severely altering its impact.

Many scientist, writers, painters and musicians know this experience. They are thankful for these crude and unfathomable creations which spring from the depths of the secondary process, but they are grateful as well for the tendency of the primary process to "polish things up" and make them comprehensible to others. The extremity of these two positions makes it possible for a middle ground to be established, where primary and secondary processes work together. From this joint effort cultures receive the creative gifts from their artists.

The mutual participation of primary and secondary processes occurs in the rubedo when the opposites no longer flee from one another in the vessel. The red man and the white woman, Sol and Luna, king and queen, are preparing to consummate their marriage, the "hieros gamos," which will finally produce the divine and perfect child of their desires, capable of continual spontaneous creation.⁴

However, before the work can reach its completion, the metals must cook over a constant and intense heat for days, months or even years. Not much has been written about this stage of the work. From what little has been said, it is evident that the rubedo, with its increased participation of consciousness, brings with it a desire on the part of the alchemists, to intervene in nature's work. By this point in the opus, they have been through confusion, tension, despair and a glimpse of better things, and they are ready to reap the rewards of their labors. They would like, if at all possible, to speed up nature's processes.

Such a desire is not unreasonable. Anyone who has been through difficult situations which seemed insoluble and endless probably knows how difficult it is to remain patient during such times. One may have even implored God for guidance: Why do you make things so troublesome? Why did you set it up like this? Why have you crippled me, stripped me of my persona, taught me to know myself and then deposited me here, alone to battle with impossible fates? Could you not have made things simpler? And is there not a way that I can participate in your work, here on earth, in a way that will speed up the process and alleviate some of the pain? Can I make something truly meaningful of this ridiculous little mouse???

Collaborating with Nature

Through their work on the opus, the alchemists went right ahead and intervened in the work of nature and time,

In this chapter, "The Rubedo," which is the work phase, the time for human effort, I discuss ways in which western and eastern alchemists, as well as yogins, shamans and process workers, become collaborators with nature and through their labors challenge her power.

Alchemists made themselves responsible for perfecting nature at an accelerated pace. Very early on, the practice of metallurgy--which is part of alchemy's venerable heritage--gave individuals a feeling of confidence and pride because they were able to intervene in the processes of nature. Actually, metallurgy can also be seen as a precursor to modern agriculture. As early as 122 B.C. in China, metallurgists likened their mines to the matrix or womb of the mother earth.⁵ And in seventeenth century Europe, alchemists still believed that ores grew and ripened there, just as plants did. One alchemist wrote, "Just as the infant is fed on the blood in the belly of its mother, so is the ruby formed and fed."⁶

It was believed that the metals reached a state of perfection at which time they should be extracted from the earth by the miner. If nothing impeded the process of gestation, all ores should and would become gold. A western alchemist explained,

we have to look upon the births of imperfect metals as we would on abortions and freaks that come about only because Nature has been, as if were, misdirected, or because she has encountered some fettering resistances or certain obstacles which prevent her from behaving in her accustomed way. . . . Gold and only gold is the child of her desires.⁷

The alchemists took up the work of the metallurgists. Their vessel was more than just a mere retort or flask, but was likened to the womb of the mother earth. It had to be egg-shaped and it symbolized a kind of matrix or uterus from which the miraculous stone would eventually be born.⁸ Alchemists believed however, that they could accelerate the rhythm of the slow and natural chthonian maturations. An eighteenth century alchemist declared,

What Nature did in the beginning we can do equally well by following Nature's processes. What perhaps Nature is still doing, assisted by the time of centuries, in her subterranean solitudes, we can make her accomplish in a single moment, by helping her and placing her in more congenial circumstances. As we make bread, so we will make metals. Without us, the harvest would not ripen in the fields; without our millstones the corn would not turn to flour; nor the flour to bread by stirring and baking. Let us cooperate with Nature in its mineral as well as agricultural labours, and the treasures will be opened to all.⁹

According to Eliade, by cooperating with and possibly changing nature, the alchemists were toying with ordinary notions of time. Their dream was to create gold more quickly than nature could. They hoped to be masters of time, rather than its victims, in order to reverse their own mortality. By seeking the prima materia and cooking it in their vessels, they symbolically returned to the primordial chaos and then, through the work, repeated the cosmogony.¹⁰

In China, the alchemical quest was almost always a quest for eternal life. Some Chinese alchemists took a strictly physical view of immortality and were constantly eating and drinking elixirs of immortality in one form or

another. The death rate among Chinese alchemists was significantly higher than among their western colleagues.¹¹

The notion that an actual elixir of life could be prepared through human work appeared in China as early as the fourth century B.C., and emerged from the teachings of the Naturalist school but the ideas were developed in later centuries by Taoist philosophers. By the third century A.D., for most Chinese alchemists, the Tao itself was the long sought-after elixir.¹² Some Chinese alchemists continued with their efforts to produce the Tao in an edible form. Other Chinese practised the internal meditative art called "The Secret of the Golden Flower," in order to become one with the Tao.¹³ Still others believed that immortality could be achieved through secret and complicated sexual practices.¹⁴

Many of the esoteric techniques were based on the transformation of "ching," or sexual energy, which is considered one of three continually interacting vital energies with which the Tao sustains the universe. These energies, the source of all life, are said to be pure and holy in their subtle form, but in the manifest world they are of a coarser nature. The goal of many of the alchemical sexual practices was to restore them to their cosmic form in order to regain the original perfection of the universe.¹⁵

The sexual practices involved accumulating the "ching" of the opposite sex in order to bring about a balance of yin

and yang within the body. Therefore, dedicated Taoist alchemists attempted, through sexual intercourse, to receive large doses of "ching" from their sexual partners, while retaining their own. The "ching," stoked by an internal fire which was fueled by the breath, traveled a complicated path through the body, making twelve transformations corresponding to the hexagrams of the I Ching. The circulation led to the generation of a Taoist foetus within the body which was considered to be the Immortal Child.¹⁶

Many schools of yoga employ sexual and meditative techniques as well in order to transcend the phenomenal world. In Tantrism, sexual pleasure without the emission of semen is said to produce the tension that abolishes normal consciousness and inaugurates a return to the primordial state of non-differentiation which frees the yogin from the laws of time and death.¹⁷

Yogins "cosmicize" the body through breathing. The inhalation and exhalation of the breath is related to the days and nights, the months and years, and the years and longer cosmic cycles. Thus, through the respiratory rhythm, the adepts conquer day and night which represents a transcendence of the opposites and an emergence from time. In short, they attempt to reabsorb all the processes of cosmic manifestation in order to reintegrate a primordial completeness.¹⁸

The Tantrists believe that this process of reabsorption occurs naturally at death, when everything is reabsorbed into

the great Brahman. Therefore, the Tantrist is centered on the experience of death, that is, ritual death and resurrection. Eliade explains that in this respect, the Tantrist is a "dead man in life," for the individual experiences death in advance.¹⁹ The many references to the Indian and Chinese immortals may refer to this condition of "being dead in life," i.e., psychically unaffected by the death of the body in time. The yogins participate in the cosmic processes, using their acute proprioceptive awarenesses to achieve immortality.

Shamans and their initiates intervene directly in the processes of nature, primarily through visions and dreams. The role of the shaman in early societies was to communicate with the living force or power that was believed to be inherent in all phenomena of the universe, in order to ensure the well-being of the community and heal the sick. In order to tap into this power, the prospective shaman separated from the known world, voluntarily, ritually or through sickness, and entered a trance that was considered for the neophyte an "initiatory death." The ecstatic trance took the initiate into the realm of chaos which existed before the created world, where power was said to move freely. The prospective shaman's worst adversaries in the "land of the dead" or the "other world" became tutors by providing direct experience as to the ways of the spirit. Through experience, the initiate acquired the knowledge necessary to become a full shaman.²⁰

According to the Yaqui shaman, don Juan, the phase of initiation when the apprentice must leave ordinary linear time is called "stopping the world." When his apprentice, Castaneda, expressed shock and confusion at having talked with a coyote while alone in the mountains, don Juan congratulated him for having "stopped the world." He explained,

What stopped inside of you yesterday was what people have been telling you that the world is like. You see, people tell us from the time we are born that the world is such and such and so and so, and naturally we have no choice but to see the world the way people have been telling us it is. Yesterday the world became for you as sorcerers tell you it is. In that world, coyotes talk and so do deer . . . not to believe that coyotes talk is to be pinned down in the realm of ordinary men.²¹

Don Juan's words of wisdom, the Taoist's transformation of "ching," the Tantrist's fantasies of "being dead in life" and the alchemist's work on the opus, all point to the human desire to interfere with ordinary life and the autonomy of nature in order to travel to new worlds where nature is an ally and human beings can actively participate in and influence her processes.

Process science gives individuals the tools to intervene in nature's work. Since the process itself does not adhere to collective notions of time, it sometimes "stops the world": people cease to perceive reality only through their familiar channels and worn identities. They learn to follow unpredictable time structures which challenge known systems. Thus, the notion of time may be relativized according to the process itself.

A man who has always been very rational and attached to the responsibilities of his life may be taken by strong fantasies and pulled into flights through the universe which warp his notions of time and space. For awhile, he may have to experience himself as a bird and fly away from his usual commitments in order eventually to bring these two sides of his personality together. A woman who, since childhood, has experienced herself as a three-hundred-year-old spirit may suffer relationship problems. Time may take her backwards and force her to act like a dependent child in order to experience the ordinary events of growing up. A man who is lazy and continually avoiding his work may experience time as a cramp, closing in on him and threatening death in order to push him into his creativity, which is in need of emergency attention. And a frantic and overly active woman who cannot relax may be pulled by time into the bowels of the earth, forced by her constipated intestines to feel like a solid rock which, year after year, does not move.

By isolating processes in the analytic setting, by placing them in the egg, focusing on them with love, and amplifying them with awareness, process workers are, like the seventeenth century alchemist said, "placing Nature in more congenial circumstances,"²² in order that she ripen with help. Sometimes the egg provides an environment that allows transformations to occur more rapidly than in ordinary life.

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form in the known world. Jung calls these energies archetypes, which are similar to vital energies in that they are images in the unseen world that are making effects in this world.²³ These energies manifest in an endless number of ways and create channels such as dreams, visions, symptoms and relationship problems, in order to appear in the known world. Process workers help individuals "abolish normal consciousness" by recognizing the channels through which these secondary processes or vital energies are appearing and amplifying their signals. Individuals learn to follow momentary events rather than preconceived plans.

By following processes individuals may achieve the Tantic experience of "being dead in life!" According to Mindell, process energy, although it manifests and transforms in different ways, is a constant for a given observer.²⁴ This notion is derived from the conservation laws of the physicists. A conservation law, very simply put, states that measurable quantitative energy in a closed system is neither created nor destroyed, but always remains the same.²⁵ Jung, in his article on psychic energy, points out that psychic energy tends to be conserved as well. Depressions, pains and reactions never disappear, but rather flow out of the field of consciousness and reappear as secondary processes.²⁶

Because process is constant, says Mindell, process awareness is analogous to the experience of immortality, liberation or freedom from death that the Tantrists call

"being dead in life."²⁷ For some people, the fantasy that they can die and be reborn belongs to their belief in re-incarnation, an esoteric system that is in accordance with linear time. To die in life and become "cosmicized" means, for the follower of process, leaving ordinary life temporarily and re-entering it with a continually transforming identity; it never remains the same long enough to know itself, or to suffer the terrible death of stagnation and boredom. A process-oriented life may thus be considered immortal.

By recognizing secondary processes, placing them in vessels, amplifying their manifestations and cooking them, individuals can have experiences which seem "unnatural" to the modern mind. People may be able to relive their lives in the course of an hour and connect to the power that chased them in their childhood dreams. They find that life-threatening illnesses are potential allies, and enemies can be teachers. Through their visions, dreams, movements and body feelings, individuals can experience themselves as if they are flying through the sky, sinking into the earth and spinning through time; they can grow beyond their ideas about themselves and respond to life in ways that conventional time prohibits.

Mindell has discovered, through work with psychotics, drug addicts and dying patients, that the basic premises of process science are applicable in extreme situations. It has been shown that the governing paradigm of psychiatry and medicine, causality, is of limited value in some cases.²⁸ Simply finding and treating the causes of problems does not

always make them disappear; perhaps their energy is conserved, as well.

Process science has had some success with people that are considered hopeless cases by psychiatrists and physicians. Mindell has found that the process worker can intervene directly in processes considered "natural"--"natural" in the sense that a direct cause can be established, such as psychotic and near comatose states, by picking up subtle and barely perceptible secondary signals. As such, some of the most hopeless processes of nature, when perceived from an expanded paradigm, reveal signals which indicate the possibility of their being delayed, reversed or positively influenced.²⁹

Jung, in his article on synchronicity, cited an example from his own medical experience, which may serve to illustrate this point. He told of a woman who suffered a heart collapse due to severe bleeding, and fell into a coma. During this coma, she should, according to established medicine, have been totally incapable of sound observation or clear judgement. However, she reported having observed from above everything that went on in the room during her coma. Along with seeing her family, the doctors and herself lying pale on the bed, she perceived behind her a beautiful meadow which she "knew was the entrance to the other world." She could not understand the frenzy of the doctors and of her family because she knew she would resist entering that scene and would instead return to life.³⁰

Jung reports having heard many such stories, by patients whose reliability he had no reason to doubt. Mindell is presently working with people in these and other such extreme states. If psychic processes go on, even during the loss of consciousness, then it may be an indication that the process is flowing in a channel which, until now, has been unknown.* By picking up the patient's subtle and barely perceptible signals and working with them, Mindell has found that communication with such states is possible. There is a great deal of research still to be done in this fascinating field.

Process science has shown that what we observe is strongly influenced by our primary process.³¹ In the rubedo, the alchemists, guided by an expanded awareness or somewhat enlightened primary process, believed they could help nature complete and perfect the work which normally went on in her concealed subterranean solitudes. Process science, by challenging the limited paradigms which prevent us from perceiving a great deal more of nature than we ordinarily do, suggests ways in which we too can become collaborators with nature, by discovering more and more of her intricacies.

The Work

At this point, we move out of the theoretical realm. In keeping with the rubedo, the work phase, is the following

*Jung speculates that the psychic processes which go on during the loss of consciousness are synchronistic phenomena, i.e., events that have no causal connection with organic processes. (CW, vol. 8, par. 955)

concrete and detailed example of "the work," that is, process work. This case illustrates "living alchemy": it demonstrates how the alchemical process functions within a short period of time, one therapeutic session.

I was amazed when I heard the following dream of a woman who had almost no previous knowledge of alchemy. The dream itself contains decidedly alchemical motifs, and the process-oriented dreamwork which took place portrays the alchemical nature of the transformations that occur as an individual's process flows towards an expanded awareness.

The dreamer, Kate, is a woman of twenty-six who, until about six months before the dream, identified herself primarily as a dancer. Her main channel tended to be kinesthesia; it was through movement that her primary process oriented itself to the world. A very shy woman, she was also strongly visually oriented, often having powerful visions and fantasies. Jung would have called her an introverted feeling type.³² She loved to dance and move and play because she felt that it gave her an easy way to express herself. When asked about her dancing she said, "It was a fantastic release. I mostly just enjoyed it."³³

Kate's fun came to an end about a year ago when, in a wild kinesthetic state, she injured her knee on the ski slope. This accident put her in a full leg cast for three months, and still, a year later, inhibits her from "jumping, twisting and turning," to quote doctors. It occurred about

an hour after her work at a seminar in which she had difficulty expressing her deep feeling and passion in a channel other than kinesthesia. During the work, it was an edge for her to take her feelings seriously and bring them out directly, without playing or moving or acting silly and crazy. The difficult work had revolved around this edge and afterwards she went out skiing.

The alchemists would have said that Kate's ski accident was the "ignis non naturalis," the fire, for her processes of the last year. The "ignis," and its opposite and complement, the "aqua permanens," are known respectively to the alchemists as "a fire which does not burn" and "dry water which does not wet the hands."³⁴ These principles serve as both the flame and the flow behind process. According to Mindell, they are not dangerous, when worked on within the alchemical vessel, or process work. In such a context they ignite growth and transformation. But as autonomous ruling principles or secondary processes, they can be initially destructive.³⁵

It is likely that Kate's "ignis" was unsatisfied that she had not gone over her edge during the process work and reignited itself on the ski slope. Slowly however, the purpose of this accident has been revealing itself. "And now there is some real knowledge coming through. I hurt my leg. I nearly killed myself. I can't move very much and all this feeling is coming through."

Kate had the following dream about six months after the accident:

There is a war going on in the world and there is this guy who wants to buy some cheap metal bars, which he is going to melt down and pour into casts of dancers, like molds. He finds some of these bars and they are really expensive and he knows that they shouldn't be that expensive but he decides that he has to buy them anyway, and so he does. He buys them and a lot of us watch the process of what he is doing. Somehow what he is doing is really important and really crucial to the war. A very crucial part. And he takes the bar and puts it in a frying pan and melts it. And then he takes it and pours it into a cast of a dancer, in the form of an arabesque and then it changes into other statues and he keeps pouring it and it keeps transforming. It was like he took this plain, inexpensive metal and it changed into bronze or gold. And this whole thing was very very important for the war and I don't know why.

Observing Kate, the prima materia, as she tells her dream, and listening to its content as well, several things immediately come to my attention. The most obvious, of course, is how much the dream reminds me of alchemy. Those "cheap metal bars" which are transformed to "bronze or gold" sound like the alchemist's prima materia, which is "as cheap as dirt and can be had everywhere . . . only without it the work cannot even be begun."³⁶ "It offers itself in lowly form . . . but by the grace of God can be transmuted."³⁷ There is gold hidden within this dream, and it is my hope, that through the process work, it will come to Kate's awareness.

I also notice that Kate plays only a minimal role in her dream. She is watching the man, who is actively working on these bars. I speculate that Kate's occupied visual channel will be an important key to helping her over her edge.*

*Mindell has shown that when a dreamer is actively doing something in his or her own dream, it generally indicates that that activity is closer to his or her awareness.

The man, the alchemist, is causing processes to happen. Contact with him may somehow be the bridge to the statues who are even a step further from Kate's awareness. She has no contact with them in the dream. The man is the agent of their transformations. It also interests me that the dancers are statues. Will the secondary process be stillness? I wonder.

As Kate tells the dream, I am aware of her movement and tone of voice. She moves her whole upper body in order to describe the arabesque of the statues. She touches her stomach, below the navel, when describing the war. And her tone of voice rises considerably whenever she mentions the war. There seems to be lots of energy around the war motif in that moment. I think perhaps we should begin there.

I wait a moment to see if the prima materia will produce anything else on its own and Kate herself says, "I don't have a feeling for what the war is about," smiling as she says this. I encourage her smile as she closes her eyes and says that the war is exciting and it is somehow about feeling. "It is a war about passion. Like life and death. Black and white. Something you would die for."

Kate's war is a war of opposites. But as of yet there is little content. I ask her what she would die for, but she says she can't feel it. She makes fists as she tries to describe her feeling and begins to make clawing motions. I mirror her hand motions and the work moves into the kinesthetic channel as she begins to claw at me saying that

there is something inside of me that she wants, deep under my skin, but she does not know what it is. Momentarily, Kate experiences her process as if she were a western alchemist. She experiences the hidden gold as being inside me. But as she gropes at my stomach, also below my navel, she travels east, to China, and says that she wants to feel the war in herself. This also does not work. "I wish I could see what the conflict was," she finally says.

Aha, I think, and I encourage her to make a picture. Immediately she has a visualization. "I see these guys inside me; Italian fighters inside my stomach and chest, punching against my skin going boom, boom, boom." She punches and laughs alot as she imitates the fighters. I ask about details of the vision and she says they are standing up. Kate stands up and spontaneously begins to act out these crazy fighters, jumping and yelling and screaming, "We want out. We don't like it in here. We want to play. We hate you. We hate you. Let us out."

The next part of the work is something like a gestalt therapy session:³⁸ in this case it is the polarization of the process that is acted out and clarified.* The Italian fighters are young, full of movement, energy, demands and craziness. They want to have a good time. The skin, however, won't budge. It advises the fighters to sit down and go to sleep. They should not continue the war because the skin

*Gestalt therapy uses a technique whereby the individual identifies with and acts out his or her dream figures.

will never let them out. Gradually, as we go back and forth, switching roles, Kate unintentionally begins to slide from one role to the next.

The polarization has become acute. As the fighters get wilder and wilder, the skin becomes more and more sedentary. The process has moved into the nigredo and there is no apparent solution. Kate becomes very depressed and she sits down.

Acting out the process has served to clarify the polarization between a solid, proprioceptive principle and a wild kinesthetic one. But there is still no content, nor is there a solution. I suggest to Kate that she look at the scene as I act it out, hoping that her occupied visual channel can provide some more information, and I get positive feedback. When she looks, she gets even more depressed but realizes that the skin has a purpose as a boundary. She says she can feel the depression in her body and she really wants to feel it more. She spontaneously begins to hold her breath. The process moves into a proprioceptive channel as the work begins to parallel a more eastern form of alchemy.

As we have seen, Taoist alchemists built up internal energy through breathing exercises. The main task of the breath was to heat up and eventually transform the Lower Cauldron or Golden Stove which is located just below the navel.³⁹ This is the area which Kate pointed out at the beginning of the work when she was discussing the war. It

was also the spot that she grabbed on me when she said that she wanted something from inside me.

In India, this area is called the base or "mūlādhāra" chakra. Chakras are defined as "vortex centers of energy" and serve as India's main channel system. The "mūlādhāra" chakra, where Kate located her hidden gold, is related to the sexual function. It is also related to inertia, the cohesive power of matter and the moon. The elephant, India's symbol of domesticated energy, is located in this chakra.⁴⁰ This supports my guess that Kate's process has to do with some wild sexuality or passion that must somehow be transformed or tamed in order to be lived in the world.

Kate breathes deeply and holds her breath in. According to the Chinese science of breath called "prānāyāma," the individual is part of the cosmic breath of the universal spirit. Breath, when it is retained after full inhalation, is called "antara kumbaka," meaning interior pitcher or jug. The retention of the breath, according to "prānāyāma," enables yogins to still the constant movement of the mind and penetrate zones which are normally inaccessible in waking conditions.⁴¹

Returning to Kate, we find that her body has become the Philosophical Egg. Mindell calls the egg "a piece of nature . . . which brings creative sparks to birth and unfolds the essence of process."⁴² Kate says that holding her breath helps her to "try to hold everything really still inside." She holds her breath for a long time. The breath

is heating up the inner feeling and amplifying it. Now she says that she feels the boundary in her chest.

"I absolutely refuse to let you out under these circumstances," says the boundary after a long inhalation. "I am at the limit of my tolerance. I have such unbelievably deep and powerful feelings and you want to act crazy and make a mockery of them. You want to make fun of them because you are afraid to just have them. You have never really done that."

This realization makes Kate very sad and she is reminded of a situation in her life where she avoids bringing out her deep feelings because the consequences are too painful. "It's terrifying to have really deep feelings like that," she says. "To keep them cute and playful is fun. But to take them seriously and say, 'okay, this is really painful and difficult but I have to learn to live with it,' . . . Wow, that's painful . . . but also fantastic at the same time. . . . Wow. It's amazing!"

A spark of hopefulness has appeared in Kate's verbal channel and the process is ready to move on. The "aqua permanens"--which the alchemists said is the agent of transformation,⁴³ and which Mindell calls the fluid process or the energy of life, previously locked up in the tension between the opposites⁴⁴--has been freed. The original enemy, the skin or boundary, is revealed to be an ally as the process moves into the albedo.

In order to amplify that spark of hopefulness, I ask Kate more about the fantastic part. Mercury of the Wise⁴⁵ immediately appears as a vision. She sees the dancer in her dream in the position of the arabesque and demonstrates the posture using her upper body. "It is pure and real and solid. It just is. There is something so fantastic and beautiful about that. It's like God to me. God gives you your feelings and to really have them is to say yes to God. I can see it really well. It's full and solid. It's filled with gold."

Again, Kate's process has flowed into the visual channel in order to offer her what, at this point, is maximal insight. However I notice several things. Firstly, she used her body to describe the position of the dancer and secondly, she used adjectives which generally describe proprioception, such as full and solid, to describe the statue. I try to push her into her proprioception and encourage her to feel the statue within her. Her feedback is clearly negative. She shakes her head and says she can picture it really clearly. Apparently, her primary process needs more of a pattern before she can go over her edge, and she continues to visualize.

"It's a bronze or gold statue and the lines are really smooth and the curves are beautiful. Statues like that are eternal. They are eternal postures. It's like if they were buried, someone could find them a million years

from now. There is a cast and you can make them again and again and again."

Her process produces another alchemical motif, eternal life. I want to know more about this but I'm not sure in which channel to proceed. I try a general question. "How do you know they are eternal?" I ask and she lights up and becomes really excited. "Wow, that is such a fantastic question! Ask me that again." She insists that I keep repeating the question over and over. Suddenly she says, "I don't know. It's just a feeling. I have to do it," and she jumps to her feet and takes on the posture of an arabesque, insisting that I continue repeating the question. The element of eternity is apparently a key part of the pattern for her experience on the other side of the edge.

She remains posed in the arabesque for a long, long time. The position is one that requires a great deal of balance and strength. Standing on one leg and leaning forward, opposite arms and legs are extended in opposite directions. The four limbs form a cross. As she rocks gently, trying to keep her balance, her body looks like a circle or wheel.

The form she assumes is that of a "mandala." According to Jung, mandala, the Sanskrit word for circle, refers to circular images which are drawn, painted, modelled or danced, and frequently contain a quaternity or multiple of four. In alchemy the mandala represents the synthesis of the four elements in the prima materia which are forever tending to

fall apart. As psychological phenomena they appear spontaneously in dreams and in states of conflict, when individuals are confronted with the problem of the opposites in human nature and are consequently disoriented.⁴⁶

The circular image compensates the confusion through the construction of a central point to which everything is related. Jung stresses that the creating of a mandala is "an attempt at self-healing on the part of Nature,"⁴⁷ and that it occurs as a sudden and instinctive impulse. As such, he says, it is an archetype which occurs everywhere and throughout all of time.⁴⁸

Kate looks very congruent and powerful in her eternal posture. I observe her for a long time, using my hands to help her make the position more intense. Several times she attempts to speak in order to describe how she feels, and Mercurius as the bird tries to fly back to the familiar land of verbal communication. Each time she tries, the energy of the secondary process pulls her back into the posture. I hear her say that she feels like she is going into a trance. During this period, the gradual whitening of the albedo is occurring as Kate is acquiring new knowledge. Eventually she awakens, as if from a dream, ready to talk about what she has learnt.

"I felt as if something was taking me and forcing me to be really real. It was God filling me up. That's what I meant by the trance. And I got this wild idea. This form, this arabesque, feels different than the form of the

punching Italians. It made me realize what is eternal about it. In this form God is able to live and come into the world. This is a pure form and God can only live in pure forms on this earth."

For Chinese and Indian alchemists and for Hatha yogins, the body, when purified, is their most reliable instrument for "conquering death." Kate's body, which has become the vessel of transformation, has refined its "life-giving energy" into its "pure and holy" form, like a Taoist alchemist might.⁴⁹ And she sounds like a Hatha yogin as well, which is not at all surprising when we consider that the balletic arabesque is similar to the "natarājāsana,"⁵⁰ one of the "asanas" of Hatha Yoga. "Asanas" are postures which the yogins must assume in order to make the body a vehicle for the spirit. The yogins believe that the body is a temple which houses the Divine Spark.⁵¹ The particular "asana" that Kate assumed is dedicated to Siva, the god of mystical stillness and Lord of the Dance. Siva was believed to have created the world through dance.⁵²

Kate, taking on the form of the mandala with her own body, symbolically returned to Paradise, the place whence new creation could occur. Paradise is one of the alchemists' favorite symbols of the albedo.⁵³ Eliade describes several ceremonies in eastern societies in which the mandala represents a return to Paradise and the Creation. In Vedic India, the mandala, when drawn on the ground, designates a sacred place, outside of time at the center of the world.

The disciples enter the mandala and the gods are reabsorbed in them. They then "realize the eternal process of the creation and destruction of the world . . . and enter the rhythms of the great cosmic time."⁵⁴

In a Buddhist ceremony, the mandala is constructed as a palace for Buddha. The ground must be "level, calm and pure." It is, through ritual, transformed into a "diamond land of incorruptibility which implies abolishing time and history and returning to the moment of Buddha's illumination." Abolishing time, according to Eliade, is known to be a paradisaal syndrome.⁵⁵

As Kate continues to describe her experiences in Paradise, she makes some clear distinctions between earlier and later forms. First she reassumes the form of the punching Italians. "This form is not pure. It feels so personal and that's why it's not pure. It doesn't leave room for God to come in; there is something pure about it, but it's like it's not distilled enough."

Kate realizes that there was something very important about the earlier form--the punching Italians. Mindell says that any signal which perseverates, be it a certain type of movement, an anxiety or an itch, "is an imperfect body asking to be cooked and transformed . . . imperfect because it is not congruent with the rest of the personality. The prima materia transforms to perfection by uniting all of its separate, incongruent and disharmonious parts."⁵⁶

The form of the punching Italians, though it repeated itself, "asking to be cooked and transformed," was not "pure." For Kate, this meant that that form was too "personal." The punching Italians were only associated with her identity--her primary process. They were incongruent with her total personality because they "left no room for God to come in." In the "impure" form of the punching Italians, the secondary process, which she calls God, was shut out of her awareness. Amplifying the primary process, in the gestalt work, helped to bring the secondary one to her awareness as a feeling in her body.

Kate returns to the position of the arabesque and says, "There are two things about this form which make it pure. In this form my arms and legs extend around the whole world and circle the globe. It's really big, and that makes it eternal. And the other thing is that it doesn't feel personal to me."

Her body, as a mandala which corresponds to the alchemical vessel of transformation, has begun to make the "heavenly circulatio." This is a procedure by which the prima materia in the vessel is said to be united into one thing. The synthesis is effected by means of a circular movement through time as the sun travels through the houses of the Zodiac.⁵⁷

The aim of this "circulatory distillation" was, for Paracelsists, the purification of the human body to such a degree that it could unite with the "inner man and partake

of his longevity."⁵⁸ The inner man is a concept which corresponds to several things: physically, to the gold; for Christians, to Christ or Paradise; and for Jung, it represents the Self.⁵⁹ Dorn said that it was "the center of natural wisdom, whose circumference, closed in itself, forms a circle: an immeasurable order reaching to eternity."⁶⁰

The vessel has united primary and secondary processes. The alchemist in the dream is fulfilling his important work which will affect the war. The molds or forms are now being transformed by Kate, as she moves from one channel to the next. As a result, she is gaining new knowledge of her "center of natural wisdom."

Until now, the gold, which she called God, was an experience far from Kate's awareness. She identified with her movement, the fighters, and was unaware of her proprioception, hence, "there was no room for God to come in." The secondary process "came in" first as a fleeting feeling below her navel--which she also imagined inside me; then, as we amplified the primary process, it entered her awareness as a boundary in her chest--another "imperfect body," incongruent with the total personality. The boundary was amplified by the breath. The amplification of the boundary, the secondary process, led to the idea of "Mercurius as peacemaker, the mediator between the warring elements and producer of unity."⁶¹ A mandala has been created and with it, new awareness through proprioception.

But, as is usually the case in practical work, Kate's return to Paradise is only temporary and the process moves into the rubedo. There is still the problem of how to bring this new knowledge together with everyday life. The king, or primary process, personified by the Italian fighters, died in its old form during the nigredo and is reborn during the rubedo with a deeper knowledge and a strong feeling reaction to what has been discovered.

Kate reveals her feeling conflict about the experience. "It's weird. I know that this posture allows God to come in, but I feel really stupid saying that. A part of me attacks me for saying that. How can I possibly know things that are so big and eternal? It's inflated."

The attacker turns out to be Kate's internal father, who says that knowledge gained through body experiences doesn't mean anything because it can't be objectively substantiated. Kate enters into a conversation with this inner part and, still feeling the effects of her new knowledge, explains to the father very clearly what she has learned, and the ways in which her body has taught her a great deal. She reminds him of her original ski accident and the deeper meaning behind the fact that she can't dance much, yet. She says that she is thankful to have been "put in a cast" and given the chance to discover her inner stillness.

But the father is still not totally convinced. Although he originally looked like a negative father, it turns out he is actually another positive aspect of the boundary. He is

desperate for understanding and wants Kate, who is a feeling type, to intervene even more in what she has learned. He wants her not only to have had an experience and to have felt it, but he wants her to study it as well. As the conversation goes on, Kate realizes that the father is right. Now that she has experienced an archetype so directly, she needs to study about archetypal forms and movements, in a conventional way. In fact, she had been undecided about a topic for her dissertation and perhaps this will help her solve her dilemma.

The rubedo, which began as a "firey conflict," the attack from the father, brings Kate to another edge, studying. The process may eventually lead to a gradual "melting and mixing," a real synthesis of the opposites. But of course, the conflict is by no means resolved. New knowledge has been gained, but it is only after Kate leaves the session and enters her life that the real work of integration will begin. And she herself realizes that it's going to be a difficult work. "My biggest problem is between what I feel that I learn in unconventional ways, like through feeling my body and moving, and what is really conventional and normal. It's so hard to make them melt; they are always in conflict . . . the fighting guys just want to get out and do it. They're so raw and unconscious. But the skin is somehow wiser. . . ."

It is easy to understand why Kate would dream about an alchemist melting down metals and helping a war. Her inner war is still going on; her conflict is still there.

But all of her dream figures have been activated. Kate has become the alchemist, using her own body, as well as her mind, as the vehicle of transformation. She is learning to be those statues, moving fluidly from one channel to the next, transforming the experiences as the mold changes and the gold flows into unknown figures.

It should now be clearer how a knowledge of the alchemical processes can assist the process worker in his or her work with clients. We see how the alchemical transformations help bring individuals closer to all of their experiences, as well as change the nature of the experiences themselves. As Kate gained awareness of her wild kinesthesia, her primary process, it brought her closer to her pure and eternal secondary proprioception. But she is aware of more than just the Italian fighters who want to express themselves and the passionate experiences of God. Those awarenesses have led her to the father and the process has indicated a way to bring the parts together in the world. And this brings us to the next stage of the work--which we did not approach in the analytical hour--the coniunctio.



7. The Uroborus: the beginning and the end. (Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs, 11th century)

The Coniunctio

The "uroborus," a tail-eating dragon, is alchemy's oldest pictorial symbol of which we have documentary evidence. A variant of Mercurius, he appears as early as the tenth century, together with the legend, "the One, the All."¹ Again and again, the alchemists reiterated that the opus "proceeds from the one and leads back to the one," that it is a circular process.² Mercurius stands at the beginning and at the end of the work. He is born as the dragon; he devours himself and dies, only to rise again as the gold and to devour himself once more.³

In that case, one may ask, what is the point of all this trouble? What is the point of growing, of learning about myself and knowing my parts? Why all this hard work and pain? And when, if ever, will I reap the rewards of my efforts?

What is a "whole person, anyway? Would I recognize one if I saw one? Do they wake up, brush their teeth and defecate like the rest of us or are they somehow beyond the mundane affairs of ordinary life? Are they always happy?

And furthermore, will there be a day when I am no longer plagued by complexes, spooked by inner demons and haunted by voices of witches, goblins and pre-historic

madmen? Will my scalp no longer itch, my voice no longer quiver and my leg no longer shake in anger or excitement? Will my nose cease running, my tongue cease snapping and my gastric juices cease escaping from my body at inappropriate times? Will I ever stop fighting with my friends and lovers? Is there such a paradise to be found? And if not, what then is the point?

Silly as they may sound, these are all questions which most people involved in the analytical process ask themselves at some point. In fact solving the ordinary problems of day-to-day life are often more important to people than the ultimate questions of life and death. Through my investigations in alchemy and my experiences with process-oriented psychology, I have begun to discover some answers to these kinds of questions. In this chapter I describe some of the ways in which the alchemists experienced "the coniunctio," the so-called "final stage" of the work, and add some of my ideas about what individuals can hope to achieve by working on themselves.

As we have seen, alchemists in the East worked proprioceptively in order to reach their goal. Whether they were Taoists or Tantrists or practitioners of Hatha Yoga, their internal alchemical operations were connected with the creation of an "immortal" body within their own bodies. The Taoist alchemists, whom I have focused on especially, strove for the detachment of consciousness from daily life

in order to live in the world with a permanent awareness of the Tao, the Uncarved Block or the Great Whole.⁴

A passage from the Book of Chuang-tzu describes the condition of Taoist sages who have achieved their goal.

Their qualities are identical with the ultimate substance of the Tao--placidity, indifference, silence, tranquillity, emptiness and non-action. They are evenly balanced and at ease; anxieties and evil find no access to them, nothing unpleasant can take them by surprise. . . . The sage takes no initiative to produce either happiness or disaster; he responds to each influence and moves as he feels pressure, acting when he must. He discards conventional wisdom and all memories of the past, following harmoniously the line of heaven. His life is floating, his death a resting.⁵

This poetic description is, in my mind, in accordance with only part of the spirit of Taoism. According to my understanding of Taoism, the philosophy is one which embraces the opposites in both human nature and in life. The experience of the Tao would, theoretically, include good and evil, wisdom and stupidity, action and nonaction, harmony and conflict and happiness as well as sadness, depending on the flow of the Tao in the moment. The true sage would indeed have the ability to adapt fluidly to any number of circumstances, but because the Tao is an everchanging process, I would imagine the qualities of the sage to be as multifarious as the Tao itself.

Jung, in his commentary to The Secret of the Golden Flower, asserts that when the goal of the Chinese alchemical processes--the creation of a "diamond body"--is achieved, this realization occurs: "It is not I who lives, it lives

me." This experience, he says, shatters all illusions as to the superior power of consciousness.⁶

Jung points out that the apostle Paul may have had a comparable psychic experience, reflected in his statement, "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."⁷ Paul was being moved by a part of himself other than his personal identity. However, the Christian means of achieving this experience is markedly different than the Taoist method. The Christian searches for meaning through the "imatio christi," which, according to Jung, has this disadvantage:

In the long run we worship as a divine example a man who embodied the deepest meaning of life, and then, out of sheer imitation, we forget to make real our own deepest meaning--self-realization. . . .

Imitation of Christ might well be understood in a deeper way. It might be taken as the duty to give reality to one's deepest conviction, always the fullest expression of individual temperament . . . with the same courage and the same self-sacrifice shown by Jesus. Happily . . . not everyone has the task of being a leader of mankind.⁸

The Tao, on the other hand, grows out of the individual and is discovered through the adept's work on his or her own body. However, as I see it, this method also has its disadvantages. The alchemical opus, as it was practised in the East, was one-sidedly body-oriented, and ruled out the possibility of any form of enlightenment coming through the mind or the world of ideas. The eastern prejudice against thoughts* severely limited the set of possible

*The Taoist yogins said that thoughts must be sent around a track in the body until they are transformed into pure energy. (Rawson and Legeza, Tao, p. 29)

experiences which the yogin could achieve.

The eastern body practices can be very useful exercises for many westerners striving for detachment from their despotic identities and aspiring to fulfill unknown aspects of themselves. As we have seen, such experiences tend to access the secondary process. In the East, however, body awareness and the experience of "detachment" seem in general to have been more a primary process, for the collective as a whole. Thinking, formulating experiences through ideas, may have been the collective edge. It is my speculation that for easterners, their alchemical practices may have never accessed the secondary process.

The Christian European alchemists, on the other hand, did not work directly on their bodies. Although they also strove for eternal life, they believed they could achieve it through their work in the unknown and mysterious world of matter. They were concerned with the union of substances, through which they hoped to achieve the goal of their work-- the creation of gold or the Key to Immortality. What they saw in matter, they described almost exclusively symbolically. Their thoughts, fantasies and ideas were an essential part of their work. Almost everything they encountered in their vessels was, as we have seen, of psychic origin, and without their allegories, alchemy's rich heritage would have perished long ago.

Gold, because of its remarkable physical characteristics and incorruptible nature, is an appropriate analogy for the perfection alchemists sought to achieve in the transmutation of base metals. Gold has always been associated with the sun, the star which gives warmth and light to life on earth. In Egypt, the flesh of the gods was said to be of gold, and when the pharaoh became a god, his flesh turned to gold. People in all parts of the world throughout time have been eating powdered gold and drinking golden brews, hoping to obtain its perfect qualities.⁹

The golden elixir which the alchemists ultimately hoped to produce was called the Universal Medicine, the Panacea and the Fountain of Youth. In order to obtain this elixir, the alchemists had first to produce the Philosopher's Stone. As the prima materia, called the Stone of the Philosopher's, it was impure. But after having been perfected by the art, it gained its transmutative quality.¹⁰

In Jung's view, the Philosopher's Stone represents the Self.¹¹ We could also refer to it as the awareness of process. Like Mercurius, it stood at the beginning of the work as the prima materia, as well as at the end, as part of the goal of the opus. The alchemist Morienus said, "One is the stone, one the medicine, one the vessel, one the method and one the disposition."¹² This legend expresses the process aspect of the alchemical work. The process flows throughout the work, and as one discovers it, the goal is reached.

The alchemists were not the only group for whom the stone symbolized perfection. Many religious cults used stones to signify their god or mark a place of worship. The black stone in Mecca, the Ka'aba, is the holiest sanctuary of the Islamic world.¹³ In I Corinthians, Christ is called "the spiritual Rock."¹⁴ Australian aborigines believe that certain oblong stones, called "churingas," contain the souls of their ancestors and have the power to promote the growth of crops, increase fertility in men and animals, heal wounds and cure diseases. For the Chinese, jade had the magic power to keep a corpse from decomposing.¹⁵

In alchemy, the Philosopher's Stone, also called the Divine Child, was born during the coniunctio. The coniunctio was described as a "hieros gamos" or royal wedding. The alchemists sometimes depicted this marriage as a love affair between chemicals of opposite natures who "embrace one another passionately."¹⁶

Gerhard Dorn described the coniunctio in great detail.¹⁷ His explanations were unique in that he spoke directly about the psyche. He purported that the final "mysterium coniunctionis" was nothing less than a restoration of the original and perfect state of the cosmos and a merging of the individual consciousness with this divine unconscious world. His formulation was the western equivalent of the fundamental principle of classical Chinese philosophy--the union

of yin and yang in Tao.¹⁸ However, his method of achieving the goal was quite different.

Dorn's conception of the coniunctio enriches Jungian and process-oriented psychology. He divided the coniunctio into three stages. The first phase he called the "unio mentalis."

We conclude that meditative philosophy consists in the overcoming of the body by mental union. This first union does not yet make the wise man, but only the mental discipline of wisdom.¹⁹

This description is a clear reflection of Dorn's Christian background. He believed that the body has a disturbing effect on the rationality of the mind and that it is essential to separate the two in order to achieve "freedom from bodily appetites and the heart's affections." This separation, however, was only a temporary one, during which time a bond was formed between the hostile elements in the mind-- which he called "spirit" and "soul."²⁰

According to Jung, this "unio mentalis" represents an introverted, introspective and meditative phase in analysis when an individual must make a careful investigation of his or her desires and motives. The goal of this process is the attainment of full knowledge of the heights and depths of one's own character.²¹

The alchemists achieved this state through "meditatio," which is described in Ruland's, A Lexicon of Alchemy, as:

an Internal Talk of one person with another who is invisible, as in the invocation of the Diety, or communion with one's self, or with one's good angel.²²

The "meditatio" of the alchemists seems to be close to what Jung calls "active imagination," a technique whereby individuals place themselves, as they are, within the drama of their fantasies and dreams in order, through their criticisms and reactions, to create a counterbalance to the unconscious. This produces a rapprochement with the unconscious that, according to Jung, creates the beginning of the individuation process and is characteristic of the "unio mentalis."²³

Jung describes a person who has achieved insight and self-knowledge through active imagination:

He alone has a genuine claim to self confidence for he has faced the dark ground of his self and thereby has gained himself. This experience gives him faith and trust . . . in the ability of the self to sustain him, for everything that has menaced him from inside he has made his own. . . . He has arrived at an inner certainty which makes him capable of self-reliance, and attained what the alchemists called the unio mentalis.²⁴

The process-oriented psychologist understands the "unio mentalis" as one type of awareness, rather than a stage in a linear process, as Dorn did. Sometimes using the mind or intellect in order to become aware of processes is crucial, and at other times it may not be useful at all. In extreme cases it could be detrimental. Let's consider a hypothetical example.

Suppose a woman has a dream which she works on when she wakes up in the morning. She takes some time, does active imagination and decides, through her work that the

dream seems to indicate that it would not be beneficial for her to enter into fights and conflicts actively. The dream, according to her understanding, suggests that she should rely on her inner strength and the feeling of solidity within her body, when she gets into relationship conflicts. She meditates on the meaning, sits and feels her inner strength for a few moments and then brushes her teeth and goes off to work.

During coffee break, her boss approaches her looking angry. He falsely accuses her of irresponsibility and treats her unfairly. She begins to get heated up, and she is about to argue when suddenly and spontaneously she remembers her dream. She thinks about herself, recalls that she often reacts too quickly and that it gets her into trouble and she meditates on her dream. Thinking about her dream causes her body to relax. She takes a deep breath, sits up straight and waits patiently. After a few moments the boss apologizes profusely, invites her to a dinner party and ends up giving her the afternoon off to make up for the unwarranted attack.*

In this case, using her mind to control her affect has been very valuable. She avoided an unnecessary fight. However, this does not always prove to be the case.

*It is important to note that it is up to the individual to determine the meaning of signals in the environment. A positive outer situation may not necessarily be a "reward" nor a negative one a "punishment."

Thankful to the wisdom of her dream, and pleased with herself that she is learning to rely on her inner strength, she leaves the office and begins walking to the spa. A stranger approaches and begins to harass her. She is very mistrustful, but remembering what has just happened, she decides she should remain passive. She notices that her fists are tightly clenched, ready to swing and her body is suddenly filled with tremendous energy, but she chooses to ignore the signals. She is determined to feel the inner solidity that her dream suggested, but cannot access the feeling. Her body remains excited. In the meantime, the stranger has run off with her purse.

This time, the overcoming of the body in the "unio mentalis" has been to her disadvantage. Probably it would have been wiser for the woman to have paid attention to her clenched fists and body energy, the strongest signals which were trying to come to her awareness in that moment. Instead, she ignored the momentary signals in order to follow an idea, a programmed awareness which she had gained that morning and was trying to retrieve. The outer mishap, in this case, may be instrumental in her further learning.

This brings us to the second stage of the coniunctio which Dorn called the "unio corporalis." This stage represented the reuniting of the "unio mentalis" with the body. This was a difficult issue for Dorn, whose Christian background left him with a deep prejudice against the "wayward physical body" which had succumbed to the original sin.

However, the alchemists believed that the body could be redeemed. Through the art, they believed that they could extract its quintessence, which corresponded to the original material named "caelum," from which the world had been created. It represented the physical manifestation of God and was therefore worthy of being united with the "unio mentalis."²⁵

So in Dorn's thinking, the body is not simply overcome; rather it must be combined with the spiritualized mind and transformed. It was this union of body and mind in the "unio corporalis" that produced the Philosopher's Stone, the panacea which could cure all psychic and physical ills. It was the "living stone" or "stone that hath spirit," mentioned in the New Testament. It was alive because it signified the presence of God in matter and thus it radiated magical power and had the ability to transform the impure into the pure. Because it represented the union of opposites, it was also called "the hermaphrodite" and could multiply itself indefinitely.²⁶

The union of the "unio mentalis" and "caelum" is also described as "the King reunited in the Fire of Love with his blessed Queen."²⁷ The king, according to Mindell, symbolizes the process itself, while the queen stands for the servant of the process. She is the loving attitude that is receptive to that which happens and believes in process, whatever it may be.²⁸

This "hieros gamos" of king and queen implies a new and expanded level of awareness. It denotes the ability to

catch, amplify and follow momentary processes, no matter how irrational, strange or contrary to conscious intention they may seem. The marriage of the royal pair produces a stone, a material substance. The wisdom of process is in this stone, and the individual can now rely on his or her own body to provide contact with the wisdom of process.

Let's return for a moment to the case of the woman who was intent upon following her morning dream insight. A queenly attitude would have given her the ability to change with the flow of her process. When she noticed her tightly clenched fists and the intensity of her body energy, she would have realized that her process wisdom had temporarily moved out of her ideas and into her body. She would have believed in her fists and her energy and discovered the hidden process they were carrying. Maybe they wanted to shake in the harasser's face and run away; maybe they wanted actually to hit him. The exact process they were carrying is unknown.

Dorn went a step further with his idea of the coniunctio and purported that the wisdom in matter does not limit itself to the body only, but that this wisdom is present in all aspects of reality. He said that underlying everything in the multiplicity of the empirical world is a "one world," a unified whole where psyche and matter are one. He called this one world the "unus mundus," and said that the final goal of the alchemical process is the uniting of the "caelum" with the "unus mundus."²⁹

The "unus mundus," a medieval concept having parallels in many earlier philosophies, has taken root in the science of psychology, astronomy and physics today. For Dorn, the "unus mundus" was a theological idea referring to the potential world which existed before Creation, when nothing was yet divided and corrupt, but all things one and simultaneous. The "unus mundus" referred to the perfect mental model of the world in the mind of God.³⁰

There are varying conceptions of the "unus mundus." In many creation myths, it was the initial condition from which the world was created. This "one world," which was known as emptiness, darkness, non-being, silence or the void, represented a pre-conscious totality, according to von Franz. It had to be split apart in order for the world as we know it to come into being.³¹

According to Taoist philosophy, the "unus mundus" will always exist. Lao-tsu gave the following description of Tao in the Tao Teh Ching:

There is something formless yet complete
That existed before heaven and earth.
How still! how empty!
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,
All-pervading, unailing.
One may think of it as the mother of all things
under heaven.
I do not know its name.
But I call it "Meaning."
If I had to give it a name, I should call it
"The Great."³²

Modern cosmological theories recognize the basic oneness of the universe, as well. The astronomer Fred Hoyle reports the following:

Present day developments in cosmology are coming to suggest rather insistently that everyday conditions could not persist but for the distant parts of the Universe, that all our ideas of space and geometry would become entirely invalid if the distant parts of the Universe were taken away. Our everyday experience even down to the smallest details seems to be so closely integrated to the grand-scale features of the Universe, that it is well-nigh impossible to contemplate the two being separated.³³

The idea that all aspects of reality are interrelated has revolutionized the world of physics in this century. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were characterized by the Newtonian, mechanical model of nature. This model held that the universe functioned like a giant machine which was completely causal and determinate. Every event had a definite cause which gave rise to a definite effect, and the future of any part of the system could be predicted with certainty, given sufficient information. Such a world could be described objectively without mentioning the human observer.³⁴

The discoveries made in this century by quantum mechanics have shown us that the Newtonian model cannot account for processes which occur in the microscopic realm. Investigations into the sub-atomic realm have revealed a basic interrelatedness of people, objects and events. For physicists such as David Bohm, quantum logic implies

a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of the analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts. . . . We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent 'elementary parts' of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that the inseparable quantum

interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that the relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole.³⁵

Jung, as well, says that the background of our empirical world has a unitary nature. For Jung,

the idea of the unus mundus is founded on the assumption that the multiplicity of the empirical world rests on an underlying unity, and that not two or more fundamentally different worlds exist side by side or are mingled with one another. Rather, everything divided and different belongs to one and the same world, which is not the world of sense but a postulate whose probability is vouched for by the fact that until now, no one has been able to discover a world in which the known laws of nature are invalid. That even the psychic world, which is so extraordinarily different from the physical world, does not have its roots outside the one cosmos is evident from the undeniable fact that causal connections exist between the psyche and the body which point to their underlying unitary nature.³⁶

Causal connections between the psychic unconscious and the physical body are fairly easily demonstrable. Physical conditions influence the psyche and the psyche affects the body. These connections can be statistically formulated and psychosomatic medicine has begun to do research in this field.³⁷

However, a further and non-causal relationship appears to exist between psyche and matter, which proves to be much more startling to the rational mind. This phenomenon, which Jung has labeled "synchronicity," refers to the coincidence in time of two or more psychic and physical events which are connected, not causally, but by their identical meaning.³⁸ Von Franz explains synchronicity succinctly:

This phenomenon consists of a symbolic image constellated in the psychic inner world, a dream, for instance, or

a waking vision, or a sudden hunch originating in the unconscious, which coincides in a 'miraculous' manner, not causally or rationally explicable, with an event of similar meaning in the outer world.³⁹

Synchronicity is another channel through which evidence of the "unus mundus" breaks through into the empirical world.

Synchronistic phenomena are, according to Jung, a special instance of a general principle of nature which he calls "acausal orderedness." This wider conception of the acausal orderedness of nature is evident in the physical world by factors such as the discontinuities in physics, of radioactive decay, for example. In the psychic realm it is indicated by the uniformity of people's associations to natural numbers. Such a priori factors have existed from eternity and occur regularly.⁴⁰

Synchronistic events, however, are not only regular and constant manifestations of the acausal orderedness of nature, but also momentary and special instances which Jung calls "acts of creation in time."⁴¹ Synchronicities are only recognized in certain moments, when the individual becomes aware of the similarity in meaning between the psychic and the physical event. In these special moments, the "unus mundus" is perceived directly by the individual.

This heightened level of awareness on the part of the observer represents the union of the "caelum" with the "unus mundus." It implies a consciousness which perceives itself not only through dreams, body signals and other such personal experiences, but through outer events as well. It recognizes

its individuality and momentary experiences as well as its place as part of a larger and eternal order.

To illustrate this point I would like to return to our previous example. Let's take another look at the woman whose purse was stolen, but this time, let's endow her with a special awareness of her ideas, her own dreaming body and the processes manifesting in the world around her. Suppose she is right in the middle of her encounter with the harasser. She is in conflict with herself, torn between following her dream and swallowing her mistrust and anger, or believing in her fists and allowing herself to react. For a split second she is distracted and glances to the right. She notices that she is in front of a television and appliance store and in that moment, in the window of the store, on a television screen, the news is being broadcast. The world champion fighter is shown accepting his one million dollar first prize.

Immediately, the woman becomes aware that the outer world is also a channel for her process in that moment. Suddenly she knows that it is time to fight. In a flash, she gains a new understanding of her dream. She realizes that her dream was not recommending a program of nonaction and passivity, as she had originally thought. The dream, which has been following her around all day, is teaching her that following her inner strength means having the courage and fluidity to change with her changing process. She shakes

her fists in the harasser's face, ready to fight, if necessary, and he runs away in inexplicable fear.

At that moment, Mindell would define this observer's relationship to process as "the fluid ego."

When this person feels a tendency trying to happen in his body, in a conversation, or a fantasy he lets himself change, moving into the body experience, mood or fantasy. . . . The fluid ego lets go of his identification with time, space and cultural tradition, with his conscious intent and primary process. He temporarily lets his definition of himself and the world stop, and experiences its strangenesses as parts of himself. He follows his secondary processes guided by momentary experiences and not by a pre-arranged reality program. When this person gets sick or has trouble with his world he experiences his body and world as a dreambody or a dreamworld process; not as a disease or an outer problem but as something which he himself is trying to express. . . . He becomes an unpredictable and mercurial person who lives in one world [*italics mine*], participating in it as if it were him.⁴²

The moment when the "one world," or the dreamworld process, manifests itself in a synchronistic event can be worked with practically. It gives the process worker another channel through which to help individuals become aware of their split-off parts. The seemingly random events which affect individuals in strong ways prove to be as significant as the images which come to them through their dreams or the symptoms of their bodies.

Dorn's teacher, Paracelsus, used this dreamworld process to determine the remedies for his sick patients.

He said,

From the external we can learn to know the internal. . . .
For the hand that divided light from darkness, and the hand that made heaven and earth, has done likewise in

the microcosm below, having taken from above and enclosed within man's skin everything that heaven contains.⁴³

And a seventeenth century alchemist added that

to know the heaven and earth of man, is the same as to have a full and complete knowledge of the whole world and of the things of nature.⁴⁴

It should now be clear why western alchemists worked on material substances. They imagined that within the microcosm of their vessels existed the entire created world, as well as the spirit of God that made it all possible. The alchemical flask, the Philosophical Egg, provided a vessel for deep religious, philosophical and psychological probings which would have otherwise been obstructed by their faith.

The notion of the "unus mundus," in both ancient and modern times, points to a holographic concept of the universe, where all aspects of the world are interconnected and any one aspect contains the same information as the whole. The process scientist, according to Mindell,

sees the individual as a world unto himself or understands the universe as a unity of parts such as people and objects. These parts think they are independent beings and sometimes forget that they themselves are channels for a greater process happening right now.⁴⁵

According to process theory, the "ideal" for a "whole" person refers to someone who can be fluidly involved in this "unus mundus" or unity of parts, while simultaneously maintaining the distance and objectivity necessary to understand it. This implies congruence of primary and secondary processes. He or she would sometimes be oriented by the body, sometimes by ideas, sometimes by fights with friends and sometimes by

car crashes or thunderstorms, participating with awareness in the processes that are occurring. Such an enlightened observer would not pre-program awarenesses but would acknowledge the spirit Mercurius wherever he may be. He or she would be able to do this, not just within the confines of the therapist's office, but right on the street in the midst of everyday life.

Such individuals would immediately recognize that their congruence is likely to affect the world around them. They are unique individuals and as channels of larger dream-world processes, they may upset the environmental systems of their friends and enemies, whose paradigms they no longer conform to. Others might be forced over their edges in the presence of such people and groups may be compelled to examine themselves, as well. For such "whole" people, relationship problems may abound.

The gold that has been created does not turn out to be perfection, a key to immortality or a panacea for all ills. In fact "whole" people are still, in my mind, quite ordinary in the everyday sense, surely have troubles and may lead lonely lives. Certainly they cannot sit back and relax for the rest of their lives, for as soon as awareness slips away, secondary processes are likely to intervene. Constant and total awareness of all channels is probably an impossible ideal and new edges will continually arise. Ironically, "whole" people are still sometimes "split," but have an easier time recognizing their splits and dropping old

identities in order to meet the new challenges which arise from one moment to the next.

The gold that has been created has two aspects. It brings to the individual a momentary awareness--a feeling of being connected to one's deep inner self and to all of nature, and of being able to respond to both, in one's own individual way. And it also implies a constant and long-term awareness--an openness to the stream of process flowing through everyday life.

In keeping with alchemy, I am unable to conclude.

"The opus proceeds from the one and leads back to the one."⁴⁶
A grand finale is unthinkable. A golden elixir is nowhere to be found. We have started out in a primordial chaos, split the world apart, reorganized it with our awareness and we discover that we are caught in a hologram. We've begun in "participation mystique," taken back our projections and we learn that we are participators nevertheless. But our efforts have not been in vain. The tree is bearing its precious fruit. We are learning something of value. We are learning to become aware of the moment--to ask ourselves what we are perceiving right now, to take notice, to feed the fire and to collaborate actively with whatever is, as we create whatever comes next.

Postscript

Originally, when I planned this work, this Opus Magnum of mine, I intended to write about creativity directly. I intended to paint a great deal and write about my creative experiences. But the great spirit Mercurius has led me far astray from my initial goal. I have only briefly mentioned any of the traditional creative pursuits such as painting, dancing, writing, composing, etc., the activities one usually thinks of when pondering the mysteries of creativity, and I have rarely painted a picture. Mercurius, my friend and foe, has guided me to approach the topic from a rather unique standpoint.

I believe that I have illustrated the most creative of all creative processes--that one which might be called the archetypal creative process--the way in which individuals participate in the process of creating themselves. I have shown how people can function as "the Creator" by connecting with the spirit that guides them in their dreams and fantasies, in their bodies and in their outer lives.

When painters, for example, put paintings on canvases, they create themselves in another form. They make what is probably a visual and nonhuman representation of some aspect of their personality. At least this was my experience. Previously I was a painter exclusively, and when I became

interested in psychology, it was this phenomenon that I wanted to study. I was intrigued by the fact that with each new canvas which seemed to "live," I had the sense of having produced some distant part of myself. But I was always mystified about exactly what that something was.

As a psychologist and a person interested in knowing and living as many parts of myself as is humanly possible, I often experience a similar feeling of creating myself, as well as a similar sense of awe at the unknown. Each time I discover my own double signals, go over my edges and allow a new part of my personality to live just a little bit more--whether it is a part of myself that I favor or that I despise and fear--I am once again the artist. Only this time my canvas is my life and my creation is literally living and breathing. In such creative moments, I thank God that I too can sometimes participate in the work of God.

As Jung said,

If I accept the fact that a god is absolute and beyond all human experience, he leaves me cold. I do not affect him, nor does he affect me. But if I know that a god is a powerful impulse of my soul, at once I must concern myself with him, for then he can become important, even unpleasantly so, and even in practical ways, which sounds horribly banal--like everything belonging to the sphere of reality.¹

Footnotes

Introduction

1. The New Miriam Webster Pocket Dictionary, 1964 ed., s. v. "alchemy."
2. For a complete description of Jung's concept of the archetypes and the collective unconscious, see C. G. Jung, The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, eds. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, trans. R. F. C. Hull, 19 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953-), vol. 9i, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" (hereafter cited as Jung, CW).
3. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 253.
4. Richard Grossinger, ed., Alchemy: Pre-Egyptian Legacy, Millennial Promise (Richmond, Cal.: North Atlantic Books, 1979), p. 183.
5. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 394.
6. Arnold Mindell, River's Way (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, forthcoming), p. iii.
7. Gary Zukav, The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1979), p. 9.
8. Werner Heisenberg, Physics and Philosophy (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 8.
9. Ibid., p. 58.
10. For a simplified description of many of the radical new discoveries of quantum physics, see Zukav, Dancing Wu Li Masters.
11. See pp. 143-44 below. See also "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle," Jung, CW, vol. 8.

12. Zukav, p. 56.
13. For a description of these and many other modern psychological theories, see Joel Kovel's A Complete Guide to Therapy: From Psychoanalysis to Behavior Modification (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976).
14. C. G. Jung, Analytical Psychology: Its Theory and Practice (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pp. 140-41.
15. Mindell, River's Way, p. 1.
16. Ibid., p. ii.
17. Marie-Louise von Franz, Alchemical Active Imagination (Dallas, Tex.: Spring Publications, Inc., 1979), p. 16.
18. Jung, CW, vol. 12.

The Prima Materia

1. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 387, citing Symbola aurea mensa duodecim nationum.
2. Ibid., par. 335.
3. Ibid., par. 425.
4. Ibid., par. 433.
5. Ibid., citing Opera omnia chemica.
6. Ibid., vol. 13, par. 148; Von Franz, Alchemical Active Imagination, p. 32; [Thomas Aquinas], Aurora consurgens, ed. Marie-Louise von Franz, trans. R. F. C. Hull and A. S. B. Glover (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 242.
7. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 387, citing Symbola aurea mensae duodecim nationum.
8. Ibid., par. 378, citing Theatrum chemicum I.
9. Ibid., par. 40. For a detailed description of the individuation process, see CW, vol. 7, Part II.

10. Ibid., vol. 14, par. 104.
11. See below, pp. 41-2. This idea is contained in Mindell's forthcoming manuscript (untitled at this time) on relationship processes.
12. Jung, CW, vol. 11, par. 609.
13. [Aquinas], Aurora consurgens, pp. 57-61.
14. Kovel, Guide to Therapy, p. 76.
15. Private conversation with Dr. A. Mindell, Herrliberg, March, 1984.
16. Jung, CW, vol. 13, "The Spirit Mercurius."
17. Arnold Mindell, The Dreambody: The Body's Role in Revealing the Self, eds. Sisa Sternback-Scott and Becky Goodman, with an introduction by Marie-Louise von Franz (Santa Monica, Cal.: Sigo Press, 1982), p. 58.
18. Lu K'uan Yü, Taoist Yoga: Alchemy and Immortality (London: Rider & Company, 1972).
19. Mindell, Dreambody, p. 58.
20. Mircea Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 265-70.
21. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 267.
22. Ibid., par. 261, citing Theatrum chemicum I.

The Nigredo

1. Stanislas Lossowski di Rola, Alchemy: The Secret Art (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), p. 11.
2. Ibid.
3. Marie-Louise von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," in Man and His Symbols, ed. C. G. Jung (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), p. 162. Von Franz's article contains a complete and simple description of Jung's conception of the structure of the psyche.

4. Calvin S. Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology (New York: New American Library, 1954).
5. Mindell, River's Way, p. 14.
6. Jung, CW, vol. 9i, "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious."
7. Ibid.
8. Mindell, River's Way, p. 14.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 791.
12. Ibid., vol. 7, par. 78. See also "On Psychic Energy," vol. 8.
13. I Ching, or Book of Changes, Bollingen Series XIX, trans. Richard Wilhelm, rendered into English by Cary Baynes, with foreword by C. G. Jung (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 298.
14. Mindell, River's Way, p. 31.
15. Von Franz, "Process of Individuation," p. 168.
16. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 708.
17. Von Franz offers a clear and simple definition of projection in Patterns of Creativity Mirrored in Creation Myths (Zuerich: Spring Publications, 1972), pp. 6-10. See also the glossary in Jung, CW, vol. 6.
18. Mindell, River's Way, pp. 48-68.
19. Ibid.
20. See Mindell's forthcoming manuscript on relationships.
21. Mindell, River's Way, p. 67.
22. Mindell often uses this analogy to talk about global problems.

23. Jung, CW, vol. 11, par. 659.
24. Ibid., par. 660.
25. Ibid., par. 659.
26. For Jung's psychological interpretation of this book, see ibid., "Answer to Job."
27. Job 1:7.
28. Exodus 20.
29. Job 13:15-18.
30. Ibid., 16:21; 23:3,8.
31. Jung, CW, vol. 11, par. 567.
32. Job 23:13.
33. Ibid., 38-41.
34. Jung, CW, vol. 8, "The Transcendent Function."
35. Ibid., vol. 7, par. 186.
36. Ibid., vol. 11, par. 631.
37. See pp. 70-71 below. For a complete analysis, see "The Lapis-Christ Parallel," Jung, CW, vol. 12.
38. Carlos Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 29.
39. Jung, CW, vol. 12, citing Artis auriferae II.
40. Ibid., par. 436.
41. Ibid., par. 437.
42. Mindell, River's Way, p. 187.
43. Allison Coudert, Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone (Boulder, Col.: Shambala Publications, 1980), p. 158, citing Theatrum chemicum I.

44. Coudert, Philosopher's Stone, p. 99.
45. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 440.
46. Coudert, Philosopher's Stone, p. 100.
47. Mircea Eliade, The Forge and the Crucible, trans. Stephen Corrin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), pp. 150-52.
48. Mircea Eliade, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, Bollingen Series LXXVI, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 41-2.
49. Klossowski di Rola, Alchemy, p. 17.
50. Jung, CW, vol. 13, "The Visions of Zosimos."
51. Ibid., par. 86.
52. This case was reported to me by Mindell, in a private conversation, Herrliberg, 1984.
53. Mindell, River's Way, Part I.
54. Ibid., p. 15.
55. Mindell, Dreambody, pp. 3-6.
56. Hall, Primer of Freudian Psychology; Wilhelm Reich, Character Analysis (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1968); Fritz Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim (Lafayette, Cal.: Real People's Press, 1969); Berkeley Holistic Health Center, The Holistic Health Handbook (Berkeley, Cal.: And/Or Press, 1978).
57. Mindell, River's Way, p. 16.
58. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
59. Marie-Louise von Franz, "The Inferior Function," Lectures on Jung's Typology (New York: Spring Publications, 1971), p. 1. See also Jung, "General Description of the Types," CW, vol. 6.

60. Von Franz, "Inferior Function," pp. 23-54.
61. Ibid., pp. 1-23.
62. Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan, p. 267.

The Albedo

1. [Aquinas], Aurora consurgens, p. 91.
2. Ibid., citing Hymn for Pentecost.
3. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 103, citing Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs.
4. Ibid., citing Turba philosophorum.
5. Klossowski di Rola, Alchemy, p. 11.
6. Ibid.
7. Mindell, River's Way, p. 195.
8. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 334.
9. Chang Chung-Yuan, Creativity and Taoism (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1970), p. 5.
10. The Secret of the Golden Flower: A Chinese Book of Life, trans. Richard Wilhelm, with a Foreword and Commentary by C. G. Jung (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1962), pp. 9-11.
11. Jung, CW, vol. 8, par. 3.
12. Golden Flower, p. 21; Mindell, River's Way, p. 194.
13. Golden Flower, pp. 21-67.
14. Ibid., p. 11.
15. Ibid., p. 33.
16. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 148.
17. Ibid., par. 163.

18. Ibid., par. 162, citing Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae.
19. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 163. See also "The Lapis-Christ Parallel," CW, vol. 12.
20. Ibid., vol. 12, par. 451.
21. Matt. 27:46.
22. Jung, CW, vol. 9ii, "Christ, A Symbol of the Self."
23. Ibid., par. 116.
24. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 455.
25. Von Franz, Alchemical Active Imagination, p. 55, citing Theatrum chemicum I.
26. Von Franz, Creation Myths, pp. 5-8.
27. Heisenberg, Physics and Philosophy, p. 58.
28. Von Franz, Creation Myths, p. 13.
29. Silvano Arieti, Creativity: The Magic Synthesis (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1976), p. 243.
30. Barbara C. Sproul, Primal Myths: Creating the World (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), p. 17.
31. Von Franz, Creation Myths, p. 16.
32. Ibid., citing Mircea Eliade, The Myth of the Eternal Return.
33. Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 30.
34. Von Franz, Creation Myths, pp. 118-22.
35. Ibid., pp. 128-29. For another version of this myth, see Sproul, Primal Myths, p. 285.
36. Ibid.

37. Private conversation with Mindell, Herrliberg, March, 1984.
38. Casteneda, Journey to Ixtlan, p. 60.
39. Zukav, Dancing Wu Li Masters, p. 54, citing J. A. Wheeler, K. S. Thorne, and C. Misner, Gravitation (San Francisco, Cal.: Freeman, n. d.), p. 1273.
40. David MacLagan, Creation Myths: Man's Introduction to the World (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 17.
41. Ibid., p. 16.
42. Von Franz, Creation Myths, p. 97; Sproul, Primal Myths, p. 202.
43. Von Franz, Creation Myths, "The First Victim."
44. Ibid., pp. 61-2.
45. Ibid., p. 65.
46. Ibid., pp. 92-3.
47. Ibid., "Deus Faber."
48. Ibid., pp. 92-3.
49. Ibid., p. 64.
50. See pp. 51-2 above.
51. Arieti, Creativity, p. 15.
52. Von Franz, Creation Myths, pp. 62-3
53. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 449, citing Artis auriferae I.
54. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 459. For a complete discussion of the tree symbolism in alchemy, see "The Philosophical Tree."
55. Roger Cook, The Tree of Life: Symbol of the Center (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), p. 126.

56. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 375, citing Theatrum chemicum I.
57. Ibid., par. 384, citing Aquarium sapientum.

The Rubedo

1. Von Franz, Commentary to Aurora consurgens, p. 304, citing Theatrum chemicum V.
2. Ibid., p. 305.
3. Von Franz, Creation Myths, p. 85.
4. Jung, CW, Vol. 14, par. 307.
5. Eliade, Forge and Crucible, pp. 47-51.
6. Ibid., p. 44, citing Le Mercure Indien.
7. Ibid., p. 50, citing Bibliothèque des philosophies chimiques.
8. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 338, citing Opera omnia chemica.
9. Eliade, Forge and Crucible, p. 47, citing Études encyclopédiques IV.
10. Ibid., pp. 169-78.
11. Coudert, Philosopher's Stone, p. 161.
12. Ibid., pp. 164-66.
13. See pp. 66-8, above.
14. John Blofield, "The Yellow and the White," Taoism: The Road to Immortality (Boulder, Col.: Shambala, 1978); Rawson and Legeza, Tao, pp. 27-31.
15. Blofield, "Yellow and White," ibid., p. 130.
16. Rawson and Legeza, Tao, pp. 29-30.
17. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p. 268.

18. Ibid., pp. 270-72.
19. Ibid.
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21. Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan, pp. 299-300.
22. Eliade, Forge and Crucible, p. 47, citing Études encyclopédiques IV.
23. Jung, CW, vol. 9, par. 155.
24. Mindell, River's Way, p. 108.
25. Zukav, Dancing Wu Li Masters, p. 179.
26. Jung, CW, vol. 8, "On Psychic Energy."
27. Mindell, River's Way, p. 108.
28. C. A. Meier, "Psychosomatic Medicine from the Jungian Point of View," Journal of Analytical Psychology 8 no. 2 (1963), pp. 104-12.
29. Mindell addressed this theme in a lecture entitled, "Individuation und tödliche Krankheiten," June 18, 1984, Zuerich. Also see chapter on death processes in Mindell, Working with the Dreaming Body (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).
30. Jung, CW, vol. 8, pars. 950-51.
31. Mindell, River's Way, p. 90.
32. See p. 61 above.
33. Kate is a pseudonym. This and all other quotes from Kate were transcribed directly from a tape in my private records. The session took place in November, 1983, Zuerich.
34. Klossowski di Rola, Alchemy, p. 10.
35. Mindell, River's Way, p. 178.

36. Jung, CW, vol. 13, par. 209.
37. Ibid., vol. 12, par. 433, citing Opera omnia chemica.
38. For a concise description of the theory and practice of gestalt therapy, see Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim.
39. Rawson and Legeza, Tao, pp. 28-30.
40. Mindell, Dreambody, pp. 30-40.
41. B. K. S. Iyengar, Light on Yoga, with a Foreword by Yehudi Menuhin (New York: Schocken Books, 1966), pp. 43-5.
42. Mindell, River's Way, p. 179.
43. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 545.
44. Mindell, River's Way, p. 179.
45. See p. 65 above.
46. Jung, CW, vol. 9i, pars. 713-14. For further information about mandala symbolism in dreams, see "Concerning Mandala Symbolism." See also "The Symbolism of the Mandala," CW, vol. 12.
47. Ibid., par. 714.
48. Ibid.
49. See p. 101 above.
50. Iyengar, Light on Yoga, p. 419.
51. Ibid., p. 41.
52. Ibid., p. 419.
53. Jung, CW, vol. 9ii, par. 373.
54. Eliade, Yoga: Immortality and Freedom, p. 225.
55. Ibid., p. 223.

56. Mindell, River's Way, p. 176.
57. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 5.
58. Ibid., vol. 13, par. 185.
59. Ibid., par. 186.
60. Ibid., par. 187, citing Physica Trithemii.
61. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 10.

The Coniunctio

1. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 404, citing F. Sherwood Taylor, "A Survey of Greek Alchemy," Journal of Hellenic Studies (London), L (1930), pp. 109-39.
2. Ibid., citing Artis Auriferae II.
3. Ibid.
4. Rawson and Legeza, Tao, p. 31.
5. Ibid., p. 32.
6. Jung, Commentary to The Secret of the Golden Flower, p. 131.
7. Gal. 2:20.
8. Jung, Commentary to Golden Flower, pp. 133-34.
9. Coudert, The Philosopher's Stone, p. 194.
10. Klossowski di Rola, Alchemy, p. 8.
11. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 757.
12. Ibid., vol. 12, par. 404f, citing Artis Auriferae II.
13. Von Franz, "Process of Individuation," p. 210.
14. I Cor. 10:4.
15. Coudert, The Philosopher's Stone, p. 153.

16. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 654.
17. For a detailed account of Dorn's "coniunctio," see Von Franz, Alchemical Active Imagination, or Jung, CW, vol. 14, "The Conjunction."
18. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 662.
19. Ibid., par. 663, citing Theatrum chemicum I.
20. Ibid., par. 671.
21. Ibid., par. 674.
22. Ibid., par. 707.
23. Ibid., par. 753.
24. Ibid., par. 756.
25. Ibid., par. 774.
26. Ibid., par. 770.
27. Klossowski di Rola, Alchemy, p. 12.
28. Mindell, River's Way, p. 200.
29. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 760.
30. Von Franz, Creation Myths, p. 240.
31. Ibid., p. 155. See chapter entitled "The Two-Fold and Four-Fold Division of the Universe" for specific myths.
32. Jung, CW, vol. 8, par. 918, citing Lao Tze, The Way and Its Power, trans. Arthur Waley (London, 1934).
33. Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), p. 196, citing Fred Hoyle, Frontiers of Astronomy (New York: Harper, 1955), p. 304.
34. Ibid., p. 45.
35. Ibid., p. 124, citing D. Bohm and B. Hiley, "On the Intuitive Understanding of Non-locality as Applied by Quantum Theory," Foundations of Physics, 5 (1975), pp. 96, 102.

36. Jung, CW, vol. 14, par. 767.
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38. Jung, CW, vol. 8, "Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle."
39. Von Franz, Number and Time, p. 6.
40. Jung, CW, vol. 8, par. 965.
41. Ibid.
42. Mindell, River's Way, p. 87.
43. Jung, CW, vol. 15, par. 30, citing Das Buch Paragranum.
44. Ibid., vol. 14, par. 554, citing Theatrum chemicum VI.
45. Mindell, River's Way, p. 90.
46. Jung, CW, vol. 12, par. 404, citing Artis Auriferae II.

Illustration Credits

Title page

Mercurius in the vessel.

Elementa chemiae, 1718.

Reproduced in Jung, CW, vol. 12, p. 237.

1. Alchemists praying.

Mutus liber, 1702.

Reproduced in Jung, CW, vol. 12, p. 3.

2. Preparation.

Speculum veritatis, 17th century.

Reproduced in Klossowski di Rola, Alchemy, plate 11.

3. Serpent as prima materia.

Elementa chemiae, 1718.

Reproduced in Jung, CW, vol. 12, p. 253.

4. Losing head and limbs.

Splendor solis mss, 1582.

Reproduced in Coudert, Philosopher's Stone, p. 125.

5. Spirit freed.

Sapientia veterum philosophorum sive doctrina eorundem
de summa et universali medicina, 18th century.

Reproduced in Jung, CW, vol. 12, p. 341.

6. Old and new kings.

Splendor solis mss, 1582.

Reproduced in Coudert, Philosopher's Stone, p. 130.

7. The uroborus.

Collection des anciens alchimistes grecs, 11th century.

Reproduced in Coudert, Philosopher's Stone, p. 143.

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| Vol. 6 | <u>Psychological Types</u> |
| Vol. 7 | <u>Two Essays on Analytical Psychology</u> |
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