# Stalking Your Inner Critic

## A Process-Oriented Approach to Self-Criticism

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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3

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I would like to introduce you to yokozuna Sha-shan and tell you about how we met and happened to become friends.

When I was beginning the Ph.D. program at the Union Institute I dreamed about participating in a big wrestling contest. Many of my friends were there also. Everybody was paired with an opponent with whom he or she had to enter the ring and fight. I was paired with yokozuna Sha-shan. A yokozuna is a holder of the highest rank of the Japanese rikishi, or sumo, wrestlers.

For those of you who are not familiar with sumo wrestling; a sumo wrestler, or rikishi, as they were called originally, is an athlete in Japan's highly respected national sport. They are enormous fellows, weighing up to five hundred pounds. The success of a sumo is determined by technique and strength, including strength of will, character and commitment to the age-old tradition of the fighting art as well as physical brawn. They dedicate their waking and sleeping time to this ancient sport, its traditional way of life and code of behavior. The sumo wrestlers live together in 'heyas' where they go through a rigorous training. Their whole day is organized in a disciplined manner by rituals and ceremonies. They eat special food, wear traditional clothes and fix their long hair in specific styles. While there are long preparatory rituals before each contest, the actual fight often lasts just

a few seconds. The wrestler who is able to break the other's centeredness and balance, and push his opponent out of the narrow circle of rice straw, is the winner. Rikishis are highly honored in Japan, and their fighting contests are a popular spectator sport.

In the dream I was completely shocked and cried and was close to giving up without even trying to fight. I just could not understand why fate would couple me with such an opponent and was very upset about the unfairness of it all. But I did enter the ring and woke up.

I worked on this dream and knew that it had to do with my own inner negative attitude and criticism. The yokozuna was my own internal critic. Although I was fascinated by this dream, I soon forgot about it; I never thought that it could be connected with my dissertation and studies at the Union Institute. Even less did I know at that time how important and central it would become and that it would become reality. If I had known, I might not have started the program, but given up without trying.

The second time Sha-shan appeared was when I started to write my learning agreement. This time he came to me during a psychological work I did on a painful cramp in my shoulders. He was sitting on my shoulders, making me heavy and depressed. At this point I suddenly also remembered the dream that I had forgotten. Sha-shan told me then that I would have to be as disciplined as he was and write my dissertation with the

highest concentration and centeredness possible.  Since then I
have had many encounters with him, and have often been plagued
and defeated by him.  He has attacked me in all kinds of forms
and with many different faces,  not just as a sumo wrestler or
a  body symptom,  and he has pushed and fought me in many ways
throughout the whole process of finishing the program.  In the
meantime  my original topic for  this dissertation has changed
to  the study  of all kinds  of Sha-shans,  or better,  inner
critics.    When I was finishing this dissertation I found that
he had taught me to be a kind of sumo wrestler myself by being
very disciplined in my daily routines and balancing my work on
this  project,  my daily  fitness and working  out,  my eating
habits, my work in my practice and social events.  He not only
pushed  me into doing  this program and  inspired the topic of
the  inner critic,  but added  many ideas throughout the whole
process,   some of which were excellent and others not at all.
Our collaboration was characterized for me by feelings of both
complete  desperation and  heightened ecstasy.  Many  times he
led me in his own way to enlightenment.

After  having finished,  I hope to  get some rest from him.  I
can  not tell yet  if his purpose is  accomplished or if there
will  be another project  that he and I  will have to struggle
through  together.  I feel  that through this  work we came to
know  each other intimately and became good friends,  although
we  had to go through some  momentary rough fights which might
be  a part of any good  friendship.  I owe yokozuna Sha-shan a
lot, am very thankful to him and would like to express here my
deepest acknowledgment by dedicating this work to him.

# I. INTRODUCTION


Having developed some ideas about self-criticism and how to deal with it, I studied all kinds of literature in search of similar or comparable I came across a chapter in one of Carlo Castaneda's last books about the teaching of don Juan, "heire would like to begin this introduction by quoting a passage from this chapter, which is called "Petty tyrants." The speaker titles are my own addition for clarity in reading.


[Don Juan] said that the most effective strategy was worked out by the seers of the Conquest, the unquestionable masters of stalking. It consists of six elements that interplay with one another. ... The sixth element, which is perhaps the most important of all, pertains to the outside world and is called the petty tyrant. ... [Carlos:] "Just what is a petty tyrant?" "A petty tyrant is a tormenter," he replied. "Someone who either holds the power of life and death over warriors or simply annoys them to distraction."
Compared to the source of everything [which he called the tyrant], the most fearsome, tyrannical men are buffoons; consequently, they were classified as petty tyrants, pinches tiranos.
[Don Juan] said that there were two subclasses of minor petty tyrants. The first subclass consisted of the petty tyrants who persecute and inflict misery but without actually causing anybody's death. They were called little petty tyrants, pinches tiranitos. The second consisted of the petty tyrants who are only exasperating and bothersome to no end. They were called small-fry petty tyrants, repinches tiranitos, or teensy-weensy petty tyrants, pinches tiranitos chiquitios.
[Don Juan] added that the little tyrants are further divided into four categories. One that torments with brutality and violence. Another that does it by creating unbearable apprehension through deviousness. Another which oppresses with sadness. And the last, which torments by making warriors rage. ...
[Don Juan:]"You haven't yet put together all the ingredients of the new seers' strategy, " he said. "Once

you do that, you'll know how efficient and clever is the device of using a petty tyrant. I would certainly say that the strategy not only gets rid of self-importance; it also prepares warriors for the final realization that impeccability is the only thing that counts in the path of knowledge. ... My benefactor used to say that the warrior who stumbles on a petty tyrant is a lucky one. He meant that you're fortunate if you come upon one in your path, because if you don't, you have to go out and look for one." ...

[Carlos:]I vociferously disagreed with him. I told him that in my opinion tyrants can only render their victims helpless or make them as brutal as they themselves are. I pointed our that countless studies had been done on the effects of physical and psychological torture on such victims.

"The difference is in something you just said," [don Juan] retorted. "They are victims, not warriors. Once I felt just as you do. ... let's go back again to what I said about the Conquest. The seers of that time couldn't have found a better ground. The Spaniards were the petty tyrants who tested the seers' skills to the limit; after dealing with the conquerors, the seers were capable of facing anything. They were the lucky ones. At that time there were petty tyrants everywhere.

"After all this years of abundance things changed a great deal. Petty tyrants never again had that scope; it was only during those times that their authority was unlimited. The perfect ingredient for the making of a superb seer is a petty tyrant with unlimited prerogatives."

"In our times, unfortunately, seers have to go to extremes to find a worthy one. Most of the time they have to be satisfied with very small fry."...

Don Juan said that his benefactor, in explaining to him what he had to do to profit from facing that ogre of a man, also told him what the new seers considered to be the four steps on the path to knowledge. ...

"Does that mean you couldn't face the petty tyrant by yourself?" [Carlos] asked.

"I'm sure that I could have done it myself, although I have always doubted that I would have carried it off with flair and joyfulness. My benefactor was simply enjoying the encounter by directing it. The idea of using a petty tyrant is not only for perfecting the warrior's spirit, but also for enjoyment and happiness." ...

I explained to don Juan that what I had wanted to know was whether, in the present, in our times, the petty tyrants he had called small fry could ever defeat a warrior.

"All the time," he replied. "The consequences aren't as dire as those in the remote past. Today it goes without saying that warriors always have a chance to recuperate or to retrieve and come back later. But there is another side to this problem. To be defeated by a small-fry petty

9

tyrant is not deadly, but devastating. The degree of
mortality, in a figurative sense, is almost as high. By
that I mean that warriors who succumb to a small-fry
petty tyrant are obliterated by their own sense of
failure and unworthiness. That spells high mortality to
me." "What happens after a warrior is defeated?"
"They either regroup themselves or they abandon the quest
for knowledge and join the ranks of the petty tyrants for
life." (Castaneda, 1984, p. 29-43)

These are the teachings about petty tyrants that Castaneda, an

anthropologist, received during his apprenticeship to the

Mexican Indian sorcerer don Juan. When I reread this chapter

on the petty tyrant I got really excited. Don Juan was

formulating here the same ideas I had about inner critics and

what to do with them. It was exciting to find somebody else

who had already formulated the same radical ideas. It was

immediately clear to me that the inner critics are tyrants

too. They are the petty tyrants and despots within, who are

often as nasty and devastating as the most brutal and cruel

tyrant, and are hated and feared as much as the external

despots in the world.

Don Juan presents the shocking idea that tyrants and despots

might be the most effective elements in one's development. He

calls this the path of impeccability and mastery of knowledge.

The idea that you have to count yourself lucky if you meet a

tyrant in your life sounds repelling. This idea is shocking

because normally we feel like Castaneda, who conflicts with

don Juan about this idea and recollects studies of the effects

of such treatment on victims. Don Juan, however, praises them

as the most useful if not necessary ingredient in developing mastery of awareness. As a final extreme note, he also talks about enjoyment and happiness.

I do not know if one has to count oneself lucky on meeting a tyrant, and I certainly would not wish it for anybody. But it seems to me to be a fact that a large majority of us do have to deal with tyrants within whether we like it or not. In fact, we often face the internal tyrants, our inner critics, several times a day. I have seen these critics ruling, putting down, making the victim helpless and ready to die as only a tyrant can do. They are often in charge of their victim's thinking and behavior in a brutal and pitiless way. Like most cruel tyrants in the world, they know how to leave their victim feeling devastated, unworthy and like a complete failure.

Therefore, I do not completely agree with don Juan when he says that it is hard to find any real tyrants today and that most of us have to be satisfied with a "small-fry" tyrant. Inner critics are often the biggest and certainly the most frequent tyrants I know.

We all know how difficult it can be to deal with an external criticism, even if it is given in a kind manner and with the best intentions. It can be even harder to get along with the judgments of the inner critic. Often we feel more helpless and at the mercy of our inner critics. The way we get along with these inner figures is crucial to the way we see the world around us and our place in it. They effect everything:

not only the way we feel about and treat ourselves but also the way we are seen and treated by others. A negative judgment of the inner critic can lead to the feeling of being overwhelmed and immobilized. One may eventually want to give up and maybe even die.

Ernest Becker, a cultural anthropologist, takes this idea further by postulating the fundamental place of self-esteem in human life and whole cultures:

> If there were any doubt that self-esteem is the dominant motive of man, there would be one sure way to dispel it: and that would be by showing that when people do not have self-esteem they cannot act, they break down. ... Anthropologists have long known that when a tribe of people lose the feeling that their way of life is worthwhile they may stop reproducing, or in large numbers simply lie down and die besides streams full of fish: food is not the primary nourishment of man, strange as that may sound to some ethological faddists (1971, p. 75-76).

Not all self-criticism has to be such a devastating and desolate experience. Self criticism also has its good sides. Feeling inadequate and uncertain about one's own value and the value of one's life may simply be part and parcel of the human condition, an inevitable natural consequence of consciousness and development. It is probably impossible for a person, no matter how much self-appreciation he or she has, to go through life without ever doubting his or her worth. Inner criticism is a universal and healthy human phenomenon. We have no evidence that any other living being is able to reflect about itself. This capability of self-reflection is responsible, along with other human facilities, for much great progress

humanity has made. However I am not speaking here about occasional critical self-reflection, but about a feeling of being criticized, pushed down and imprisoned in the feeling of not being good enough and not having any energy over a long period. Most people have certain things about themselves they like and certain things they dislike. The parts one dislikes make one want to change. Almost everybody has a need to change in some way or another, some more than others. From this perspective, we could say that the desire to change grows out of self-criticism. People who are happy with themselves all the time, (if such people exist and are healthy), will probably never appear in a therapeutic office. It is the critical part of the personality, the distinct human ability to be self-critical, which makes people want to change and grow and eventually brings them into therapy.

Psychotherapy has grown out of the human need for change and improvement. Goodbread describes psychotherapy in a general way as "the art and science of helping people to change" (1987, p.3). Many clients who appear in a psychotherapeutic office suffer in some degree from self-criticism. They feel that they are too much this or not enough that and have some ideas of how they would like to be.

The self criticism does not have to be as strong as in the above described examples. A simple and harmless sentence like "I would like to grow" suggests that potential for growth exists; while this change may not be necessary, it is possible and desirable. Such a statement implicitly says, "I am not

13

living at my full potential yet and know that more is possible". This is a form of critical self-perception which is not emerging in a negative, destructive or tyrannical way. In conclusion we can say that one important, perhaps the most basic and central assignment of psychotherapy, is to help people with self-critical thoughts.

In spite of the fact that self-criticism could be one of the driving forces behind human development and individuation, it has not received very good press. I have not heard of anybody who has applied don Juan's principle to the phenomenon of the inner critic or tyrant. As far as I know, nobody has attempted to see internal criticism as a challenge and opportunity or tried to make the energy and information of the inner critic accessible to the client.

Most of the literature which specifically addresses the phenomenon of inner negative dialogues, self-hatred and low self-esteem recommends that people learn to replace these behaviors with a new kind of behavior, some positive self-affirmation.(Ellis, 1977; Firestone, 1988; Orbach, 1978; Rubin and Rubin, 1975; Sandford and Donovan, 1985) I personally do not think that telling people to be different than they are and trying to reprogram them is very useful. This perspective misses the direct study or stalking, as don Juan would call it, of the phenomenon. The road to enlightenment has to start were a person is, and there is no sense in criticizing this point. It is not possible to jump the different steps on the way to enlightenment and just learn the enlightened behavior.

Einstein (in Watzlawick, 1982) said that the theory one applies to view and understand the world determines what one will see. A person who applies a causal and reductive approach and philosophy to humans is bound to see mostly sick and disturbed behavior and people; almost everybody will look neurotic in some sense. If we approach the inner critic in a causal way we will discover its roots in the past somewhere in early childhood, and our efforts will be mainly aimed at developing tools and techniques to get rid of the criticism. This approach is easy to understand because the suffering and feeling of being blocked that often goes along with internal criticism is immense, and the client coming in just wants the situation to be resolved. From this standpoint, it often appears as if self-criticism itself is the reason why people can not develop and grow. But this is a depressed and hopeless attitude, an attitude that is from its very foundation critical of people and their behavior. It is a trap, which tells people how to become the little tyrants ourselves by criticizing our essential nature.

If we approach people with a less critical, that is, with a teleological and finalistic philosophy, simply observing them without the judgment of right and wrong or sick and healthy, but just as they are, we might learn that their so called "disturbances" can develop in an apparently magical way into favorable opportunities for growth. Everything that occurs does so for a reason; we only have to discover it. The

inner critics need to be "stalked" like the petty tyrants. Only then they will work as a chance for the warrior and reveal a huge amount of energy, ideas, and creativity. Stalking means dealing with them in a way that does not just try to get rid of them, but views them as a possible beginning of something new and wonderful that is trying to reveal itself. Stalking also implies trying to bring the energy and tremendous potential in the internal criticism accessible to the individual who is suffering. One has to appreciate these critics and learn to pursue them in order to detect and access their inner wisdom. If we approach the critic in this respectful manner it may become an important messenger and element on our path to individuation. The inner critic, if viewed from this standpoint and given a chance to reveal its full purpose, can be experienced as the momentary expression of a larger and potentially meaningful and useful life process.

The concept that there could be some deeper wisdom in everything that is happening, including not only desired events but also those which look unfavorable and distressful at first sight, is an ancient attitude which predates don Juan by millennia. One of the earliest known examples of this perspective is Taoism. The old Taoists believed in following nature, which they called the Tao. Their goal was to simply follow nature and the flow of events without selecting and judging what happened as right or wrong. The Taoist rather than trying to change the Tao, tried to adjust to it and to make something out of it which would be useful in life. The

difficulty with this Taoistic philosophy is that the Taoists never explained in detail how to follow nature.

It is around this point of following nature that Process Work makes one of its biggest contributions. Process work provides tools and techniques which allow us to notice and observe the manifestations of nature and to discover and unravel the information so that we can learn to ride the wave of events instead of being washed over by it.

Therefore Process work can be understood as a "modernized Taoism in the sense that Process Work tries to appreciate the flow of the river and to help clients to adjust to this flow." (Mindell 1985b, p.6) Its empirical methods and scientific tools are geared towards discovering the inherent wisdom within the individual, including his or her symptoms, behavior and totality of being. Process Work provides within a single theoretical framework a way to work with a wide spectrum of individual human phenomena and also with relationships and groups.

Arnold Mindell, the founder of Process Work, began with the discovery of the connection between the experience of body symptoms and dreams. He found that working with one will often lead us to an understanding of the other; they mirror each other. Symptoms, like dreams, are therefore potentially meaningful and purposeful conditions.

"They could be the beginning of fantastic phases of life, or they could bring one amazingly close the center of

existence. They can also be a trip into another world, as well as a royal road into the development of the personality. (Mindell, 1985a, p.3)

From this discovery Mindell (1982) formulated the concept of the "dreambody" which encompasses not only the connection between dreams and body symptoms but the totality of our being. It includes all of our intended and unintended behavior, our relationships to other people or groups and the world and all our different channels of perception. The dreambody is a "multi-channeled signaler". (1985 b, p.78) Mindell's discovery revealed that dreams are not happening only at night but also during the day. Our behavior, or in other words, the flow of events happening in the moment has dreamlike aspects in that it happens spontaneously and without our conscious control or influence. The way we move, the kind of body symptoms we have, the tone of voice we use, the structure of our relationships or the way we experience and express ourselves in the world has a dreamlike quality; these ways of expression are seldom consciously chosen. We can actually detect the same pattern in all our spontaneous behavior.

The experiences we have, including favored and unintended or disturbing ones, are not chaotic and accidental but governed by a coherent and meaningful concept. All our disturbances, diseases and problems are geared towards a goal and can, when approached with an attitude of curiosity and respect, reveal an inner order and coherence that contains the seeds of a

18

solution to the problem and opens the door to a bigger
potential. The dreambody is a name for this unifying concept
which weaves inner and outer events together into a meaningful
web.

This concept implies that our behavior and experiences, even
disturbing behaviors and events are not pathological and sick
but an attempt to grow and expand. From a process-oriented
perspective the client no longer has to be seen as a victim,
or as captive in need of pathological regression and neurotic
repetition, but as somebody who is led by an inner wisdom and
drive for individuation.

The idea of an inner drive for individuation or the principle
of finality was originally introduced into psychology by C.G.
Jung. He began by viewing dreams as purposeful and meaningful
messages of the unconscious rather than as a distorted version
of wish fulfillment (e.g. Jung 1928, 1943). In Process Work
it was discovered that the principle of meaning can be applied
to all human experiences, and that the flow of nature then no
longer appears as a chain of accidental events but as a highly
organized process which given the chance will reveal its inner
wisdoms and lead the individual to greater wholeness.

This study will investigate this radical new perspective in
finding out if it is possible to utilize the inner critics as

potential growth makers and challengers of development and personal growth, rather like what don Juan suggests one do with the worldly tyrants.

It is the goal of this work to investigate and stalk the phenomenon of the inner critics with the help and application of Process-oriented Psychology. The questions investigated will be: can the inner critics be utilized in the sense of don Juan's petty tyrants as the perfect ingredients for the making of a whole and mature individual? This would mean that they would challenge us and add components to the individuation process and human search for wholeness. If this is indeed the case, what are the contributions the inner critics can make? And what are the tools, methods and conditions under which the inner critics reveal their meanings? Why is it that they often do not reveal a message by themselves but create so much suffering? Is it possible to get rid of them? And to go a step further, is it possible to use the inner critic for enjoyment and happiness, as don Juan postulates doing with the encounter with the petty tyrant? Is there an overall deeper meaning or positive purpose to the inner critic? And if so, what is it? These questions will be investigated during this work and illustrated by case examples. The final chapter will return to these points.

COMPARATIVE CONCEPTS TO THE IDEA OF INNER CRITICS

Self-criticism is a human quality which has probably existed as long as humankind has existed. In fact, it may have been one of the driving forces in human development. Part of human nature is the capacity for self-reflection. As I argued in the preceding chapter, this often happens under a cloud of negativity and leads to critical and judgmental attitudes towards oneself.

WHY A NEW TERM?

The terms "self-criticism" and "inner critics" are not yet part of psychotherapeutic language, although these concepts have been addressed in several research studies. (see Aronfreed, 1964; Davis and Brook, 1972; Grusec, 1966; 1972). Self-criticism is a term which refers to the events which precede the feeling of being criticized. The feeling state which results from this inner self-critical drama has been discussed much more than the preceding events. The feeling state has been described as guilt, shame, self-doubt, self-hatred, low self-esteem, inferiority feelings, etc.. These are abstract terms, which are difficult to connect with the clients behavior and statements. Self-criticism is perhaps a more accurate term with respect to the client's behavior, and may appear in the research studies mentioned above for this reason. I see some danger in developing terms and

theories which are based on the therapist's interpretations and are not related to the client's concrete situation. I prefer the concept of self-criticism to that of self-esteem or inferiority feelings because it is not abstract and stays close to the direct experience and description of the affected person. In fact, the term has been used by clients spontaneously and is not professional or diagnostic jargon which needs to be re-translated into immediate experiences. In this work therefore I will distinguish self-criticism as the psychic dynamic which creates these kinds of feelings.

This chapter will show that each therapeutic direction has its own understanding and conceptualizations of the development and importance of such feelings. Not only do most of today's psychotherapeutic approaches have different conceptualization but they all approach the phenomenon of inner criticism from different angles and diverse viewpoints which are mirrored in the values they attach to it and the distinct way it is handled in psychotherapy.

I will review psychotherapeutic schools which address the phenomenon of self-criticism or a comparable concept explicitly at one point in their theories. Many of them have developed extensive theories of inner psychic dynamics and systems of psychotherapy which go beyond the concept of self-criticism. However, for my purpose here, I will stress only those elements of theory which make a unique contribution to the field of self-criticism.

Freud did not use the term inner critics. But he talked about a "critically observing agent" which he called the superego. This agent was responsible for inducing guilt feelings and shame. In his paper "On Narcissism" (1914), he mentions for the first time the "special psychic agent which performs the task of seeing that the narcissistic satisfaction from the ego ideal is ensured and which, with this end in view, constantly watches the actual ego and measures it by the ideal." He makes here a clear distinction between the "narcissistic ego ideal" and the "institution of conscience," which is basically "an embodiment, first of parental criticism, and subsequently of that of society."

Freud introduces the term "superego" for the first time in his work "The Ego and the Id" (1923). These two terms, the ego ideal and the superego, are used in many different and synonymous ways. Throughout his work he talks of the superego and the ego ideal (Introductory lectures, 1916-17; Group Psychology and The Analysis of the Ego, 1921; The Ego and the Id, 1923; New Introductory Lectures, 1932), and the concept and definition of these terms subtly changes over time. This change has caused a lot of confusion. In the following literature it has not been possible to refer to these terms without first defining them. No precise agreement about what particular combination of elements was or should have been referred to exists.

Even today this area remains unclear and controversial. In

the psychoanalytic literature a major discussion and dispute about different definitions of and distinctions between the superego and the ego ideal still goes on. Since the purpose of this chapter is not to add another contribution in this area, I refer the reader to the works of Sandler, et al, (1963) and Chasseguet-Smirgel (1985) which give a survey of the many contributions in the area of ego, ego ideal and superego. In order not to get lost in theoretical terminology and for simplification, I will use the term "superego" in the sense Freud used it in some of his later papers (1932), as a synonym for ego ideal and that specialized set of ego functions which is called the conscience. Sandler (1960) also recommends this understanding of the agent of the superego. This definition is also supported by the difficulty which appeared during the attempt to index clinical material in the Hampsted Index:

> "In attempting to order our clinical observations of the conscious and unconscious ideals of children of different ages, we have been forced to the conclusion that they are for the most part so overdetermined that we could not differentiate an ego ideal system or structure as functionally distinct from the ego and the superego." (Sandler et al 1963)

This leads me to the conclusion that many of the definitions of terms in this area were deduced from theory and have partially lost their direct connection and relationship to actual human experiences and behavior.

Nine years after the first mention of the ego ideal Freud presented the structural point of view in "The Ego and the Id" (1923). The term ego ideal is replaced by superego, but Freud

did not imply by this change of term that he was dealing with two separate organizations. He saw the superego, as he had seen the ego ideal before, as constituting a modification of the ego. The superego -- a structural precipitate within it -comes into existence at the time of the resolution of the oedipus complex and, through its formation, becomes the main agent in bringing about a solution to the oedipal conflicts. It exercises the function of self-judgment, and preserves throughout life the capacity to stand apart from the ego, to interfere with it and to rule it. It exercises the "censorship of morals", and tension between the ego and the superego is manifest as a feeling of inferiority and worthlessness. Freud also stressed the fact that the superego is not only a vehicle of moral and parental criticism, but also functions as a mode of expression of the most powerful id drives. By constructing the superego, the ego places the id under subjection. Indeed, Freud says that "the ego forms its superego out of the id," and it is the unhindered traffic between the id and the superego which accounts for its largely unconscious nature. Thus, the more the child controls his aggressive impulses towards others, the more tyrannical his superego subsequently becomes.

Freud sees the development of the superego based on two different mechanisms: first the internalization of parental figures, and later during the oedipal phase the identification with them. He describes the superego as the "special agent in which ... parental influence is prolonged"(1938). The superego thus becomes a replacement for parental authority.

In "New Introductory Lectures" (1932), Freud contrasts the harshness of the superego in many people with the kindness and gentleness of their real parents, and attributes this disproportion to the "transmutation of instincts" which occurs at the time of the resolution of the oedipus complex.

Melanie Klein (1933, 1958) adds another explanation for the harshness and cruelty of the superego which develops even before the resolution of the oedipus complex. She sees the fears of the external world which the small child displays as due to the fact that the child's fantasy view of the world comes from the influence of the superego. The childhood fears are projected onto terrifying images which stem from the death instinct. She places the beginning of the superego in the second quarter of the first year. Klein relates the division into ego and superego to the polarity of the two sets of instincts.

Klein, in contrast to Freud, views the superego as an inborn characteristic of humankind, whereas Freud understands the agent of the superego as a result of the interaction between the child and its parents or the culture.

The postulation of different psychic agencies, among them the superego, allows a detailed understanding of the inner dynamics of the human psyche and its behavior from a psychoanalytic viewpoint. This viewpoint is based on the belief that if during childhood and the phases of establishing different personality agencies something goes 'wrong,' or if there is a disturbance in normal development, it will show its effects in a neurotic personality and behavior.

A. Reich (1960), for example, writes especially about the dynamics of the self-esteem regulations and the role of the superego and presents cases from this viewpoint. In contrast, today's psychoanalytic therapists often prefer to sort their clinical material in terms of object relationships, ego activities and the transference, rather than in terms of the participation of the superego. This differentiation may have to do with the difficulties in defining the term "superego" and the resulting over-determination. The healing effect in analysis in general, and therefore also for a 'dysfunctional' superego, is created by insight, that is, the insight of the patient into his or her own inner psychic drama and development.

## ADLER'S INFERIORITY FEELINGS

The feeling of inferiority is the most important concept underlying Adler's depth psychology, and is the reason his psychology is also called "self-esteem psychology" (Steffenhagen, Burns, 1987). Adler states that children from their earliest years are oppressed by a feeling of inferiority towards the "giants" - their parents. In this sense the parents are a kind of critics or tyrants. All of the children subsequent behavior flows from the desire to escape these painful feelings and attain a feeling of superiority. "Human beings are in a permanent mood of inferiority feeling, which constantly spurs them on to attain greater security. The pleasures which accompany this striving are only aids and

rewards received on this path." (1967, p. 123) According to Adler, the striving for superiority or in other words the trying to get away from the inner critics is the basic motivating life force for all human beings.

This striving for superiority is understood in terms of goal directedness. If a person's goals are realistic and in keeping with a sense of Gemeinschaftsgefuehl (social interest), the individual will move toward a normal, healthy personality adjustment. If, on the other hand, the goals are socially useless or unrealistically high, the individual will develop low self-esteem. Individuals unable to attain their goals, or who attain socially useless goals, will always manifest feelings of inferiority and will be neurotic. Thus, the neurotic is distinguished from the normal individual not by feelings of inferiority as such but by the degree to which the former seeks superiority in ways that are socially useless or even harmful while the latter to a large extent focuses his or her drive for superiority in ways that are socially useful. Social interest is not a separate or second drive, but the ultimately desirable avenue for seeking superiority; it consists of identification with others and concern for their welfare.

One of the main goals of Adlerian therapy is to help elucidate the feasibility of the client's goals, since obtainable goals are crucial to healthy personality development. The past, which is important in many other psychological schools, is only of value in Adlerian therapy insofar as it helps the therapist understand the nature of the defective cognitive

concept, which forms the basis of the neurotic disposition. Feelings of inferiority or neuroses are resolved by helping clients understand how their goals can be attained and helping them to achieve productive individual striving towards superiority.

## BERNE'S PREJUDICIAL PARENTAL EGO

Berne's personality theory postulates three different ego states, or "states of mind and their related patterns of behavior as they occur in nature" (1961, p. 30). "It is the qualitative balance between these three which determines the clinical condition of the patient, and also indicates the therapeutic procedure (p.41).

The ego state which is similar to the idea of the inner critic is the parental ego, which in Berne's theory is the complete storage of our early childhood memories of our parents. Berne postulates that the content of the parental ego is like an exact audio-tape of past events, and that the feelings that originally went along with these events are inseparably connected with the "tape." Harris explains this concept as follows: "A tyrannical parental ego does not mean that we had cruel parents. They might have been angels, but for the small creature who was recording the parent ego, they were giant angels who did not always appear like angels to the child" (1985, p.31, transl. by S.S.).

There are two typical forms of the parental ego, the nurturing and the prejudicial. The prejudicial parent manifests itself

in "seemingly arbitrary, non-rational attitudes or parameters, usually prohibitive in nature which may be either syntonic or dystonic with the local culture" (Berne, 1961, p. 76).

"Ego states manifest themselves clinically in two forms: either as completely cathected coherent states of mind experienced as "real Self"; or as intrusions, usually covert or unconscious, into the activity of the current "real Self" (Berne, 1961, p. 71)." This means that we either experience the parental ego states as 'us' or as happening to us. We identify either with the criticizing parental ego, or with the child ego which is criticized, i.e., the victim.

The strongest influence of the parental ego in the present occurs in the inner dialogue where the individual, or the child ego, hears over and over again the reproaches and criticism of the past. The inner dialogue has to be understood as an unconscious leaving of the present and a shift into the past stage of the dialogue between parent and child. This inner dialogue usually happens without our awareness, and only an uncomfortable feeling is consciously experienced. Amy and Thomas Harris (1985) describe how one can, starting with the feeling, track its origin and find the parental message in the background. "The message of the parental ego, which originally calls for automatic child-like reactions, loses its reflex triggering character as soon as we are conscious of it. We are not completely determined, and this is where our hope for change lies" (p.56, transl. by S.S.). This means that although we are not able to change the content of the parental ego, we can establish a predominance of the reality testing

adult ego state and thus free ourselves from contamination by archaic and foreign elements.


## SATIR'S LOW SELF-WORTH

Like Berne, Satir believes that what she calls "blue prints" are mainly the internal perpetuation of the way a person was treated by his or her parents. In her book "People Making" (1972), Satir speaks about self-worth, which plays a central role in her therapeutic approach. According to Satir, the parents are exclusively responsible for self-worth. Although she does not explicitly define the term self-worth, its relation to self-criticism becomes obvious when we look at how she defines people with low self-worth:

"Because they feel that they have little worth, they expect to be cheated, stepped on, deprecated by others. Expecting the worst, they invite it and usually get it. To defend themselves, they hide behind a wall of distrust and sink into the terrible human state of loneliness and isolation. Thus separated from other people, they become apathetic, indifferent toward themselves and those around them. It is hard for them to see, hear, or think clearly, and therefore they are more prone to step on and deprecate others.

Fear is a natural consequence of this distrust and isolation. Fear constricts and blinds you; it keeps you from risking new ways of solving your problems and so gives rise to still more self-defeating behavior." (p. 22) It seems from this example

that Satir's "low self-worth" is analogous to feelings of inferiority, and has a similar relationship to the concept of the inner critic which was mentioned under Adler.

Satir goes on: "I am convinced that there are no genes to carry the feeling of worth. It is learned. And the family is where it is learned." (p.24)

Throughout her work, Satir goes into detail about how these feelings are created. She postulates a close interrelatedness between the way people or family members communicate with each other, the rules which govern their behavior, and the resulting system, either a closed or an open system, and the feeling of high or low self-worth. If the system is closed, meaning that the communication is not clear and direct and a lot of blaming, placating, computing, and distracting takes place, the rules are inflexible and covert. Human needs thus have to conform to the established rules and not vice versa. In this case, "self-worth grows ever more doubtful and leans more and more heavily on the outside for support" (p.116). In other words, the feeling for oneself, its quality and internal source, are created in the family system. A child who grows up in a non-nurturing family, i.e., a closed system, will learn from these parents how to treat itself, others and the world. This phenomenon is what Satir calls "blueprints." These blueprints are not only responsible for the way one treats oneself, but also for the kind of family one will build, and therefore directly the kind of blueprints one's children will learn.

" ... the main data that goes into the blueprints comes
from the experiences from your own families and other
families with whom there was intimate contact. ....
(they) supplied you with experiences that you are using
in some way in your own parenting. Some of this may have
been helpful to you, and some not. All of it had its
effect, however"(p.224).

Satir sees four parental factors that are perpetuated by the

closed system: ignorance, insensitivity, not knowing about the

importance of the how in communication, and uncertainty about

one's own values.

According to Satir, the dynamics of self-worth are that,

"being learned, it can be unlearned, and something new can be

learned in its place" (p. 27). This new learning occurs

through insight into the way you and your family system

communicates and knowledge of how to communicate better. The

main goal of Satir's therapeutic approach lies in educating

clients and families in communication and helping them to

higher self-worth by unlearning parental blueprints.

A sense of urgency and central importance for the concept of

self-worth lies in Satir's statement: "I believe that most of

the pain, problems, ugliness in life - even wars - are the

result of someone's low pot [self-worth], which he really

can't talk straight about" (p.23).


PERL'S THE "TOP DOG"

Perls calls the agent which would be comparable to the inner

critic "top dog." He writes: "The top dog is upright and

authoritarian; he knows everything better. He is sometimes

right, but he is always upright. The top dog is a tyrant and

33

works with 'you should' and 'you shouldn't.' The top dog manipulates through demands and threats of catastrophe like 'If you don't do that then -nobody will love you, you won't go to heaven, you will have to die' and so on" (1969, p. 26). He goes on to postulate that for each top dog there is an under dog, and that the two of them are in a constant battle, which he calls the "famous game of self tormenting." The top dog is the one who has perfectionist ideas of how one ought to be, an ideal picture of oneself. A person tries to live up to this ideal, and Perls sees this attempt as the basis of the "self tormenting game." By playing this game, one leaves existence in the here and now, and tries to realize an impossible self ideal instead of realizing oneself. Therefore, one is no longer in the here and now and oneself, but is battling with a neurotic inner idea. Perls called this "mind fucking" and required his clients to let go of it, become real, and be in their "centers." After this occurs, the organism will be able to function in a healthy way and find its own self-regulation. The organism is self-regulating and any attempt to control it will result in self-tormenting or, as Perls said, a "dead end situation." This phenomenon which he calls "self tormenting" or "mind-fucking" denies the organism the right to be in its own real experiences. A dead end is a very frustrating place to be, but Perls sees exactly this frustration as the healing place, where the person needs to find and develop his or her own and whole potential. He writes: "We [the Gestalt therapists] are applying enough purposeful frustration so that the patient is forced to find his own way, his possibilities

and his powers, ..." (p. 45). Through insight, the client understands that everything was just illusion and he or she is perfectly capable of leaving this dead end situation.

In contrast to Freud and Satir, Perls was not interested in developmental theories and the question "why?" He said that we are the way we are, and the question "why?" is just an attempt to protect one's pride and maintain the idea that we are responsible for our present situations. Therefore, he does not make the parents responsible for the way an individual is, and says that it is a mistake to make them responsible and not to simply forgive. Forgiveness would close this gestalt, or pattern, and free the individual from the dead end.

As mentioned above, Perls was not especially interested in the origin of self-tormenting games and did not focus much on causal factors. He believed that the conflict between the top dog and the under dog served the purpose of allowing the individual to avoid being in the here and now and facing the frustration of a dead end. In Perls' view, a therapist who was interested in or focused extensively on this "game" would support the neurotic behavior. In some sense, he took a prescriptive approach by telling his clients not to be a certain way. In his verbatim reports, when this dynamic came up Perls would let the client experience it a little bit, and would then interrupt, show the client how split off he or she was from real existence in the here and now, and thus work towards insight. Perls saw this kind of frustration as unavoidable and as the only way to become self-responsible.

## ELLIS' IRRATIONAL AUTOSUGGESTION *

As does Perls, Ellis (1977) sees inner negative self-reflective thoughts or "autosuggestion" as the main cause for psychological and neurotic disturbances. He takes a very different therapeutic approach by making this dynamic his main therapeutic focus. Like Perls, Ellis does not focus on historical development, but aims to change the thinking patterns as they appear in the present. His basic assumption is that humans are rational beings. This means that one can free oneself from neurotic suffering and difficulties by learning to maximize rational thinking and minimize irrational thinking. He calls irrational thoughts "nonsense which people keep telling themselves." Along with sensory-motor and biophysical processes, these cognitive processes are the main source of emotional reactions. "... it looks as if lasting feelings, provided that they are not physical pain or other specific sensations, are results of ongoing thinking processes" (transl. by S.S., p. 52). Feeling and thinking are therefore not two different processes, but are actually identical in the sense that thinking, or inner dialogue, precedes and creates feeling states. In other words, our reactions are mainly caused by our internal evaluations or judgments. These judgments are represented in sentences that we tell ourselves internally, sometimes consciously, but far more often unconsciously. Although these sentences are

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* Beck's Cognitive Therapy (1979) is in many respects similar to Ellis approach and therefore I will only mention it here and not discuss it in more detail.

learned through past experiences, they themselves are not the cause of our present neuroses. The true cause is the fact that we cling to and perpetuate these beliefs even though we are grown up and long separated from our early environment and parents. Even if the origin of a problem lies in the past, the unconscious thinking perpetuates it. Ellis states that people "have exceptionally powerful innate tendencies to think irrationally and to harm themselves" (1979, p 194). The individual is responsible for forming and changing his or her present emotions and behavior.

The task of the rational-emotive therapist is "to have the patient realize his irrational basic assumptions and that these illogical or unfounded premises inevitably lead to emotionally disturbed behavior and therefore must be systematically eliminated and changed if the behavior is to improve" (p.113, tranls. by S.S.). Therapeutic treatment consists of logical analysis of these thought patterns, and rational persuasion in order to get the patient to actively fight against these neurotic thinking patterns. The therapist has to uncover the client's illogical thinking patterns and self-hindering verbalizations by

> "... a) emphatically pointing it out, e.g. making it conscious; b) explaining the connection to his or her difficulties and depressions; c) finding the illogical assumptions in these internalized sentences and d) teaching him or her to rethink these sentences and to replace them with others that are more logical and fruitful. The rational-emotive therapist will attack these illogical ideas and sentences actively, and demonstrate in a rational way how much they are based on nonsense and stupidity".

37

STANFORD AND DONOVAN'S CONCEPT OF WOMEN'S LOW SELF-ESTEEM

The topic of women's self-esteem and self-evaluation is especially addressed in several feminist works (Fransella and Frost, 1977; Orbach, 1978; Rubin, 1980; Russianoff, 1982 and others). In order to avoid repetition, I will present Sanford and Donovan's concept as one example of feminist literature on this topic, and refer the reader to the literature for further study.

Sanford and Donovan (1984), in their comprehensive work, "Women and Self-Esteem", see the cause of low self-esteem in learned thought patterns. (A theory similar to that of Ellis, above.) In comparison to the previously discussed therapeutic approaches, they not only see thought patterns as learned in private family life, but emphasize also that thought patterns are learned from current cultures and religions which oppress women. Sanford and Donovan see low self-esteem as one of the central problems of today's women, who live in a male-dominated culture. While Sanford and Donovan do not state that men have higher self-esteem, they state that men have a decided advantage over most women in that men are more supported on a cultural level. According to this theory, the only way to change the culture and the oppression of women in the male-dominated world is for women to change their level of self-esteem.

Sanford and Donovan locate the cause of low self-esteem in learned thinking patterns and behavior. They say: "... an important task of adulthood is sorting out the negative and inaccurate self-perceptions we were taught and replacing

them with something more accurate and positive. After all, we are adults now and have the power and the potential for insight, judgment and personal change that we never had before" (p. 96). They add that:

> "These thought patterns usually seem involuntary, as if they had a will of their own. However, we learned to think in ways that reinforce negative views of ourselves, and so we can unlearn these patterns, replacing them with ways of thinking that do not perpetuate our poor opinion of ourselves"(p.284). Their suggestions for changing the self-esteem emphasize behavioristic relearning of thought patterns and insight into the influence of parents and social environment. In this respect, their therapeutic approach is almost identical to that of Ellis.

CONCLUSIONS

All of the literature discussed in this chapter is concerned with the topic of self-criticism or related phenomena. Although the theories differ greatly in the value and importance they give the concept of self-criticism, they all agree on the fact that it consists of learned introjected behavior and thought patterns which stem from the past, and that the source lies in either the parents or the wider social context or both. Adler goes even further and postulates that self-criticism is an inherited human trait. While these concepts, the relative importance given to self-criticism and the suggested therapeutic methods are diverse, they all have a common goal: overcoming self-criticism.

Unfortunately, none of these theories take into account that the way they consider the problem is in itself a negative and critical perspective and thus perpetuates the pattern of negative thinking. In the description of the way people think and feel about themselves, the theories judge people as neurotic and prescribe a better and healthier way of being. Thus far the problem has not been viewed from its positive sides, and no attempt has been made to use of the critical dynamics for the good of the individual.

Although the assumption that self-critical behavior is a learned pattern from the past is an illuminating explanation, it does not explain why people hold onto this experience and recreate it over and over again. If this behavior is learned, why do people not simply unlearn it over time? Adler explains that we strive for superiority throughout our lives, but does not address the human tendency to criticize and put ourselves down. Why does the human recreate such painful experiences? Campbell writes:

> In summary, we see that self-reviling is the anguished outcry of a self-esteem wounded by realization of the deficiencies of self, and may offer balm to that wounded self-esteem in several ways: wringing some comforting gestures from the hearers, forestalling their criticism, inflicting pain upon others, making self the center of the stage, evading a confrontation with more serious deficiencies, and providing a feeling of noble self-honesty. (1984, p. 233)

Campbell found an explanation for why one would criticize oneself in front of others, i.e., it serves a social function. Driscoll (1983) and Grayson (1983) uses the same rationale. This explanation is not quite satisfactory. It is not necessary for a person to choose the painful avenue of self-criticism in order to reach the goals mentioned above; there are many ways to achieve the same result without putting oneself down. This explanation also does not account for the fact that self-criticism happens so frequently and often while people are alone, with nobody else aware of the criticism. Many people even attempt to hide their self-criticism from others. Most of the literature discussed here considers self-criticism a sick and neurotic behavior or "nonsense" behavior, which has only neurotic purposes and needs to be analyzed, unlearned or reprogrammed. Self-criticism is a human waste product which needs to be thrown out. All of the theories share a reductionist and causal world view and philosophy. Thus far self-criticism has not been investigated under the assumption that it might carry potentially useful information and could be a meaningful step in one's further development. This assumption suggests a different philosophy in the background, a belief in the meaningful and purposeful nature of human experiences.

In the next chapter I will introduce ideas about the impossibility and consequences of throwing information out, and introduce the necessity of recycling it. These basic

philosophical beliefs lie behind the process-oriented approach
which  finds meaning  and purpose  in so  called psychological
'waste' products.

## III. RECYCLING PSYCHOLOGICAL INFORMATION

As we saw in the literature review, psychological literature does not yet view self-criticism as meaningful. Rather, it is understood as a neurotic symptom which needs to be cured and replaced by other behavior.

Since this dissertation presents an unusual approach to self-criticism, namely viewing inner criticism as a carrier of potentially meaningful information, I would like to discuss the idea of throwing away psychological information versus the idea of using or recycling it. I believe it is necessary not to waste but to recycle psychological information. Recycling is a term that is often used today in reference to ecology. We are trying to recycle energy and all kinds of material which would otherwise be lost in order to protect environment and our global reserve of basic raw material. We have learned that thoughtless throwing away and wasting can be harmful to the environment. Getting rid of something in the sense of putting it somewhere where we no longer can see it or be associated with it is no longer possible. The world has grown too small. We are forced today to acknowledge that we all live on the same planet and that the resources are not endless. In one form or another we will have to face our garbage again. It either piles up in huge mountains, pollutes the air or poisons the ground or destroys the atmosphere. In Europe especially, where people live in close proximity, the consciousness of this problem and the

feeling of having to take care of our only planet has increased dramatically over the last decade.

Normally the problem of ecology is not addressed in the realm of psychology. We psychologists are still used to getting rid of energy, emotions, affects and problems without thinking about what will happen to them afterwards, where they will go and who will have to deal with them. Important world teachers are still prescribing that humanity get rid of its negative thoughts and emotions without helping us to make use of them. Everybody agrees that this would be nice and would like to do so, but we all have the experience that it is not easy to simply make negativity pass away. The African tribe of the Zulus knew about the impossibility of getting rid of something (Ngubane,1977). They knew that the spirit of disease can not just disappear; therefore, they preferred to heal their sick people on busy cross roads, where many travelers from other regions passed through, hoping that a traveler would pick up the spirit of the disease and carry it with him out of their tribal area. This idea would not work today, since there are no other tribal areas that are far enough away. There is only one planet. We have to think in global terms and will have to solve problems in a way that they are solved for everybody and not just dumped on our neighbors. Information theory says that it is not possible to lose information, but only to transform and process it.

What right do I have to use the analogy of environmental ecology in the psychological realm? How can a psychological

problem or action pollute the world? Most psychological
thinking is based on the principles of individuality and local
causality, that is, that we are separate entities and that our
actions and experiences are caused by our own neuroses or
by someone else's action, comment, or reaction. Modern physics
introduced the concept of field theory, in which an
individual and individual experiences are also as a
manifestation of the field. The field is a general pattern
that involves all of us and may even to a certain degree
be independent from us. From this perspective it looks as if
the field itself has a problem and picks an individual or a
group to manifest itself. In process-oriented psychology we
call this field the "dreamfield".

This principle is well known in the study of family and group
dynamics and many of us have experienced it. Often if one
family member gets better or healed, another family member
suddenly gets sick or comes down with the same or a similar
disease. Unaddressed relationship problems between parents may
disturb a child's psychology. Family therapists no longer
focus only on one individual, be it a parent or the child, but
much more on the field or the communication system between
them. Mindell describes a case without any local connections
where a woman is having surgery on one part of her body. At
the very moment of the operation, the woman's sister is
developing pains in this area without having any knowledge of
her sister's condition. (1987, p.13) Jung has described this
phenomenon with many examples as the principle of
synchronicity (1952).

I have experienced many times in groups that one member makes
a comment, which often begins with "I just wanted to mention
quickly that ..." and then they throw some kind of explosive
material which effects and changes the whole group atmosphere.
That member just dumped a piece of garbage which is now
polluting the atmosphere or dreamfield. Most of us have
consciously or unconsciously experienced something like this
situation where the mood or the atmosphere changes radically.
Somebody will now have to pick the statement up, react to it
and process it. If this does not happen the whole group will
be disturbed, or one or several individuals will be stuck
with the issue, perhaps dreaming about it, or carrying it home
and having it out with others. The issue will also reappear in
a different place in the world and the global field. This
phenomenon also works in a reverse direction; if there is a
bad atmosphere in a group or family it can sometimes be
resolved if one member picks it up and processes it.
Everybody in the group will notice and suddenly feel much
better and relieved, sometimes without knowing why or having
any knowledge about what has happened. The pattern of the
field was picked up by one member and processed or
transformed; this can be enough at least for a moment. The
idea of "I do my thing and you do your thing" or "this is my
problem and that is your problem" is only partially valid. It
does not consider the fact that we all belong to one
continuum, and if I do not solve the problem somebody else
might have to do it for me. As the Bodhisattva said: it is not

possible for a single individual to become enlightened by him or herself alone. We all have to become enlightened together.

Something like a psychological "environment" exists, as does the danger of psychological pollution. The problems that we face as individuals, even our most internal and individual difficulties, are not only our own problems but often also belong to a certain degree to the field around us in which we are born and live. The psychological material we work on is not only our personal fate, but also belongs to a larger global field. It is no longer ecological to transform our problems or tensions by trying to send them out into the universe. Today our responsibility includes processing problems, through which they change and we can find meaning in them and use the energy and information in some way. If we work on and transform problems instead of taking pills against them, sending them into the universe or reprogramming ourselves we not only help ourselves but also the health of the global field and the whole planet.

As an example of somebody coming to understand this principle of recycling energy and information, I would like to quote the last sentences of a case example in Mindell's book where he worked with a man (R) who suddenly experienced and verbalized this perspective. The client was working on a body symptom, a pressure in his chest. Mindell (A) worked with him and helped

him to take over the pressure maker, a nasty critic, and use its energy for his own good. At the end of the session the client says:

> "R:(realization) Uh uh!... Now I get it! ... This is the same energy as the evil one (the pressure maker) had, except that it has a different use.
> A: Yes, same energy, a different use.
> R: ... If I could be strong enough I could just (he makes motions of putting A on a shelf.)
> A:(Switching perceptual channel) Go on with that wish in a vision.
> R: I would just put you (the critic) on a shelf and there would be this mechanical fear "oh don't." But now (exuberantly) it's ok with me to put this figure up there!
> A: Get him out of your chest, by using his energy by fully experiencing or living him.
> R: Huh. Wow. Yeah. In other works I've done on this, I... well, other things I've done around this have been to remove the pressure. And so I guess I was (inadvertently provoking the pressure maker) increasing it, feeding the fire.
> A: Instead of using it.
> R: Yeah. That's it. You've got the (right) idea.
> (Mindell, subm. manuscript, p.76)

In other words, this man discovered the necessity of recycling psychological information, and that it is not possible to just get rid of it by massaging it out, send it into the universe or telling yourself not to be a certain way. When we try to get rid of it, we can force the disturbing information to either find ways to express itself where it is less available to our conscious control, as in serious body problems, or force it to become more radical and often more harmful in its attempt to attract our awareness. Also another person in the field, who might be less able than we, may have to pick up the disturbance and find a solution for it.

48

This principle is not a new. The alchemist's goal was to make gold out of dirt. The same idea is formulated in don Juan's teaching: "One of the first concerns of warriors is to free that energy ... The action of rechanneling that energy is impeccability." (Castaneda, 1984, p.28) So far this idea has not been widely known or agreed upon. This principle or attitude of not trying to get rid of problems but to recycle their energy and information stands behind Process-oriented Psychology. Useless or even disturbing "garbage", if it is unfolded and lived with awareness, can develop into something very beautiful that can bring us into close contact with our inner wisdom and the essence and purposefulness of life. This is my intent in the following chapter: to find the gold within self-criticism.

## IV. PROCESS-ORIENTED PSYCHOLOGY

We have discussed the topic of feeling insufficient, inferior or simply bad and have found that working on this problem is a central task in psychology; it is part of the ground on which psychotherapy has grown. Each psychotherapy has its own way of looking at and dealing with this problem. Different schools also have their own ways of explaining its origin and theories of the inner psychic dynamics which create these kinds of human experiences. A perspective that most schools have in common is that internal criticism is negative or neurotic and needs to be cured and rearranged. Internal criticism is seen as an unwanted psychic dynamic which is created by circumstances. The task of the psychotherapist is to undo as much of the problem as possible, as it is either the sickness itself or is causing people to be sick. Many psychotherapeutic schools actually become critical themselves by taking a negative approach to the phenomenon of feeling criticized, and by looking at it as pathological. The necessity of using even negative and disturbing information has been introduced, and I will now introduce Process-oriented Psychology and its way of recycling "garbage".

In this chapter we will take a look at Process terminology and then study its techniques, which have emerged from the attitude or philosophy of Process Work. I will focus mainly on and around the concept of dreamfigures, since the inner

critic is a dreamfigure. I will investigate its meaning and place in the theory of Process Work and its practical function and appearance in the therapeutic approach.


DREAMFIGURES

One way of understanding and explaining psyche and behavior in Process-oriented Psychology is by dividing them into their momentary parts and personalizing the parts as different dreamfigures.

A dreamfigure is the personification of a piece of information or pattern which appears within a personality. These pieces can be patterns or dynamic processes like feelings, desires, resistances, fantasies etc.. The dreamfigure is in many ways comparable to concepts from other psychological schools, including Freud's ego, id, and superego,(1969) which Berne (1961) translated into the terms of adult ego, child ego and parental ego (1961), Jung's idea of the archetypes (1935), Federn's the Ego states (1952), the battling topdog and underdog of Perls (1969) or the subpersonalities by Assagioli (1978). The most important difference between the dreamfigure and these other concepts is the fact that dreamfigures are momentary manifestations of a dynamic process which happens inside of people. They are not necessarily fixed or lasting parts. The expression and experience of our personality can change from moment to moment but also can last for a long time, maybe for life. Dreamfigures therefore are also a dynamic construct which can

change and develop and grow. A nasty critic may transform all its features and become a wise inner guide or a strong ally. The dreamfigures are momentary manifestations in time. They appear and by doing so already change their qualities and characteristics. The dreamfigures have their own psychology and potential to grow and develop. Not only the whole person but also his or her parts are in a continual process of change and development and have to be seen as dynamic rather than static. This unique way of understanding the individual is dynamic and bound to a specific point in time. It describes the momentary configuration of awareness rather than seeking past causes or intropsychic motivations for behavior. The important information is the present configuration of dreamfigures. This perspective makes terms like healthy and sick relative if not useless and somehow excludes any diagnosis which goes beyond the momentary situation. The dynamics of personal experiences are included or mirrored in the concept of a person as a group of different dreamfigures.

DREAMFIGURES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE WHOLE
In order to explain the relationship of the individual to the dreamfigure I will use the analogy of the theater. The individual is the whole, including the director, the actor, the entire cast and the play itself. The different dreamfigures embody aspects of the whole and have some of the qualities and characteristics of separate personalities. They have their own characteristics and beliefs, their preferences

and dislikes, their individual history and behavior and a separate psychology. They can change, grow and transform like a person or a character in a play in a theater.

The individual is not just one coherent person but a whole group of different personalities, an entourage. The personality is like a big assembly. This means that when we talk to somebody we are not just talking to one person, but sometimes to a whole group of people. By saying something to one dreamfigure we might irritate or leave out another. Or the person may experience a feeling of being split; one part is doing something with which others do not agree.

Diamond compares the dreamfigure and its relationship to the whole with the structure of a sentence: "A dreamfigure is to the information whole what a morpheme is to the sentence: the smallest element that still contains meaning." (subm. manuscript, p.26)

This also means that the single figures often do not make much sense by themselves. They can only be understood and unfold their whole potential and meaning within their environment, including their relationships to other parts. Often dreamfigures are in a complementary relationship, or in reaction to one another. For example, if there is a child, often there is a mother around too, and if there is a critic there must also be somewhere a victim or criticized one.

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DREAMFIGURES

So far I have been discussing dreamfigures as if they were something "other" than we are. But in fact the concept of dreamfigures questions who we are. If we use the analogy of dreams again, we see that the "I" in dreams is just one dreamfigure among others. It is the dreamfigure we are identifying with in this specific dream or this momentary situation. The "I " can therefore be understood as a dreamfigure too. It receives its specific place or position because the whole person identifies him or herself with it. This dreamfigure, the "I", is closer to awareness and represents the present subjective experience. In Process Work this is the primary dreamfigure or the primary process of one's personality.

As soon as we identify with one dreamfigure we set boundaries and differentiate or dissociate ourselves from other figures, which are nevertheless around. The dreamfigures which are further away from our identity we call secondary figures. We do not identify with these figures and they seem foreign to us.

## AN EXAMPLE

I remember observing the child of a friend of mine. She was told by her mother several times not to touch the hot oven in the middle of the room. After several attempts that were interrupted by the mother, she touched the oven and burned her fingers. She came crying and showed her burnt fingers to her

mother, explaining the event by saying that the "bad hand" did not listen to her and went to touch the oven anyhow. It was not the child who had touched the oven, but the bad hand, or better, the dreamfigure that stands behind the hand led it to touch the oven.

This child identified with the part that did not want to touch the oven. The "bad hand" was secondary but had taken over for the moment. When secondary dreamfigures take over we find ourselves doing and saying things that we do not want to, meaning that these things do not go along with our primary identities.

Like any other normal neglected person secondary dreamfigures will try to attract our attention. They press to become manifest and will appear in all kinds of unconscious behavior and spontaneous signals and double signals.

Once in a while they take over without our conscious will or control. They happen to us, for example, in the cases of strong affects or fits or other altered states. During these states we are no longer our normal selves. We do things or behave in ways that are not characteristic and we do not identify with them.

We usually speak about moments when the monster breaks through and takes over as "I just simply lost it," meaning lost the primary identity, or "something else just took over" meaning a secondary figure which I normally do not identify with took charge. During this moment I had a different identity; I was the monster and the sweet decent person was more secondary.

The idea of secondary figure being able to take over helps explain how we change and feel so different from one instant to the next. One day or moment I might identify as a sweet and nice person who does not like shouting and the next day or moment I find myself feeling angry and irritated, screaming at people and behaving like a monster. In this moment the more secondary monster becomes primary. The qualities of primary and secondary can switch in an instant and therefore we as therapists have to determine primary and secondary anew each time a client comes in.

The usual more primary dreamfigure is the sweet and decent one and the secondary dreamfigure is the monster. The monster will be pushed into the background by the primary one and therefore only "leak through" in small signals like a sharper tone of voice than wanted, a facial expression, body symptoms, etc.

The secondary figures try to get attention. If we are not attended to it over a long period, they can become more and more disturbing and irritating as we try to keep them out. This is the reason why secondary figures often appear to the primary figure as disturbances and look so impossible at first glance. They appear as troublesome producing all kinds of irritation, disorder, sickness and chaos. Once we open the door for them, they change and something that looked threatening and dangerous can suddenly develop into something very beautiful. If I am able to bring out the monster within me consciously, with awareness, then I might find that the monster simply has different interests and wants me to bring

in my own needs and no longer just be sweet and adapted. The monster then has changed into a needy person. A raging witch might change into a dance of life, a nagging critic into a useful messenger that brings a completely new and exciting aspect to life.

Although the secondary dreamfigures are perceived as not belonging to us, they are often carrying an incredible amount of energy. This energy will reveal itself once the person is in contact with the secondary figure. By contact I mean not analytical understanding, but actually bringing the figures into life. Pure analytical understanding often is not enough. While it is not possible to predict what will happen exactly, we have observed that change occurs once the secondary figures are processed and brought into life with awareness. With these changes one often experiences a sense of incredible relief, a rush of energy and a feeling of "rightness" after contacting a secondary figure. Disturbances change or are no longer experienced as disturbing; it is the awareness which makes a difference and is important.


THE CONTINUUM OF DREAMFIGURES

When a secondary dreamfigure is picked up, it becomes primary. But the process does not stop here. A new figure will now appear as secondary, and will be the carrier of growth potential and the next step in development. There are not only two figures, but a whole continuum of figures. How far we can or need to go with our awareness depends on our ability to

pick up the different figures and on our flexibility in flowing with different states. For a primarily sweet person the first developmental step might lie in picking up the monster. But the monster itself might be angry because it has been hurt, and secondary to the monster would therefore be a hurt and needy child.


## THE METACOMMUNICATOR AS A SPECIAL DREAMFIGURE

In some dreams we identify with one of the figures in the drama and thus are participating directly in the flow of events. In other dreams we are not directly involved in the story, but are more in the role of the observer or witness. Using the analogy of the theater again, we are no longer an actor in the play: we are the audience in the theater. This particular dreamfigure carries awareness; it is aware of our different identities, and can talk about the different identities and states. Process Work calls this part the metacommunicator. It has the capacity to metacommunicate about different dreamfigures without identifying with them or immediately taking part in the play. It therefore often has the chance to mediate between different figures. The metacommunicator is the part that identifies neither as the sweet one nor as the monster, but is able to talk about both of them as different states of mind. This part of a person can step back, detach and reflect about itself.

If I identify with the metacommunicator I am not just sweet or monster like, but I think: how interesting, I am feeling sweet

now and just before I was feeling like a monster. I wonder what happened? The metacommunicator is the part that has the potential for awareness.


## THE EDGE

The edge is the moment or structural element that stands between the primary and the secondary figures. The edge is responsible for excluding secondary figures. It keeps us from identifying with secondary patterns or figures and does not let them flow naturally into our being and behavior.

At the edge we find all the fears, ideas and belief systems, both individual and collective, which are against the secondary material. Everything which is against the secondary process and prevents us from living is called the edge. Whenever somebody says "I can't," or "I don't want to," he or she is on an edge. The edge represents the boundaries of the identity. If we had no edges we would simply be our totalities and live whatever lies within us.

The edge simultaneously gives us our identities and keeps us from being our whole selves by preventing us from merging with secondary dreamfigures. If I identify as a sweet person, I might not like rough and monster-like behavior much. I probably have many good reasons not to be like a monster. I might fear not being liked anymore and losing friends; I might have a belief that being warm and loving is good and that anger is bad; I might have prejudices against strong emotions in general, or anger may remind me of somebody I did not like

and with whom I do not want to be associated. It could also be that I just never learned how to behave like a monster and thus have no pattern for such behavior and simply do not know how to do it. All of these would create an edge against monsterlike behavior and dreamfigures.

The edge is a magical and also chaotic point. It is where we start to produce all kinds of signals and double signals. The secondary dreamfigure is knocking on the door, pushing in and creating problems and symptoms. It is trying to push our edge lines or boundaries back and broaden our identities. At the edge lies our growth potential and an incredible amount of creativity. The goal of Process Work is not to become the monster now, jump over the edge and identify with the secondary figure. This would just cause the primary figure to become secondary. The creative task for the individual is to solve the conflict between these two figures, the primary and the secondary. The task of the therapist is to find the edge and point it out to the client, making him or her more aware of all the different parts without necessarily pushing the client over the edge. Solving the conflict is a very personal and unpredictable act which cannot be done by anybody besides the individual. The client's process itself will suggest and find its own solution to the situation. The therapist can be helpful in picking up on this and encouraging it, but it is not in the therapist's hands to create a solution. Possible solutions include the integration of the secondary figure or some of its parts or features into the primary one; taking sides with one of the parts for a while; developing a new part

with a completely different viewpoint that solves or transcends the problem; simply developing awareness about the situation; just dropping the conflict for the time being and doing something else. Some conflicts or edges will be solved and never come up again if we go over them once, while others will have to be solved over and over again. There are as many different ways of solving this conflict as there are individuals. Everybody has a unique process which can not be predicted. This is the wonder of nature in its multitudinous manifestations.

If the edge did not exist there would be no conflict. Secondary figures would simply be integrated into primary ones, but we would never have to realize anything and would go on without developing any awareness. It is the edge, this magical place, that forces us to develop awareness and become conscious.

THE EDGE FIGURE

Often we find at the edge another dreamfigure, the so called "edge figure". The edge figure stands for the belief systems or ideas that prevent us from integrating secondary material. It is this figure that tells us that monster-like behavior is not the thing to do and will get us in trouble. The edge figure whispers in our ears that certain kinds of behavior do not go along with our primary identities. For a primarily sweet woman it might insinuate that her partner will leave if she starts to be rougher, or that she will lose her job, etc.

When working with a client, the edge figure often needs to be addressed before a person can go over the edge. When we work on secondary material with a client, we actually have not one but at least three personalities in front of us but: the primary, the secondary and the edge figure.


CHANNELS

Different dreamfigures communicate through signals in different channels. Channels are modes of perception and expression, ways people can send or receive information. In Process Work we talk mainly about six channels, four sensory grounded ones and two composite ones. The sensory grounded channels are auditory, kinesthetic (movement), proprioceptive (body sensation), and visual channels. These sensory grounded channels are also part of the theory of neuro-linguistic programming (Bandler and Grinder, 1979). Since humans experience themselves and the world differently in relationships and in groups, in Process Work one additionally talks about the relationship and the world channel. People communicate and receive information through all these channels. Most of us have some channels that we prefer; that is, we feel more at home in them and can more readily control and structure the incoming and outgoing messages. We identify with the messages in this channel. In Process Work this is called the occupied channel. It is occupied by my identity or the primary dreamfigure. The other channels, called unoccupied channels, will be used by secondary, or repressed,

dreamfigures to send their messages. The unoccupied channels are less accessible to the individual's control and therefore can be used by secondary figures to express themselves. If I identify with the friendly hello I give somebody on the street, then this primary message is coming through the auditory channel. Let's imagine that at the same time my body is slightly turned away. The signal in the movement channel, the body that is turned away, does not make immediate sense in connection with my verbal content. I am also probably not aware of my movement. And even if I were, I probably would not know the message in the turning away. It is not "me" who sends this message; it is happening by itself and not coming from my intent. A secondary dreamfigure stands behind it and communicates without my conscious control. In this example, the movement channel is unoccupied. It is unoccupied by my identity, or in other words, occupied by a secondary dreamfigure. It is not possible to prevent dreamfigures from communicating. If we exclude them from our conscious or intended behavior, they will find some other way and channel to express themselves.

This means that the new experiences of emerging secondary material, which broaden our identity and energy, never happen in occupied channels. We have to look for them in unoccupied channels. As therapists we will therefore try to help the client access and get into unoccupied channels. These are the channels where big experiences can happen and changes can come through. Therefore it is important as a therapist to give attention to the channel structure of the client within the

first minutes of a session. We can often predict in which channel the solution will come without being able to foresee the solution itself.

## CHANNEL CHANGE

The occupation of a channel can change quickly and several times throughout a process. I can focus on my movement channel, amplify the signal in that channel and discover the meaning of my turned away body. It might be that I am in a hurry and do not want to chat now. I could then change channels and express this verbally. In this moment I occupy the movement channel. The shifting from one channel to another we call channel change. Channel changes are important because they can add new information, and occur in the natural flow of the unraveling process.

## SIGNALS AND DOUBLE SIGNALS

Dreamfigures communicate and send signals through the different channels. Signals are pieces of information. They are the phenomenological and manifest expressions of dreamfigures. By amplifying signals and following the information, we are able to make out the complete message and find the sender or the dreamfigure in the background. Signals are like the calling cards of dreamfigures.

The messages and signals I intend to send come from the primary dreamfigure. There are other signals which happen

meaning that I do not have any control over them and do not know their meaning. An example of this is the slightly turned away body above. These pieces of information do not belong to our identities, but are communication attempts of secondary figures. As stated earlier, it is not possible to stop dreamfigures from communicating. If we exclude them from our conscious behavior, they will occur in other channels where we have less control over them. "It is not possible to not communicate." (Watzlawick, 1982, p.53, transl. by S.S.) Secondary dreamfigures send messages which are incongruent with the primary message and often come to awareness first as disturbances. Disturbances to the primary figure are the signals and messages of secondary dreamfigures. If primary and secondary signals are sent at the same time we speak of double signals. If I tell you that I am happy to see you and at the same time my body is turned away from you, then I am giving you a double signal. My body posture is giving you a different message than the content of my verbal message. Or saying "yes" while shaking my head "no" is a double signal. I am incongruent. Mindell writes about double signals:

> "They are a combined product of your spontaneous creativity, of the existence of channels which are not at your disposal, of conscious inhibitions and of your inability to admit paradox. Some double signals occur at the perimeter of your awareness, some are further away." (1985, p.26) Whenever double signals appear there is an edge. The edge is responsible for splitting up the messages. Process workers discover these double signals, amplify them and use them to access the secondary figure in the background and to work on the edge that is involved.

THE COMMUNICATION ASPECT OF SIGNALS

Because signals are bits of information and communication attempts of dreamfigures, they have to be seen within the communication background. This means that signals are either meant for another part or are a reaction to another part. They are actions of two dreamfigures within the same play. A hand that is slapping a thigh is a communication between the dreamfigure in the hand and the dreamfigure in the thigh. Therefore, a single signal can indicate both complementary figures.

> "The point here is that complementarity simply means that there is a logic, a "fitting togetherness" of messages, sender and receiver. This "fitting togetherness" is the context, the situation in which the communication is embedded. .... Complementarity does not have to mean opposition, though it frequently includes that. Thus, a dream of an infant or a screaming child might imply, even by absence, a parent or caretaker. A parent is not necessarily the opposite of an infant, though at times it can be." (Diamond, subm. manuscript, p.29)

That suggests that whenever we work with a signal and find a dreamfigure in the background, we might also look for the still unrepresented figure for whom the message is meant. The second figure is implicit within the first one. The figure that is closer to awareness will be represented first and the implicit figure is often further away and emerges later. If we find a critic we will also have to expect a victim, the criticized one, somewhere in the field. If we find somebody

who feels pushed down there must be someone pushing them down. If I have a headache that I perceive as pressure, then there is a part that is pressing and a pressured one.

The various dreamfigures of different individuals are also communicating with each other. A partner may not pick up consciously on my double signal, but he might sense that something is not quite right and start to feel slightly uncomfortable. He might also have an edge against bringing in his reaction. If I say hello and my body is slightly turned away, he will then start to double signal too. He might take a step backward and start to play with his hands. In this case, there are two conversations happening at the same time: the nice friendly chat between the primary dreamfigures saying, "hello" and "how nice to see you," and another conversation between the secondary dreamfigures. The secondary conversation might sound something like: I am very busy and actually have no time to stand here with you but I do not dare to tell you. The answer to this could be: I see that you are only half in the conversation. That makes me feel nervous and think that you do not really want to talk to me and that you do not like me.

AMPLIFICATION

When a process worker picks up a double signal, or any kind of signal, he or she will be interested in learning more about it and its context. In order to do this the process worker first notices the channel the signal is in, meaning in which mode it

is perceived by the individual. A headache will probably be felt; a wiggling foot is in the movement channel. Amplification is an important way to find out more about signals. Amplifying a signal means doing whatever is happening more and more consciously. There is no amplification method that fits every situation and it is up to the process worker to find the method implied by the signal itself. The process worker is guided by the verbal and non-verbal feedback of the client. If the signal is a pressure, the therapist can amplify the signal by gently putting more pressure on the spot. If the signal is a wiggling foot, the therapist might ask the client to wiggle it more; the signal of a low voice can be amplified by making it even softer. In fact, even focusing on a signal is in itself an amplification. By focusing our attention, we "pull" on a little corner of a dreamfigure. Spontaneous channel changes will occur and add more information, finally revealing the figure who is sending the signal. By carefully following the channel changes and the flow of events we eventually find the whole drama and context of the dreamfigures. The wiggling of the foot might change into a picture of a child jumping up and down for joy. The proprioceptive experience of a pressuring headache might evolve into a physical struggle and wrestling match.

It is important to amplify the signal first in its own channel, because only then can we really access the figure in the background. For example, if we ask the individual about the headache, we will hear the opinion of the primary figure about the secondary one, since different channels are occupied

by different dreamfigures. I remember a woman who was talking to the headache she felt and got the message that she should not have partied so late the night before and that she needs a lot of rest. But by first amplifying the headache in the proprioceptive channel and then following the spontaneous channel changes, she saw a picture of a merry-go-round and a dreamfigure who was interested in celebrating and partying even more. The symptom of the headache was actually a reaction against the voice telling her to go home early.

By noticing and communicating with these unconscious parts of our behavior, we can find the same dreamfigures we find in our dreams. Amplifying secondary signals and giving the dreamfigures a chance to express themselves more and to come into the foreground actually reveals figures similar to the ones we dreamed about at night. The dreamfigures as autonomous parts or personalities of our psyches can be detected both in our daily ways of expression and our nightly dreams.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

A client of mine came in one day and sat down in a very specific posture, a half lotus position with his hands in his lap. He talked about some relationship problem with his wife. After a while, I became so intrigued by his position that I asked him to look at me while I tried to mirror it. I asked him what he saw and he immediately said a Buddha. We worked more on this idea by having him take over and be the Buddha

figure. We found that he needed more of this kind of Buddha-like attitude in his relationship. He needed to be more detached and centered. The night before this hour he had dreamed that he was planning a trip to Tibet. When I asked him his association to Tibet, he said that he had once read a book about Tibetan Buddhism and that he was fascinated by it. In his life at that moment, he needed a more Buddhistic attitude. We can say that the same dreamfigure who organized his body posture when he sat down in my practice had sent him this dream at night.

THE DANCE OF THE DREAMFIGURES

When a client comes into the session he or she is not yet presenting different dreamfigures, but the way he or she is experiencing him or herself. This is the primary dreamfigure who is bothered by all kinds of symptoms and disturbances. The task of the therapist now is to see what is secondary and help the client to process it. This involves finding the secondary signals, amplifying them, and following the positive feedback of the client and the channel changes in order to find the hidden dreamfigures. Once we find the dreamfigures we can invite them to show themselves more and give the client a chance to experience them. The therapist can do this either by gently complementing and encouraging a figure, talking to the client as one of the figures, or joining one of the figures in its efforts, taking it over, acting it out and talking from its place in the room. Another effective way of

70

drawing a figure out is to interact with it either by stepping into the complementary role, having personal reactions to it, challenging it or resisting it.

By working with secondary signals we are certain to touch some edges, since we are working with material with which the client does not identify. By exploring a secondary signal we question the client's identity and confront him or her with something he or she did not want to identify with in the first place. By following the process, the client and the therapist will "dance" up to the edge at one point or another. Again, it is not possible to generalize or predict what will happen and how the client will process the edge. It is important that the therapist does not miss the edge, because the work will start to circle back and loose its energy. If the therapist catches the edge, he or she can give the client some experience of the edge, the edge figure and the secondary process behind it. In the unraveling of this dance, surprising events often occur. Sometimes two figures find a way together by making a contract or merging; sometimes a new figure will join them and transcend the conflict, and some other dances go beyond the dreamfigures and create a completely new constellation.

Some people jump right over edges; others stop and look at them and get to know them; yet others dance around them and thus get to the other side. What will happen and how the drama with the different figures or conflicts will be processed is up to the creativity of the individual client and

therapist. People draw their own conclusions and spontaneously connect them to their current life situations. If we give a process enough time to unravel and develop it will be self explanatory; the process will need no further explanation or interpretation. The process generates its own solution often in magical and unforeseeable ways.

We can not say in advance how this "dance" will look and what or where it will bring us. We can know the structure of the process and some of the content, but not the dance that will come from it. By amplifying secondary material and following the overall positive feedback, we are unraveling hidden pieces of nature, giving it a chance to come to life and organize itself in new and exciting ways. There are as many possibilities as individuals, meaning that there are no rules for how to go about it. I have seen thousands of dances in different parts of the world and I have not seen the same dance twice yet.

# V. ABOUT THE INNER CRITIC

I would now like to introduce the specific dreamfigure of the inner critic. I will first define it further so that we can study its appearance and some of the environmental conditions around its occurrence.

## DEFINITION

The inner critic is a dreamfigure which carries a negative and judgmental self-construct. The critic is the part or figure which is practicing critique or criticism on the individual. "Critique" and "criticism" have specific meanings here, which will be defined below.

### In everyday language

Let's first see how the terms critique and criticism are used in our everyday language. Critique is a term which is normally applied to a rather negative, pessimistic, or even destructive comment about somebody or something. Critique has a negative meaning, opinion, or judgement. The critic has a position or attitude which does not just accept a certain fact or achievement, but measures and compares it with other standards or rules and comes to a negative and disapproving conclusion. Critique, in everyday language, is a negative judgement and the critic is the condemning judge.

Consulting my dictionary I learned that "criticize" originates etymologically from Greek, in which it means, "I

differentiate," and also "I decide," "separate," and "judge."
These terms give the impression, in contrast to our everyday
use, that criticizing is a fair act, a purely factual
procedure in which both sides receive the same chances and the
critic is a competent judge. In this sense the inner critic
would be the one who has access to some objective, unbiased
and perhaps absolute knowledge, and is capable of comparing
and drawing conclusions on a neutral ground.

## The judge or the tyrant

Further, the term criticize also is defined as "I choose," "I
believe," "I mean," and finally "I order." Suddenly, the idea
of objectivity has disappeared. Criticizing now not only has
to do with careful examinations, but comes close to being an
arbitrary act. Critique which seemed to be knowledge at first
now looks like an assumption or an opinion. The inner critic,
according to this definition, would be the figure which is
acting out of personal volition and opinion without any
respect for other parts; it dictates over other figures. The
inner critic has changed from the one who is competent to
judge to a tyrant or dictator who gives orders at his own
discretion.

## Self-knowledge

In connection with critique my dictionary also refers to
Immanuel Kant. Through his works Critique of Pure Reason,
Critique of Practical Reason, and Critique of Judgment, he
introduced the term "critique" into the fields of science and

philosophy. He uses the term not in a negative sense, but in its original Greek sense of separating and judging. Kant investigated the human mind and its functioning. He postulated that cognition is not only based on "posteriori," or empirical knowledge, but on "apriori" conditions in the mind which make it possible to even have experiences. He stated that these conditions of cognition can not be derived from the experience itself. Kant's idea of critique is therefore transcendental in its sense of searching back for the conditions which are basic to all empirical knowledge. Critique in Kant's sense is the capacity of the mind to investigate itself and its own functioning. In the sense of Kant's definition of critique, the critic or inner critic, would be the figure or the part of the mind that can talk about itself and has self-knowledge about its own operation. The inner critic would then be the part within us which is capable of self-reflection in general; it is no longer limited to negative judgments. In psychology we call this figure the metacommunicator, observer or witness. It metacommunicates in that it has access to not only empirical knowledge and sensory grounded experiences but also to the act of knowledge and the self-consciousness of having experiences. It not only has experiences, but is aware of having them. This is the detached observer which is able to look at how one is doing something, rather than taking it as simple fact that one is doing it. This part is the carrier of self-knowledge and awareness.

Besides the everyday use of the term, there are at least three additional definitions of a critic: a competent judge who has access to some objective knowledge, a tyrant who acts at his own discretion, and a metacommunicator who has insight into the way the mind functions. Chapter 9 will demonstrate that people experience their individual inner critics as having all of these different features. Inner critics vary from individual to individual and situation to situation, and each critic has to be investigated and unraveled before we can tell which of the above definitions is correct for the situation. As we will see in the discussion of the case material, all of these definitions are valuable for different kinds of critics which spontaneously emerge. The figures which are experienced in the beginning as inner critics are not all the same and serve different functions for the individual.

CRITIC OR CRITICS?

The discussion of the different qualities of the critic brings us to a question: is it always the same figure which shows itself in different ways, or are there different figures? Defining the inner critic as a dreamfigure means that as the momentary experience of a person or a state of consciousness, the inner critic is subject to constant change. Therefore, the dreamfigures and their manifest representations differ from moment to moment. It is possible that each time an inner critic appears within an individual's process, it is a different kind of critic with diverse features and faces. One day it might be a dark man, the next day it appears in the

form of a parent, a teacher or another authority figure. Sometimes we experience the critics as collective figures, like witches or Gods; we may feel haunted by different animals, or even material things like balls or clouds, as we will see in Chapter 8. Often we also feel criticized not just by one person or figure but by a whole group or organization of people, like a society or culture. Inner critics are dreamfigures, which means they are personalized patterns behind their momentary manifestations in all the different channels. When we look at this definition of a dreamfigure, the question of whether there is one single critic or many different ones loses its importance. Dreamfigures are not fixed parts of an individual although they can appear more than once. Therefore we can speak either of different dreamfigures or of one, depending upon which is more helpful and better represents the experience of the individual. The question becomes one of practicality. The term dreamfigure was created in order to more easily explain and understand human behavior and experience. If the term is not helpful any longer, we should change the term and not the fact or the experience. The question of one critic or several critics will therefore have to be answered anew for each process and experience.

If the question is in reference to the more general level of drive or archetype in the human psyche, we leave the realm of direct and sensory grounded experiences and enter into the realm of hypothesis. I will come back to this topic later in this work when we have more material which aids this

discussion. For the moment I will limit myself to the direct experiences of the client, and from these it is clear that the inner critics appear in many different forms.


## BEHIND THE SCENES

We are all occasionally critical of other people. Most of us are also critical of ourselves, although we are not always conscious of it. Often we can hear others muttering self-critical comments as they work. For example, a person typing makes a mistake and immediately says: "Oh dumb me, I'm always making mistakes." Or a woman drops a glass and exclaims: "I'm so clumsy." It is often much easier to observe this kind of behavior in others than in ourselves. We are so used to being self-critical that we think of it as normal. We are so often unaware of the critical drama that happens inside of us that it usually slips out in these small comments or other unconscious signals. It is nevertheless very influential in terms of how we feel and who we are, and determines to a large degree the atmosphere we live in and carry around within ourselves.

We can compare the internal situation to a situation with an outer critic. If a father is constantly criticizing a child, then the atmosphere in the family and between the father and the child will be very tense and painful for the child. Let's assume that the child would not be able to visit other families. Growing up in this type of family, the child will not notice this special atmosphere. It is so used to this kind

of atmosphere that it will think that this is the way the world is. The child will have no awareness of being criticized, because he or she knows of nothing else. It is normal that the father talks in a critical way to his child, and therefore nobody will complain about. The child will still suffer and feel pain over the situation. Although the child feels depressed and unhappy, if she or he later comes to a psychologist, the presenting complaint will probably be about his or her current state and not the scene at home.

This is the internal situation for many people. They often suffer immensely under an inner critic without knowing from what they suffer. They are accustomed to their inner atmosphere, and since they never have a chance to compare it to other people's inside drama they know nothing else. Depending on our individual reaction to the inner drama, we might notice an unexpected mood change, suffer from a sudden energy loss, feel depressed, aggressive or spaced out. If we track back from these experiences we often find that an attack by an inner critic has happened very silently and unnoticed, and is the scene behind our experience.

How does this happen? There is nobody who has awareness; no audience for the drama; no metacommunicator who could talk about it. We are completely identified either with the dreamfigure who is being criticized or with the critic itself, without having a third part around which would be aware of this fact. Mindell defines psychosis (1988, p. 178) as a state of having no metacommunicator and therefore no feedback loop. Being attacked by an inner critic without any conscious

79

knowledge about it can put a person in a "mini psychosis," meaning that for a certain time one becomes psychotically depressed and withdraws from everything, or paranoid, feeling that everybody is against him or her, or manically agitated, trying to defend him or herself and prove the critic wrong. Hartmann (1964) sees severe self-criticism as the basis of some psychiatric cases of psychosis. Psychosis, as he sees it, is the "last ditch" attempt to defend oneself against harsh attacks of self-criticism.

## AN EXAMPLE

I remember a situation in the mountains. I was hiking on a wonderful trail in the mountains with a friend of mine and we were having a nice conversation. At one point my friend asked me how it was going with my dissertation. He hit a hurtful spot without knowing it. I was at that time feeling pretty bad about my work and had not been able to do much for a while. I just wanted to avoid the topic, and gave a quick answer and then changed the topic. I did not think about it anymore, but suddenly realized that I was so exhausted that I could hardly move anymore; my legs would not carry me any longer. The mountain in front of me, which had looked so inviting before, was completely over my abilities. I had to sit down and was almost ready to die right there. I was having a momentary "mini-psychotic depression." My friend noticed the sudden change and helped me with my state by asking me what would happen if I would give in to it completely. I decided to go ahead and die right there. What was so good about dying?

After some minutes of being dead I found the answer: I would not have to finish my dissertation!! Now the curtains to the inner scene had lifted and I remembered him asking me about it. He had started a whole tyranny of self-criticism which I had repressed completely. All the energy I had felt before was gone, because now it was the critic who used this energy against me. Once I had awareness about it, meaning that I had a metacommunicator, I felt much better, because I also had access to other parts of myself.

The altered state the inner critic puts us into might also be responsible for the loneliness that goes along with feeling criticized. When talking to friends and colleagues, it is much easier and socially more acceptable to complain about headaches or relationship problems than about the inner atmosphere and drama with the inner critic. It is easy to find a compassionate listener when one has a toothache, but if a person talks about self-criticism,others may be disbelieving or, meaning well, may recommend not to be like that. The normal reaction to self-criticism is to try to talk the person out of it. Not many of us have learned to relate to people in altered states.

A client of mine came to a workshop on inner critics. He suffered from heavy self-criticism which manifested in strong anxiety attacks whenever he was with people. He did not get to do a personal session with me during the workshop, and I was concerned about him. I asked him how he was doing and he was absolutely excited. It was a big experience for him to see and

hear people who had similar problems and to be an observer of the inner critic. It gave him the chance to observe the drama, to be part of the audience of the play and to access a new part, the metacommunicator, within himself. After this workshop, he could use this part to observe his own inner critic.

In cases of psychiatric psychosis, Garfield (1985) reports radical improvements, meaning the reestablishment of a metacommunicator, after the individual is supported against self-criticism and is given insight into being criticized.

The altered state which results from self-criticism, and which permits no access to the metacommunicator, might be responsible for the fact that we seldom hear spontaneous reports about people's inner self-criticism. More often clients come into the office and complain about something else: depression, low self-esteem, insecurity, relationship issues and all kinds of symptoms and problems. An observer will be able to detect the critic which appears in all kinds of spontaneous remarks as mentioned above, or in other signals in other channels, which will be described below.

THE NASTY NATURE OF THE INNER CRITICS

Nobody likes to be criticized, and if possible we try to avoid it. Most people have an edge against being criticized, and so try not to focus on it, but to repress it as much and as long as possible. What happens then is comparable to when a little stream is blocked; the longer and better it is dammed, the more forceful the stream becomes and the greater the flood

will be if the dam breaks or leaks. The same thing happens with all repressed parts and dreamfigures. The less attention we give them and the more we try to repress them, the angrier and the more impossible they become. If I suppress a need for closeness and intimacy it might come up in an unoccupied channel and look like a nasty monster, ready to eat people. This was the case with a client: once her monster had a chance to come out and show itself, it turned out to be a pink monster, and the eating up looked much more like cuddling and enjoying being close to people.

If secondary critics are dammed up, they also become much more radical and devastating and look as if they want to destroy or take over the whole person. This is not true only for inner critics but for any secondary figure. Secondary figures always look like they are after us and out to get us. They appear completely impossible. As long as they remain secondary they do not make much sense to us. This phenomenon is similar to the ugly frog in fairy tales. The ugly thing first needs to be embraced and loved and kissed before it will transform into a beautiful prince. Repressed critics often come out first in a painful general way, making comments like. "you can't do anything right," or "you are the most stupid person on earth, nobody could possibly like you." These comments are painful and often stupid and may be the reason why the inner critics are often so hated and feared. They are also untrue, since it is impossible for somebody to always do everything wrong. In order to get the real message, we have to invite the critics to bring their criticism in, and we must often press them to

be more specific and learn to follow and unfold the process.
Critics often have useful messages and a great deal of wisdom
and creativity, and they may care about and believe in us.
But first they need to be invited in; then they will change,
and develop into allies or friends who can not only accompany
us on our way to wholeness and individuation, but can also
drive us forward and take a special interest in us.

## THE CRITIC AS A COMPLEMENTARY FIGURE

Before going into the details of how self-criticism appears in
different channels, I will mention again the complementary
nature of signals. A signal in a specific channel is always
part of a bigger picture, meaning that the signal is a
communication between at least two parts; it is either a
reaction to or meant for something. Signals are not only
messages from one part, but are addressed to other parts.
Therefore, an inner critic never emerges alone. It always has
a victim, the criticized one, somewhere in the system. The
criticized one also appears in the signal, and a single signal
therefore includes both figures. A concrete example of this
two figure phenomenon is as follows.
If I slap my head because I just said something stupid, there
are two parts involved in the signal: the hand and the head.
The critic is represented in the hand, which is saying "you
dummy," and the head is the dummy, the criticized one. Both
parts are represented within the single signal. When we work
with the signal and unravel the drama, we will have to
represent both parts, or the unrepresented figure will appear

in another part of the field. This happened to me at a workshop. I had just finished working with a woman in the middle of the group. Suddenly some of the participants became critical, attacking the woman and the work she had just done. She was a very shy woman and had not yet said much during the workshop. In her work she hid behind a pillow, and I took sides with the person behind the pillow by supporting and complementing her behavior. I did not address the other figure, the one who was looking in and being critical and from whom she was hiding. This figure then came up in the group. We would say that the group was dreamed up to be the critical figure which has not been represented. This work ended well. The criticism gave the woman a chance to stand up strongly for her shyness, and she actually criticized the group for its insensitivity. In doing this, she actually became and integrated the critic. Strangely enough, the group was also satisfied, since both parts had been represented. Now, after the critic was represented, the process was finished.

This dynamic also happens between the therapist and a client in private practice. If the therapist unconsciously sides over a long period with only the victim side of the drama by supporting the victim and not inviting the critic into the process, the inner critic will be amplified even more, or will emerge elsewhere in the field, often in the therapist. He or she will suddenly feel very critical of the client. If the therapist takes on only the critical part, he or she could be

held responsible for keeping the client in the role of the victim and not giving them a chance to also step into the critic's role.


## WHO IS CRITICIZING WHOM?

So far we have mentioned the two dreamfigures which are implicit in self-criticism, but have not addressed the question of primary and secondary identity, i.e., which figure is primary and which secondary. Although the inner critics are far more often secondary than primary, this is not true for all cases. The structure of primary and secondary has to be established in each individual situation by observing the signals and their context in detail.

It is not necessarily clear from the signal itself which of the two figures is primary and which secondary. It depends on the specific process and the identity of the client which of the two sides of a signal belongs to the subjective experience and is closer to awareness, meaning belonging to the primary identity. To determine the structure, we have to explore the context around the signal.

A signal is a communication between two parts. Watzlawick describes communication as having two aspects: the content aspect and the relationship aspect (1982, p.55). The relationship aspect is expressed in the metacommunication of behavior, that is, the way I do or say something. To use the example of hitting the head and saying "what a dummy I am," again, it depends very much on how I do it and how I say it. If I say it in a whine and suffering voice, the victim is

probably closer to my awareness and the critic more secondary. My subjective experience will be of the one who is being criticized. If I say it with a hard and reproachful undertone in my voice, the critic might be closer to my identity and the sufferer more secondary. The sentence "I hate myself" can also have two different structural backgrounds. If I underline the word "myself" then I will identify more with being hated and as the victim. If the word "hate" is more amplified, then my primary identity is closer to being the hater.

A manifest signal or sentence leads us to the content and the two dreamfigures involved in the drama, while the HOW of the signal indicates the relationship of the individual to the dreamfigures, specifically whether they are more primary or more secondary.

A third point in a process where the critic emerges is right at the edge. Many of the edge figures are actually critical figures. These figures are against the secondary parts, but are not experienced as the primary identity. They often stand for collective and moral ideas, and are frequently associated with parents or teachers. The edge figure criticizes the secondary behavior and thus prevents the individual from integrating it into the primary process. These figures therefore come up around the edge. The client is about to do something, or just went over an edge and suddenly stops and says, "but I'm not supposed to do that," or "if I am like that nobody will ever like me again." If the critical edge figure

is not addressed during a process of crossing an edge, it will often come up later in the form of self reproaches or guilt feelings.

We have seen that the structural arrangement of self-criticism varies and that not all self-criticism has the same structure. Since the secondary figure is the one which needs encouragement and assistance in order to be integrated, different parts will need to be supported. We have to study the client and the specific manifestation of self-criticism carefully, and cannot assume if we recognize self-criticism that we know its structure.

In a case where the critic is primary and the therapist does not notice but tries to help the client change in the way the critic would like him or her to change, they will meet a lot of resistance. The therapist unconsciously becomes an accomplice of the inner critic. While falling into the inner critic's hands, the therapist may wonder why the therapy is not more successful.

A similar problem can occur if the critic is secondary and the therapist supports the primary victim by encouraging him or her over a long period not to believe the critic. By only siding with the client against the critic, the therapist prevents the client from accessing the energy, creativity, wisdom, and power contained in the secondary inner critic. In these cases the critic may become even stronger or shift to deeper levels which are even less accessible to the individual.

As we have seen, the inner self-critical drama often happens without any conscious participation on the part of the individual, and the therapist will have to pick up the self-criticism in spontaneous secondary signals. I would like to mention some frequent manifestations of signals which may indicate a drama between the critic and a criticized one. It is clear that there are thousands of possible signals, and the cases I talk about here are examples, not an exhaustive representation of the possibilities.

## Critics in the Auditory Channel

The auditory channel consists of verbal content, and sound or noises. Critics may come up in the auditory channel as verbal asides which people make, like "oh what a dummy I am," "how stupid of me," or "that is really strange." Sometimes the people also hear voices internally without speaking aloud. These internal voices may make comments like "you know that you shouldn't do that," "I always knew that you couldn't do it," or "what a disappointment you are." These soundless critics may become manifest in many kinds of interrupted actions and sentences.

## Critics in the Visual Channel

In the visual channel we either look or are seen. A critic in the visual channel may appear as an imaginary critical onlooker, or a critical figure in a fantasy or a dream. In the case where the critic is more primary, the client may say

89

"that looks really stupid." If the critic is rather secondary the client will feel observed. I remember a woman who was very disturbed by the video camera in the room. When I asked her to go behind the camera herself, we discovered that she imagined a figure behind the camera who was observing her and was critical of the way she behaved.

## Critics in the Movement Channel

Critics in the movement channel can come up either in our own spontaneous gestures and movements or in movements that happen to us from outside. An example of the first type is an angry slapping of one's thighs or an impatient tapping of the foot. The second type of critic may manifest itself in little accidents like hitting one's head against a post or tripping and falling. Which part is more secondary and which more primary has to be investigated in each individual case. I remember a woman who had a very specific and especially careful walk. By unraveling this movement pattern she found that it was in reaction to a sleeping critical figure whom she did not want to wake up, thus attracting its attention.

## Critics in the Proprioceptive Channel

Inner criticism that is using the proprioceptive channel to express itself can emerge as any body symptom. I have seen different kinds of headaches or tightenings in the chest area, like asthma, which were related to internal criticism.

90

Proprioceptive criticism may also appear as a general body feeling, like being heavy or feeling pushed down, as in the above example of myself hiking in the mountains.

Critics in the Relationship Channel

If a secondary critic appears in the relationship channel, we will experience our partner or another familiar person as critical of us. We perceive her or him as being against us or not liking something about us. If I feel criticized in relationship, I will be ready to interpret each frown or any kind of signal as proof of the critical attitude of my partner. Or I will fantasize, even when my partner is not around, that he or she will disapprove of my behavior. The relationship becomes a channel for my own inner experiences. The inner critic suddenly becomes, from a subjective standpoint, an outer one. I project my inner critic onto another person. This can happen completely independent of the partner's actual opinion, meaning that it is only a projection. The case of the other partner actually having a criticism will be discussed in the next chapter on inner and outer critics.

I remember demonstrating how to pick up your inner critics in another person at one of my seminars. I arbitrarily picked the participant who had happened to sit across the room from me. Looking at her, I tried to fantasize about what she could be critical of. There was something around her eyes that caught my attention. I suddenly thought, with no further indication from her, that she did not like the way I was dressed that

day. Later on I remembered that in the morning in front of the mirror I had criticized the color combination of my clothing, but I ignored it because I was late and went out anyhow. Now this opinion came back, and I picked it up again in this seminar participant. Later on I asked the participant and found that she had not thought about my clothes at all, but was trying hard to follow my instructions and was looking more questioning than critical. I was projecting onto her.

## Critics in the World Channel

The world channel seems to be a preferred channel for critical figures. In the case of an imagined public that would not agree with us we might hear sentences like "one doesn't do that," or "nobody would like it."

Also any kind of performance in a public situation can constellate our inner critics. We fear and imagine that there will be some critic out in the public. Who does not know the experience of walking into a restaurant, or into any group, and suddenly becoming self conscious or painfully aware about the way we look today? This could be one of the factors behind why we often do not feel well in groups. Groups often constellate our repressed inner critics in a painful and immediate way.

Other worldly events can also be experienced as a criticism: a thunderstorm or car accident may be interpreted as the world being against you or God punishing you for something.

The channel question during the unfolding process

As mentioned in the chapter on dreamfigures, secondary dreamfigures appear and express themselves through sending signals or double signals in different channels. As a therapist you pick up on one of these manifest signals, and by amplifying it and processing it discover the two figures involved in the signal. In doing this, other channels will often have to be added to the original one to reach a full sense of the dreamfigures. One might ask the client how this dreamfigure talks or moves, or help him or her to get a clearer vision of it by asking how it looks and what kind of clothes it wears. Getting to know the figure means meeting the whole personality in its environment. At this stage of the process, several or all of the different channels may be involved at once, and the question of channels is no longer useful.

# VI. INNER AND OUTER CRITICS

This chapter will go into details about critics in the relationship and world channels, meaning critics that appear outside of us in the form of other people or groups. So far, the possibility of projecting the inner critics onto another had been mentioned. This is only the beginning. In some cases, there is a real outer critic, a person who is actually critical of you, not just someone you project the critic on.

It is important to clarify that I am very much aware that certain social and socioeconomic situations inflict and support inner criticism and inferiority feelings. My goal is by no means to deny this fact. Although I feel a great deal of pain over social inequalities, and a pressure to change the social situation, my goal in this work is not to go more deeply into this dynamic. Rather, I will explore the possibility of finding ways for each individual to deal with his or her current situation and to gain as much as possible from personal circumstances. In the beginning of this work I quoted Castaneda's story in which don Juan used his most difficult and life threatening situation as member of a suppressed minority for his inner growth and warriorship. This endeavor also allowed him to finally overcome his external worldly tyrant, although he never addressed the question of social inequality or change. It could be that attempts for social change, that is world and relationship work, and work

on the individual inner situation are interdependent. If this is the case, both levels would have to be addressed in order for genuine change to occur.

In this chapter I will address and clarify the interplay and possible alliances between inner and outer tyranny and criticism.

## DREAMING UP YOUR INNER CRITICS

When we are confronted with outer criticism, the concept of projection is no longer enough. There is a real conflict with an outer critic. Often these outer critics are related to the inner critics, behaving like internal figures. How can we explain this unusual phenomenon?

The idea of "dreaming up" goes beyond the concept of projection and explains why a person is not only projected on but may actually suddenly behave or feel like an internal dreamfigure from another person. My own repressed inner critic can dream you up to have critical thoughts about me. I will not go into the details of the mechanics of dreaming up here, but just mention that most dreaming-up phenomena happen when a person unconsciously picks up another person's double signals. For a complete explanation, see Goodbread (submit. manuscript). Mindell also gives a clear example of dreaming up in the case of a student therapist who presented the problem of feeling very critical toward a client of his:

> He [the student therapist] showed me a video-tape of a
> discussion with her [the client], and we soon found the
> problem. He began to dislike her when she sent of
> signals of inflation. In other words, his negative

feelings were dreamed-up reactions to her signals of inflation. As soon as he realized this, he understood himself to be a channel for her dreaming process, and could sympathize more completely with her negative dreamfigures. They came into being together with their dreamed-up counterparts in this woman's reality in order to balance her inflation. (1985a, p.42)

As discussed earlier, the inner and unconscious and therefore unrepresented dreamfigures have a pressure to appear in consciousness, and constellate themselves in order to come into awareness. One way they manage to appear is by "dreaming up" the people in the environment. This means that people around us become parts of our own inner dream field. When others enter our dreamfield they take the position of the most unconscious and least represented part. Real people suddenly start to behave like figures from a dream we have had at night, or like the dreamfigures we can find behind body symptoms.

The phenomenon of dreaming up and projection does not occur in only one direction. It often occurs on the side of both people simultaneously, which makes it much more complicated. I would like to quote another example from Mindell:

For example, a therapist may feel that his client should be developing more feeling while the client resists this change because he feels it is not right for him. The client dreams that he is plagued by a negative figure who is trying to make him into a feeling person while the therapist dreams about developing more feeling. Here, the therapist has become a negative figure for the client while the client has become a negative dream figure for the therapist who himself is in need of more feeling. Both are projecting and dreaming each other up! (1985a, p.43)

Nobody likes being confronted by edges and painful experiences. If we have internal critics, we try to repress them as long as possible and therefore these critics become secondary and unrepresented dreamfigures.

The world and relationship channels are differentiated from others by the fact that we are much more aware of the critics in these channels than in any other. In fact, the drama in these channels becomes much more immediate, and we are less able to repress it or overlook it. It is much harder to forget a relationship problem then an unpleasant dream, and, in contrast to symptoms, there are no drugs which alleviate the pain of relationship troubles.


INNER OR OUTER?

This discussion raises the question of whether all the criticism that happens in relationships or groups is a matter of projections and the dreamed-up phenomena of our own inner critics, or if "real" criticism between two people actually exists. This question itself emerges from a causal way of thinking. It is a question which seeks the real cause behind interpersonal criticism and problems in general. It is of the same nature as Columbus's question: which came first, the egg or the chicken? The question of which is the initial cause, if the inner critic causes the outer or the outer triggers the inner critic, and which dreams up the other, is actually not a useful question or perspective. Regardless of the answer, there is no difference in the subjective experience. The question of interest here is a more finalistic one: what to do

with the critical drama; how to solve it and make it, if possible, a useful and meaningful experience for both sides involved. The drama takes place in a field involving two or more people. Whether we look at it as a dreamed up inner process or as a relationship process is a question of viewpoint. The process itself happens between two people, and the relevant question is who will be able first to pick it up, take over the responsibility, and process the information either internally or within the relationship. From this perspective all of us are channels for each other and for the common dreamfield between and around us which is trying to become aware. If one individual picks up and processes the field, she or he will often not only relieve the field and the other partner but also receive the benefit of being able to use the information for personal development.

The decision to try to work on the inner critic or to work with the outer real person in the relationship is thus a matter of the moment. In order to be whole, we will have to work out the drama within ourselves and in the relationship. Taking everything only internally is one-sided and dismisses the other person as a social being, and focusing only on the relationship neglects the need for individual growth and development. The two perspectives must be balanced.

Working on one level will often also influence the other. Deciding to do internal work has effects on the partner's opinion about you, too, especially when it is done out loud in front of the partner, even if your partner does not know about

it. You will be more congruent and no longer send double signals. The same effect is true in reverse; working on the criticism in the relationship will not only make your relationship better and deeper but also influence your own relationship to your inner critic. It is beyond the scope of this work to focus in depth on the relationship aspect of criticism, which would be another dissertation unto itself. I would like to briefly address here the interface and overlap between the two aspects.

## FACING OUTER CRITICISM

Outer critical voices are easier to deal with if they do not touch a sensitive spot inside the person. Amy and Thomas Harris write: "We are convinced that nobody can hurt us, that means our feelings, if they don't succeed in activating our parental ego which then will attack us internally." (1985, p. 69) I agree that a large part of the pain of outer criticism comes from its ability to amplify internal criticism. If somebody tells you that you are too skinny while you yourself feel too fat, you will not feel hurt. In fact, it might even make you happy and you would take it as a compliment. In other words, outer critics who do not pull the same strings as inner ones will not be perceived as critics. Most of the time, however, we are strongly affected by outer criticism. It can be a very painful experience. In these cases where we are strongly affected, we can almost always find an inner critic that shares the opinion of the outer one. This can be observed in that often even after we have left the outer

situation, the criticism goes on as internal dialogue. If we do not know this inner critic already then we will not be able to freely react to the outer attack. Our reaction is an autonomous reaction, that means that only one part of us is involved and not our totality of parts. We either sink or simply attack back. If we do know about this criticism already we will be able to face the situation with all of our parts, like the hurt one, the one that wants to learn, the one that wants revenge etc.. Getting attacked, especially in front of a public, can become a challenge to which you look forward. It is a chance to show your totality, test your warriorship and try to create something useful out of it for both of you, you and your attacker.

This also lets us easily explain the surprising findings of Lemelin, Piccinin, Chislett and McCarry (1986) in their research study on proficiency in giving and taking criticism. They found that people who reported higher "social anxiety" and greater "difficulties in taking criticism" were significantly better in taking it. It is possible that these participants simply knew more about their own inner criticism and fears.

The ability to react and pick up outer criticism, even when it is well meant, and maybe turn it into something useful, thus depends on one's degree of self-knowledge, development and competency in dealing with your inner critics.

## AN EXAMPLE

A colleague of mine had just begun to teach and was still very insecure about her teaching abilities, and felt criticized internally about teaching. When she started her class, there was a lot of tension and a bad mood in the room because the participants felt treated unjustly because their class had been separated from another more advanced track. As a result, the participants were not really involved in the class and moved a lot and could not really listen to her. The teacher, out of her own insecurity, could not allow herself to pick this up and become aware of it. In a normal state, she could have interrupted her program and asked the students what was happening. Normally she would also have done this, but at the time it would have put her and her abilities too much into question. Because of her own inner criticism she assumed that the class was not happy with her teaching and repressed the feedback. Eventually the class actually did attack her for not being able to process what was going on.

It takes an almost foolish amount of courage to be able to listen to any criticism, inner or outer. To do this in a public situation seems almost impossible. It takes a great deal of flexibility to be willing to listen to, accept and admit criticism, and to then learn from it. Our ability to deal with outer criticism depends very much on the degree to which we get along with our inner critics.

## VII.  UNDER ATTACK

### THE PROCESS ASPECT

So far we have spoken about the inner critic as if it were in a fixed and unchanging state.  The simple attempt to explain an individual's experience by splitting up the parts and representing them with dreamfigures, which are momentary but nevertheless static pictures of a a dynamic experience, is in contrast with the process idea.  Although the dreamfigure has the potential to modify and transform itself, simply naming it turns it into a description of a momentary state within a process.  States are useful descriptions of processes as long as we are aware that they are only the momentary "stations" of the moving "process train" (Mindell, 1985a, p. 11).  Dreamfigures, as figures which appear throughout the stream of a process, are imbedded within the unraveling of a whole story or scenario, and are analogous to a single frame picture taken from an entire movie.

Here I want to introduce a process idea about inner critics through the use of picture stories, which better represent the movie-like quality of a process or drama by illustrating its inner dynamics and interplay.

Before introducing my examples of inner criticism comic strips, I will refer to other psychotherapeutic systems which use story creation without interpreting them analytically and then take a quick look at the application of drawings within the therapeutic process to detect inner psychic patterns.

102

To use stories and storytelling and creating is nothing new in psychology. According to Joseph Campell (1978), a myth opens up practical ways for people to understand and live the different phases and crises of life which are common to us all.

## THE USE OF STORY TELLING

The psychiatrist Richard Gardner (1971) used story telling techniques in his work with disturbed children. He asked children to tell a story with a beginning, a middle, an end and a moral. Gardner focused on the central topics in the stories, which for him represented unsolved tensions and conflicts. He then retold a similar story which dealt with the same conflicts. His stories differed in that the acting persons found better solutions to the central conflicts. This method gives the child the chance to find better stories and solutions for personal problems. Milton Erikson (1982) used a similar technique. He did not ask his clients to produce stories themselves, but told them stories which suggested an alternative problem solving pattern for the client's specific problem. The process-oriented approach with the comic strip differs from Gardner's and Erikson's approach where they created the new story and presented it as a suggested solution to his clients. There method does not access the problem solving potential within the client him or herself.

CREATING ALTERNATIVE STORIES

Feinstein and Krippner have a similar concept, the "personal myth." They define a personal myth as the pattern of personal theories and cognitive structures by which we understand and interpret ourselves and the events in the world. The personal myth can help the individual to create new patterns and to reconcile conflicting personality parts. Therefore, these personal myths serve the same purposes on the individual level as the collective myths do on the collective level.

Feinstein and Krippner's specific method consists of creating new, "anti-myths" by asking clients to recall certain night dreams and then actively create new stories which bring solutions to the problem created by the old myth or dream. Thus, the less useful aspects of the old myths are reformulated. A dialectic process which will create something new and bring the two myth together is created by the tension between the myth and the anti-myth. In process work the method of comic strips which I will present function more to create in a fun way some introspective awareness around the topic and to introduce possible solutions. The story is not in and of itself the therapeutic act.


USING DRAWINGS IN THE THERAPEUTIC PROCESS

The idea of having clients draw their conflicts has also been developed and used by Nelly Stahel (1969). Stahel used drawing as a diagnostic medium within the therapeutic process. She began her research with children, asking them to draw their families, either as animal or as ordinary human

families. Later she also had her adult clients draw pictures of their fears of life. She used these pictures as a diagnostic tool and found that they were able to provide basic information and valuable hints for the treatment. But a conflict is, as mentioned above, not a state but a passage through a series of different states. Single pictures show only one link within the chain of constant change. Drawing only one picture, as Stahel does, is like cutting one picture out of a whole movie. These single pictures are comparable to some of the third frames in the process-oriented comic strips. A single picture can give some information about the content of the movie, but it misses the dynamics and their development. She had her clients draw several pictures at different stages of the therapeutic process and found that the pictures would document the progress over time.


DRAWING THE PROCESS OF THE INNER CRITIC IN COMIC STRIPS

The picture stories or comic strip* which follow were created by participants in two workshops I gave on the subject of the inner critic. I asked them to draw an attack by an inner critic and find a solution for the attack. The clients were given the blank access instructions to draw six empty frames. I deliberately kept my instructions as open as possible and did not tell the clients how to proceed. This differs

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* The idea of using the tool of the comic strip as a therapeutic tool was introduced by Mindell during a seminar on childhood dreams and life myths in 1988. He asked the participants to draw their dreams and then to develop them further by drawing them in a series of pictures.

from Stahel's work. She asked her clients to draw their fear of life by drawing the fears as animals. My instructions are blank accesses which help the individual create the content according to their individual experiences and fantasies. This is like telling a client to go ahead and dream about a certain topic, asking them to dream in the present moment of drawing. Jung did something similar in his method of active imagination where he asked his clients to go on with their dreams by imaginative dialogues with the figures that appeared to them at night. (Ammann, 1984)

The instructions I gave for this picture stories where as follows:

1. Take a piece of paper and make six empty frames on it.

2. In the first frame draw yourself. It does not have to be an artistic drawing: a rough sketch is fine.

3. In the second frame, draw the inner critic as it approaches you.

4. In the third frame, show yourself in the middle of the confrontation with the inner critic.

5. In the next two empty frames you have the chance to find a solution to the conflict between the two of you.

6. The last picture shows you again after the whole process is completed. Do not think about it too long, but just draw it as it comes to you while drawing.

## THE COMIC STRIPS

I will now present 10 of my favorite examples to illustrate the unique individual experience of the inner critic and the differences in the personal experiences of the attack and the reaction to it. Some of these stories are quite artistic; others are funny, and very enjoyable to read. The reader may note the variations in the stories and their solutions.

The reactions illustrated here range from aggression and fighting, to depression and withdrawal to an almost suicidal state. All of the stories illustrate very individual approaches and solutions to problems, although not all of the positive solutions were found within the picture stories themselves. The first example has no solution, but I have included it in order to give a complete representation of the created stories. Nothing has been changed in the stories themselves. Titles have been added, generated from written German notes on the pictures or from the participants' verbal comments. Numbers have been added when the sequence was insufficiently clear.
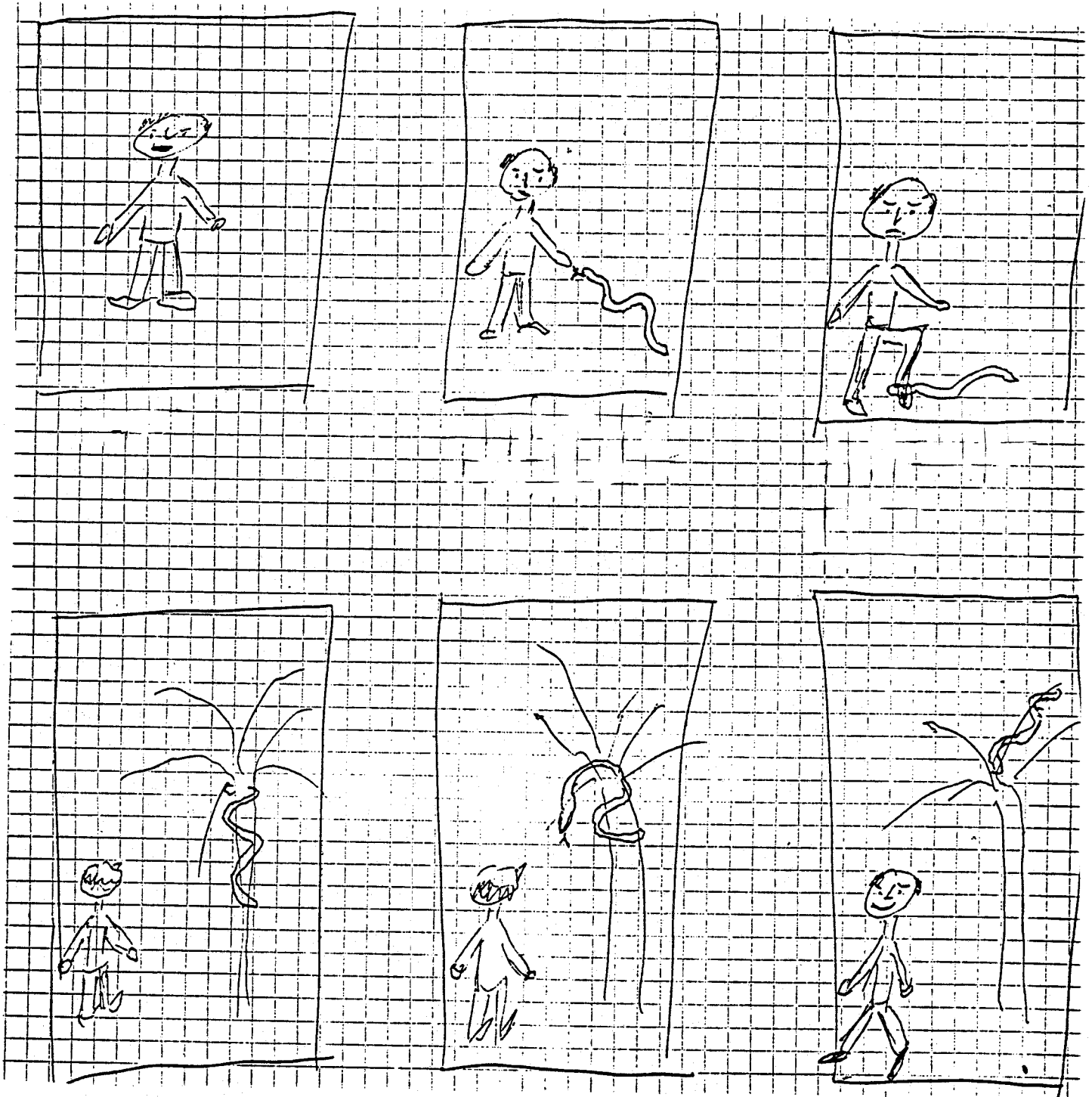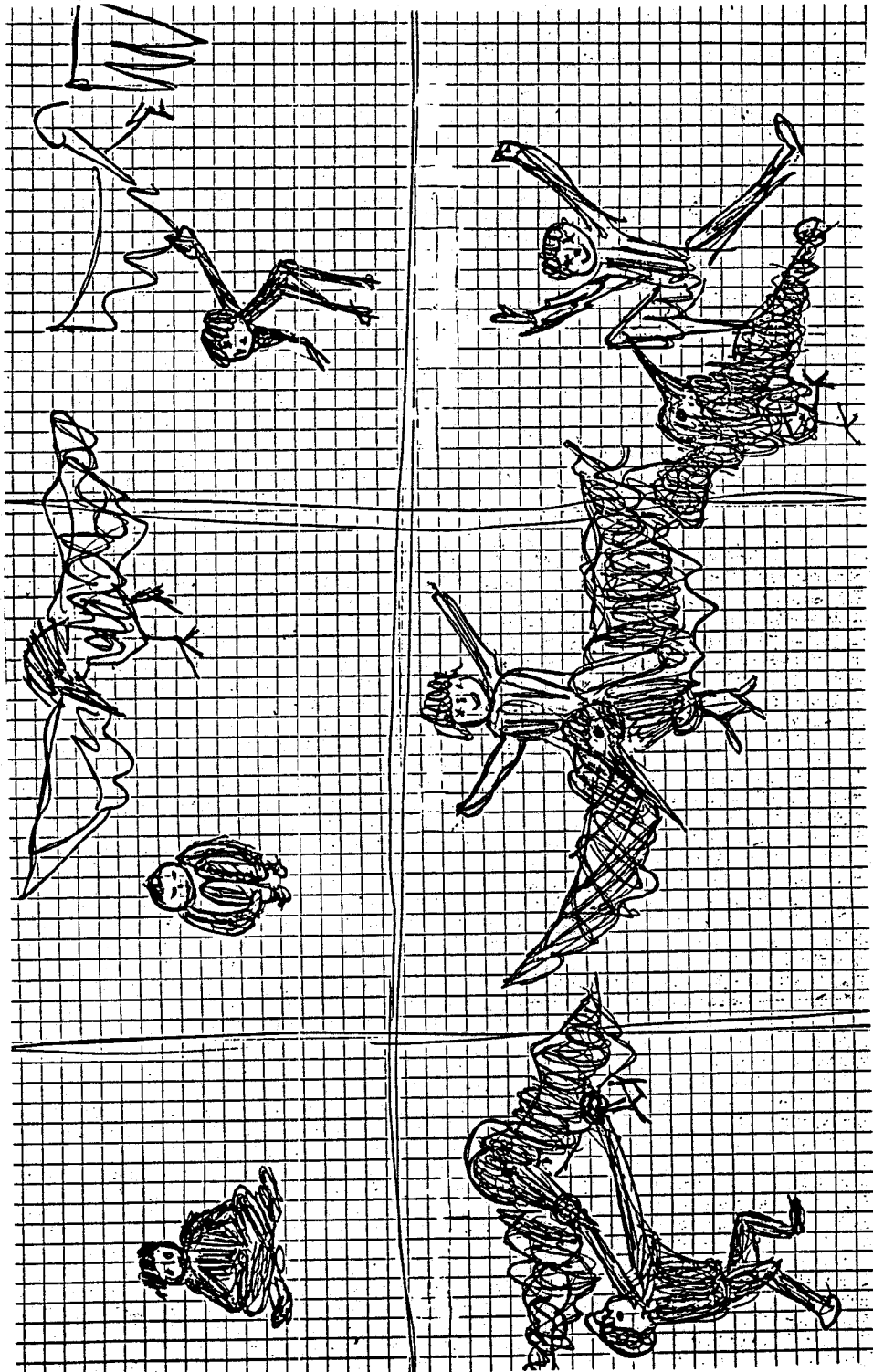
1. Being defeated
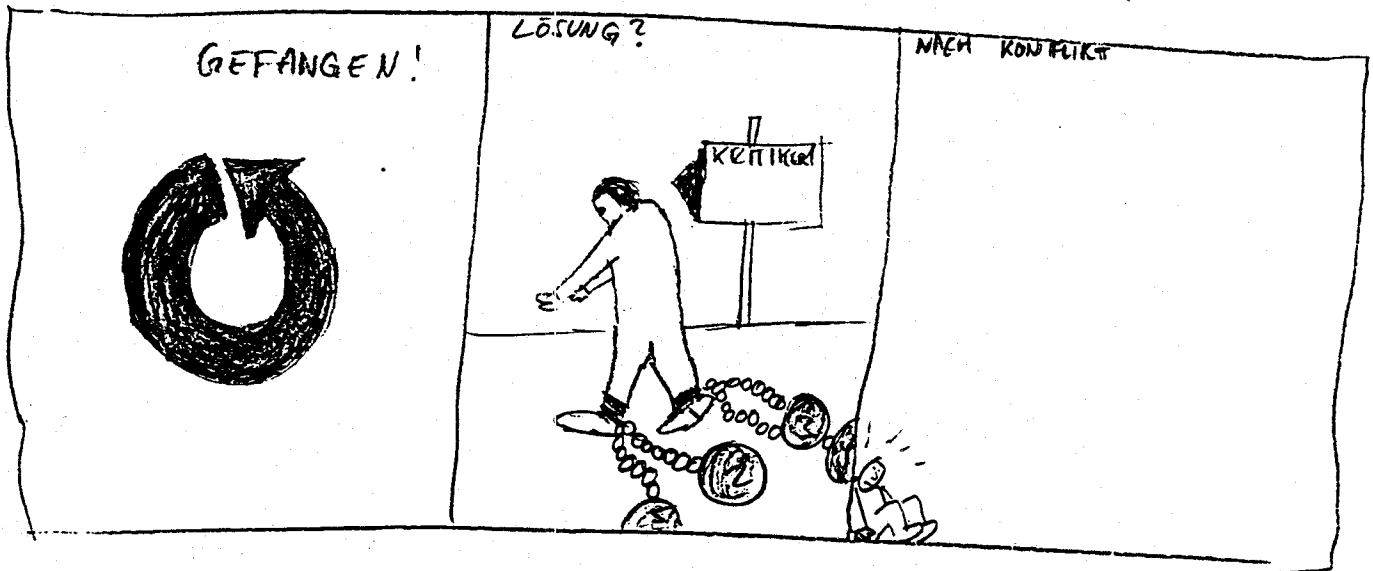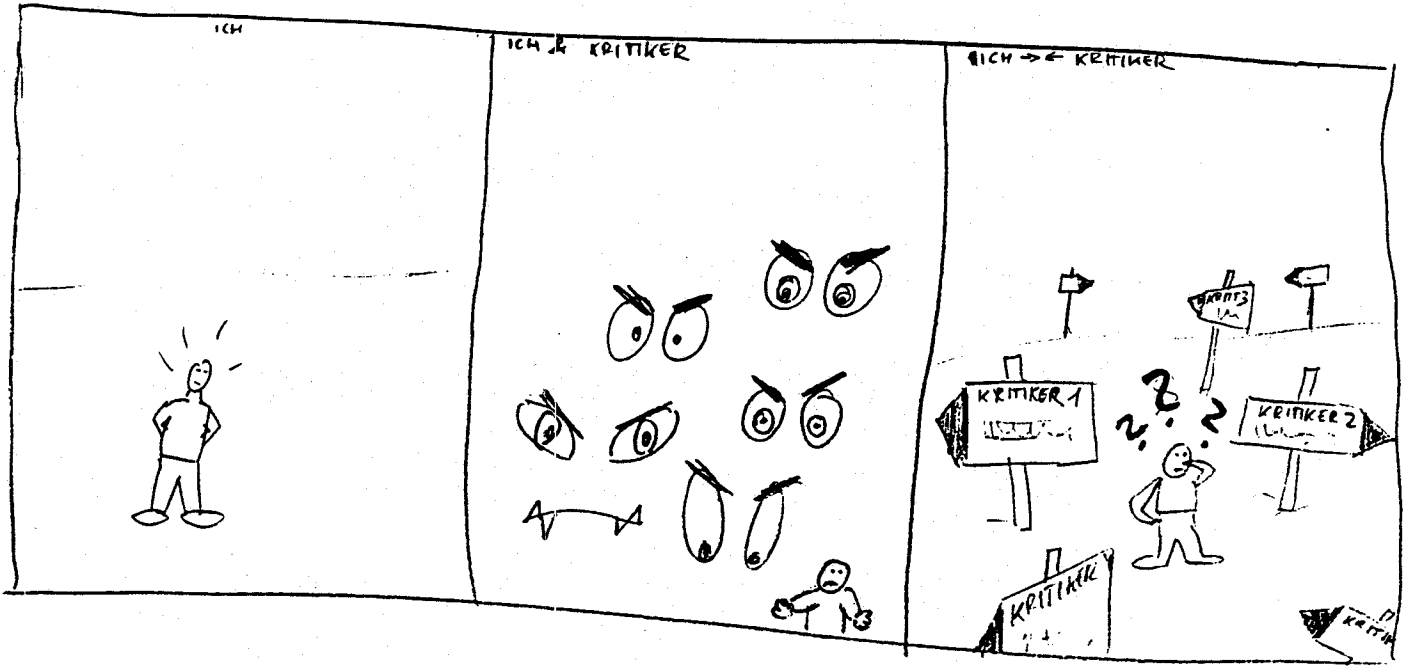
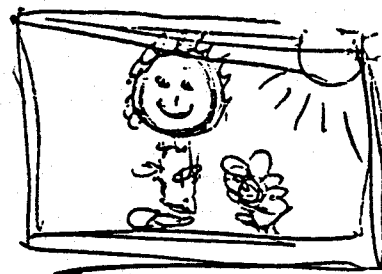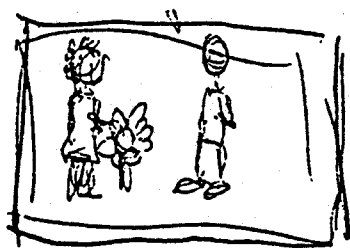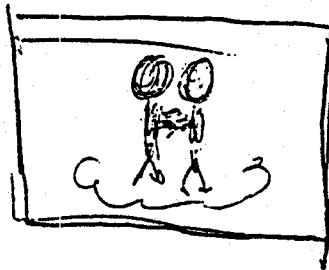2. The critic as a materializing and dematerializing creature
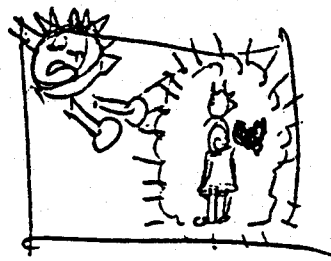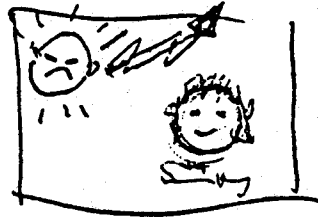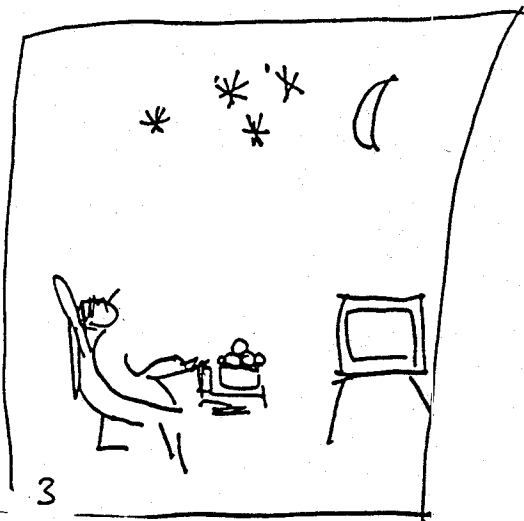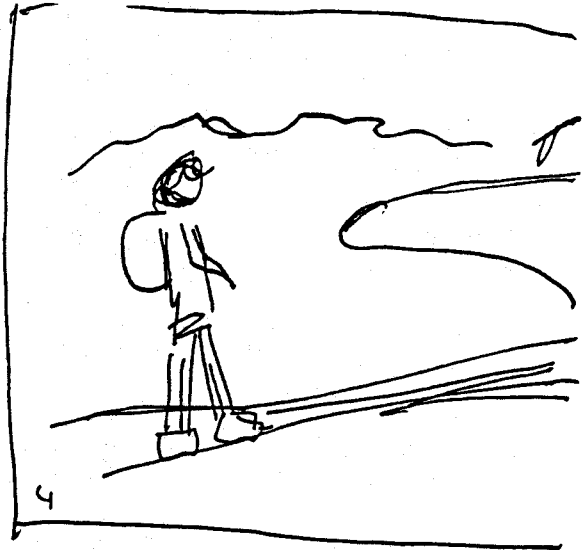


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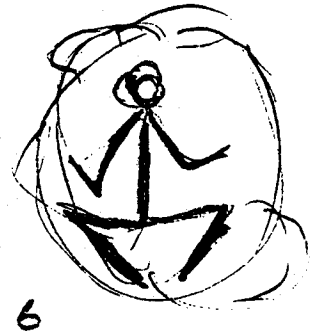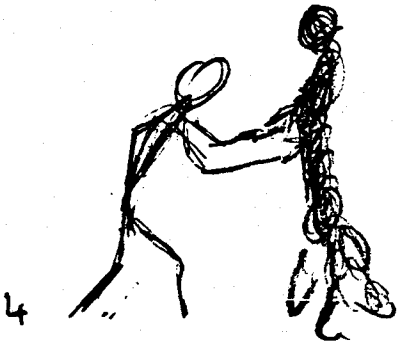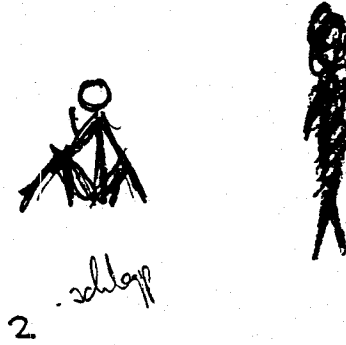
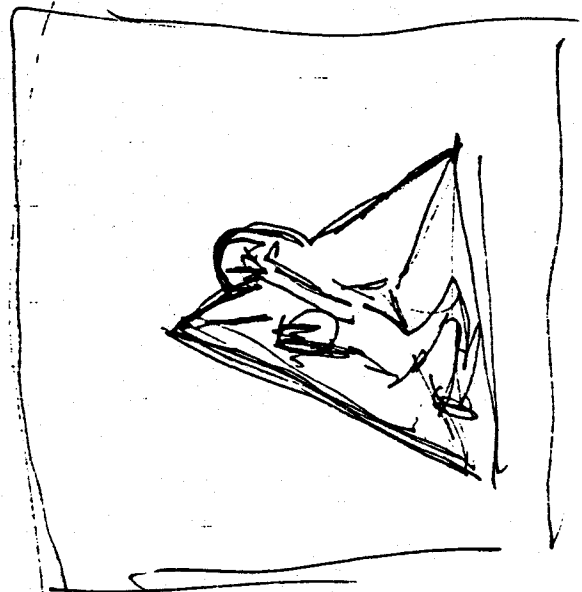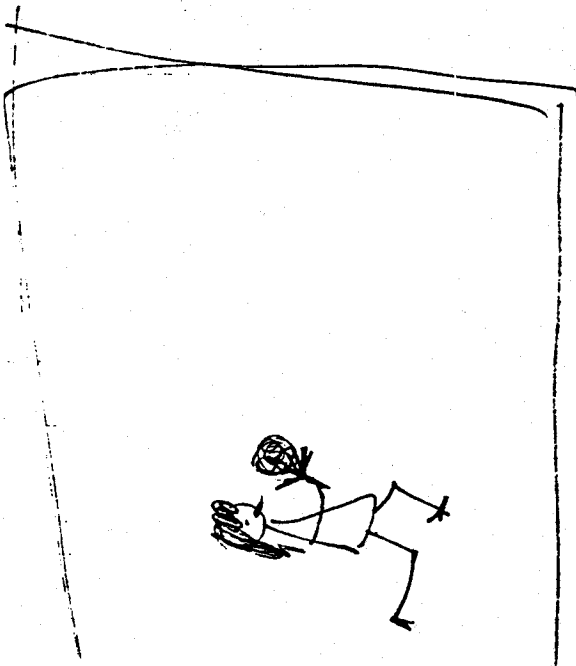3. Raising the position of the sneaky critic
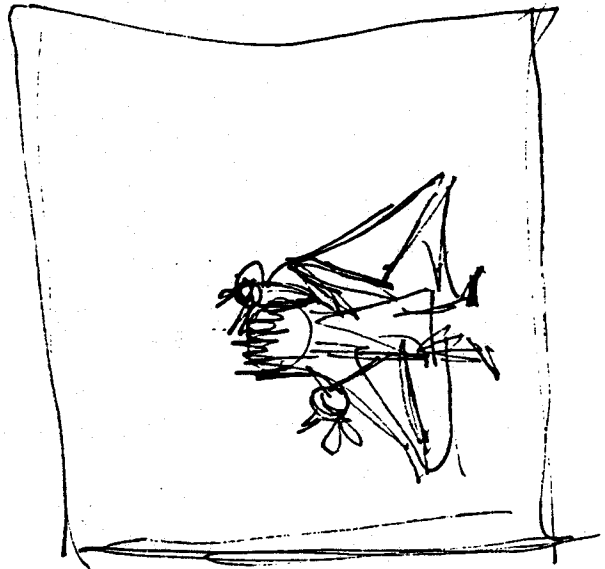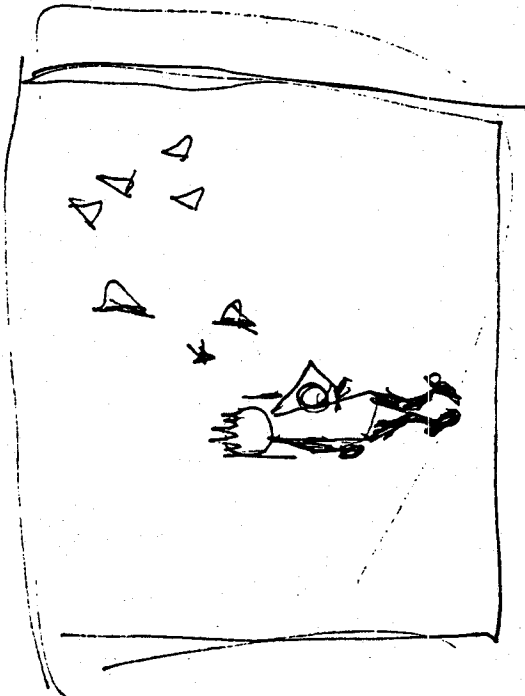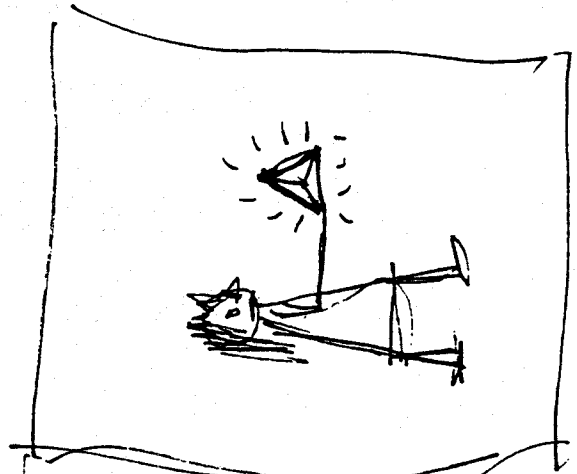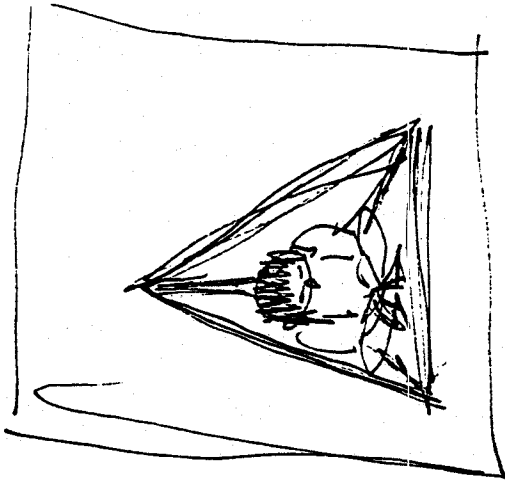
4. The dance with the black bird

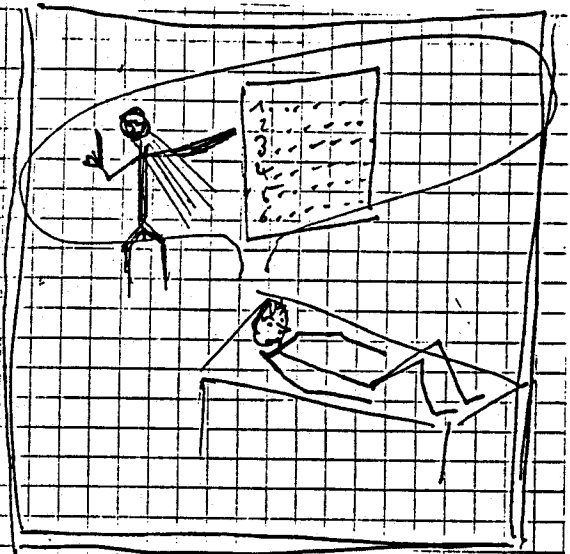5. An angry Zeus throwing thunderbolts

6. The change in the atmosphere

7. Being locked into the pyramid
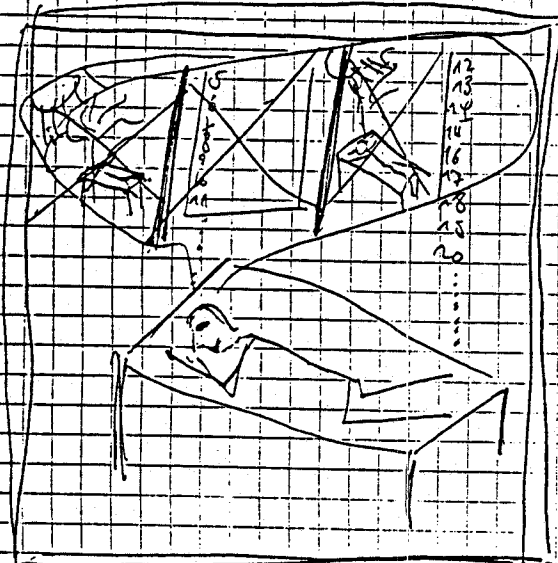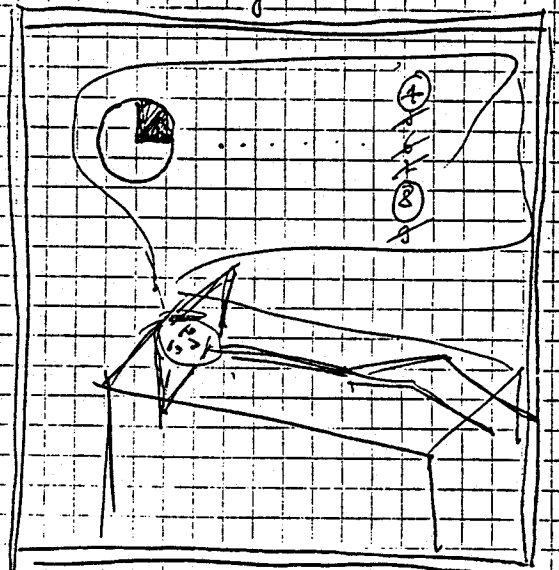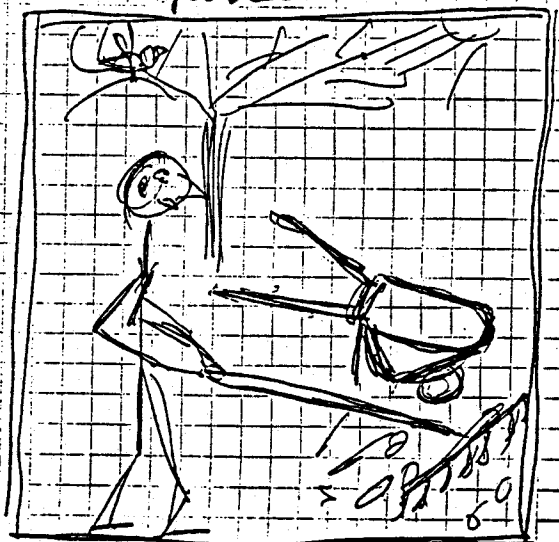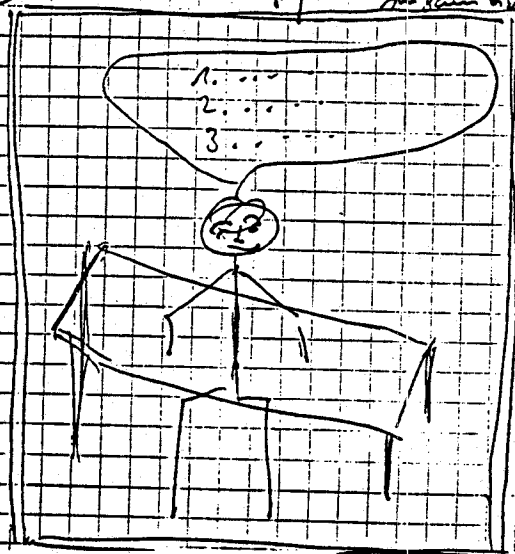
9. The gift of a heart-shaped amulet
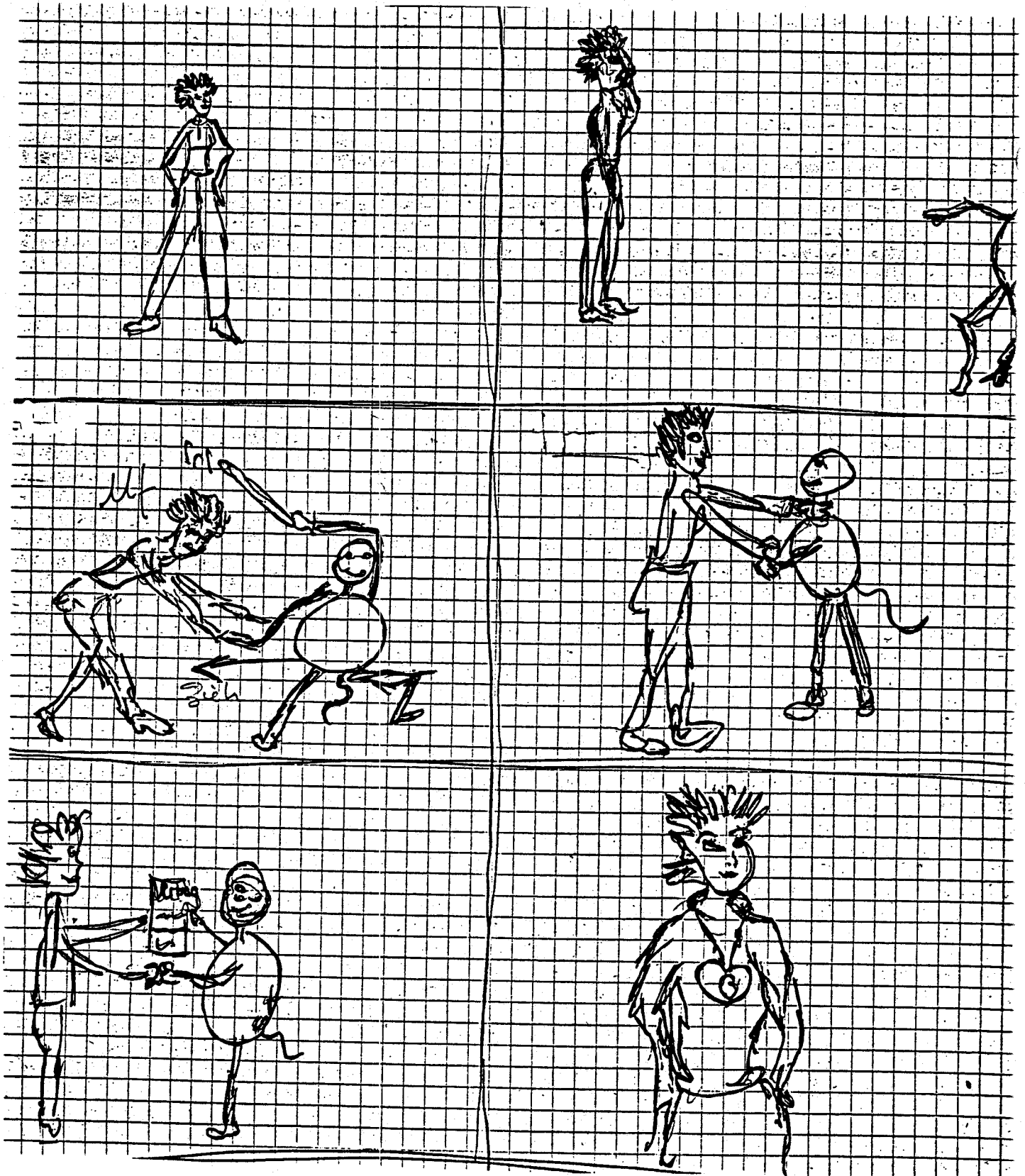
Boss, I have enough

O.K. Boss, let's make a deal!

117
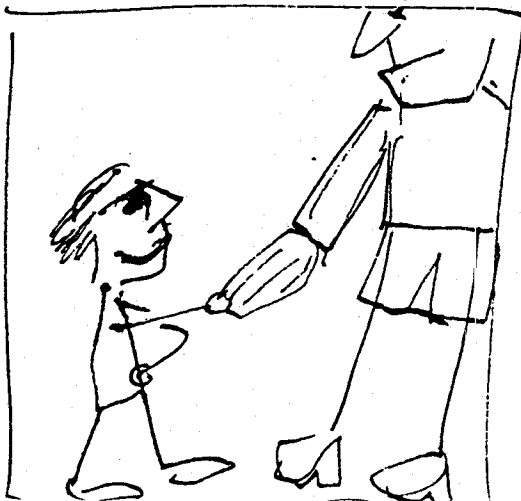
DISCUSSION

It is interesting to see the variety both in the way the critics are portrayed and in the kind of attacks they make. In each of these comic strips, the participant chose to represent the inner critics in a different form. Some spontaneously chose the form of an animal. In these cases, the third picture in the series, is similar to the animal/human pictures in Stahel's book about the fear of life (case 19, 21 and 22). Other participants experienced the critics as people or fantasy figures, clouds, weather change, geometrical forms or simply eyes or magnetic waves coming through the air. This diversity shows that the term "inner critic" is itself a blank access, and not everybody has the same inner experience.

The differences in the kind of attacks reveal the different channels in which the critic functions, and the methods of processing the critic and finding a solution also vary in regard to channels. Some people listen to the critic (auditory channel); others threaten them back or make a contract or a deal with the inner critic (relationship channel); and others find a way out of the dilemma by leaving the scene and seeking seclusion in nature (world channel).

Inner experiences are very individual, and we as therapists should not assume we know what our clients are talking about when they use words like depression, pain, sadness, love or inner critic. These are all are blank accesses which need to be filled in exact detail by the individual.

While my instructions did not suggest that the person appear to be different in the last picture, all of the picture series actually do show a change form the first picture to the last. (The first and last pictures show the client before and after the battle with the inner critic.) Exactly what the changes consist of is different each time. Some of the artists look different as people, i.e. they appear in a more dynamic or centered body position. Others gained some actual thing or are suddenly no longer alone in the picture.

Since I am convinced that solutions to problems have to be experienced directly in order to be useful, I did not interpret the picture stories of my seminar participants, but later worked with their personal and direct experiences. Although I introduce these pictures here to demonstrate the process idea, this exercise was actually created in order to present the topic of the inner critic, to bring some awareness to the conflict with these inner figures, and to introduce the idea or possibility of finding both a useful solution and a meaning for this internal battle. It was interesting for me and the participants, at a later point after they had processed and experienced their conflicts in a more direct and Process-oriented way, to go back to the pictures and be able to detect some similarities between the stories and the personal work. Often we found that the suggested solutions in the pictures actually did anticipate the results of the personal work. But only now, after having had an experience,

was the client able to make the connection between the drawings and his or her personal life, and to understand and interpret the pictures him or herself.

I would like to mention the example of the woman who quite spontaneously drew herself in the last picture as having gained a heart shaped amulet which is hanging from her neck (comic 9). Through her personal work afterwards, which did not even start with the experience of an inner critic and in which she did not refer directly to the picture story, she found that the confrontation with her inner negative figure allowed her to develop much more feeling and love, or heart, for others and herself. She still needed the personal work to make this already suggested solution accessible to her. It was the actual experience which provided her with the details of how to go about acquiring heart.

In this chapter we took a look at the process of the inner criticism drama in a rather fun and superficial way. The next chapter will discuss the general strategies for approaching inner conflicts in a Process-oriented way and making them useful for yourself. Chapter IX will then go on to the concrete application of process work to individual cases of critical inner figures.

# VIII. THE ATTITUDE OF STALKING

Thus far we have spoke about the inner critic, the critic as a process, and the necessity of utilizing criticism. The title of this dissertation includes "stalking" the inner critic. In this chapter I will investigate this phenomenon in general terms, before discussing the individual cases in depth in the next chapter.

I borrowed the concept of stalking from Castaneda's books, in which he speaks about becoming a seer, or master of stalking, by stalking the petty tyrant. Don Juan's teaching has been applied to the idea of individuation, and the path of a warrior or seer has also been compared to the individuation methods and ideas in psychology (see e.g., Mindell, unpubl. manuscript, a). Therefore, I will not go into this discussion in detail but will limit myself to explaining don Juan's terms about the seer in psychological terms.

Becoming a seer is the final goal of Castaneda's apprenticeship with don Juan. Mindell describes the idea of a seer in psychological terms in his manuscript:

> The seer ... is the archetype of the fluid and
> enlightened individual who can act like an average man,
> analyse like a hunter, dive in like a warrior, dwell in
> the other world like a sorcerer, and laugh like a mad man
> at all the other types because he knows they are just
> ways of being, none is any better than the others.
> (Unpubl. manuscript, a, p.22)

121

This understanding of the seer is very similar to Tart's (1986, p.18) psychological definition of enlightenment, the final goal of many Eastern traditions. He says that enlightenment is knowing about the different possible states of consciousness, being able to voluntarily switch between them according to one's life situation, and being able to use all the resources within any one state. Jung's (1939) concept of individuation is also similar: he sees individuation as a process of going back and forth between conscious and unconscious material, and the ability to access, use and possibly merge these two areas in a meaningful way rather than simply being flooded or taken over by unconscious material.

The encounter with the petty tyrant is one of the most effective ways of becoming a seer. Don Juan says that the mistake an average man makes when he has to confront a petty tyrant is that he has no strategy to fall back on. Therefore, an apprentice has to develop the strategy of stalking in order to face the tyrant. This strategy, also called the strategy of impeccability, does not consist of pre-programmed steps. Don Juan does not tell us exactly what to do; rather, he tells us how to do it. The steps are actually required skills and inner attitudes which will prepare the ground for the encounter and make it possible for one not to be crushed and defeated by tyrants. Don Juan's strategy does not tell us what to do, but gives us the background belief system or the "how to" in applying tools. In psychology, we might call these steps inner attitudes or meta skills. These meta skills or attitudes are also crucial in working with and befriending the

inner critic. Let us take a look at these indispensable attitudes in don Juan's stalking strategy for petty tyrants and see if there are applications to processing the inner critics.

DON JUAN'S STALKING STRATEGY

The strategy consists of four steps:

> The first step is the decision to become an apprentice. After the apprentices change their views about themselves and the world around they take the second step and become warriors, which it to say, beings capable of the utmost discipline and control over themselves. The third step, after acquiring forbearance and timing is to become men of knowledge. When men of knowledge learn to see they have taken the fourth step and have become seers. (1984, p.36)

TO BECOME AN APPRENTICE: VIEWING YOURSELF AND THE WORLD DIFFERENTLY

In order to become an apprentice and to learn to see the world differently, you have to be interested not only in what is going on around you but also inside of you. You have to be willing to focus on and take responsibility in some sense for fantasies, pains, voices, relationship issues, little accidents or other worldly events; to make a decision that these are potentially meaningful aspects of your life and accept them as such. This means that a person has to decide on a specific kind of attitude which takes all these things seriously, believes that they can be utilized as signposts on the path to wholeness, and is willing to focus on and processes them. It does not matter if one does this with a

therapist or alone; it is the belief system itself that is important, and which leads one to view the world in a different light, namely as a meaningful place rather than a causal or accidental chain of events. To have this attitude would mean to become an apprentice to the "dreaming process" which manifests itself in different events and organizes or governs our life. Don Juan would call this dreaming process the "big tyrant" which is "the primal source of energy and the one and only ruler in the universe." (1984, p.30) In relationship to the inner critic this would mean believing that there is something meaningful in the criticism, being willing to find it, and to use the encoded information instead of wasting it or being distracted and seduced into only causal thinking, hopelessness and giving up.

## BECOMING A WARRIOR: CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE

If a hunter is stalking prey, he will try to discover as much as possible about it, all its routines and life habits. Stalking an inner critic is the same, and requires a great amount of control and discipline. You will have to gather all the information about your inner critic: What kind of a dreamfigure is it? What are its structural components, meaning: Are you identifying with it? Is it a secondary figure? Is it an edgefigure? In order to process and amplify it, you also have to know in which channel it appears. Once you have found the structure and the channel, which are the tracks of the critical dreamfigure, it might also be necessary to stalk the content aspects: What are the exact criticisms

124

and beliefs of this dreamfigure? What are its ideas and opinions? What are its weak and strong points and its style, habits and routines? It is easy to lose the tracks or space out. Then you might swim in your feelings or disappear in a mood or depression and hopelessness. It takes a lot of control and discipline to then keep up the stalking attitude and researcher's mind and to notice and see this depression as another upcoming curve in the road of the process which also needs to be investigated. You need to keep up your focus and spirit in order to research all of the subtleties and to bring the inner critic out into the open where it can bring its message and be helpful on your path to individuation.

"To gather all this information while they are beating you up is called discipline ... to tune the spirit when someone is trampling on you is called control." (Castaneda 1984, p.39). Focusing on something that can be very hurtful, negative and not appealing at first sight, not losing your temper but keeping up a good mood, requires discipline and control. As a warrior you are no longer simply suffering and trying to get away from your inner critic, but inviting it in and listening to it, moving it, feeling it, amplifying it and accompanying it in order to give it a chance to express itself and come to life with its whole potential. This is a true warrior's act and might not be for everybody.


BECOMING A MAN OF KNOWLEDGE: FORBEARANCE AND TIMING

"Forbearance is to wait patiently - no rush, no anxiety - simple, joyful holding back of what is due." (Castaneda 1984,

125

p.39) In order to work with an inner critic, you not only have to gather all the information, but you also have to learn to follow the unpredictable process through all its different loops, channel changes and edges. If you are impatient, trying to get somewhere, you have a goal and are no longer able to follow the unpredictable and sometimes strange nature of the process. But it seems that there are no short cuts; you will have to be able to persistently go along with the process. On the other hand, it is also important not to get lost in a endless cycle but to recognize the edges when they come up. Learning to follow the sometimes rocky and curved road of the dreambody, and having the sense of good timing to catch the edge once it appears requires a lot of patience.

The edge is a very important and magical moment, and it is not possible to say what will happen once you get there. When you do follow the road and unravel the process you are bound to come up to the edge at one point. This means that you will encounter the things which you are trying to avoid. The edge is where the most energy often lies, where critics are able to transform and where they will ask for integration. In order to make the secondary information useful rather than just having to suffer it, means that you will have to pick it up and make its energy yours. You will have to be able to wait until the edge comes up, recognize it as such, and then deal with it in your own personal way. This requires an exact sense of timing, since it is easy to miss the moment of the

edge. But it is crucial to notice this point in order to get to the secondary material that lies behind it. The edge is the connecting door between the two processes.

> Timing is the quality that governs the release of all that is held back. Control, discipline, and forbearance are like a dam behind which everything is pooled. Timing is the gate in the dam. (Castaneda, 1984, p.40)

## BECOMING A SEER: LEARNING TO "SEE"

To see, or to be a seer, means to be able to detect one's own primary and secondary processes; to be aware of edges and to cross them, and to be flexible and courageous enough to bring the secondary process behind the edge into life and integrate it with the primary process. As Mindell said, being a seer has to do with fluidity and enlightenment about all different parts. In other words, seeing that they are all just parts and figures, neither better nor worse than one another, and then being able to go back and forth between parts in accordance with each situation, living all of them as fully and joyfully as possible. Primary and secondary processes are both parts of the person, both together make up the whole personality. None of them are superior or inferior; rather, they are simply different parts or states waiting to be lived. "Seeing" means knowing all of your parts and having the attitude of flexibility which enables you to switch back and forth and live your total potential.

ENJOYING THE ENCOUNTER

Don Juan does not include joyfulness in the four steps of stalking, but he says that "the idea of using a petty tyrant is not only for perfecting the warrior's spirit, but also for enjoyment and happiness." In telling about his own battle with his tyrant, he says that he was "carrying it off with flair and joyfulness." The attitude of humor and joyfulness might not be a necessary ingredient for stalking, but a consequence of including it is that the encounter is much more enjoyable. Psychology does not usually put much emphasis on having an attitude which allows us also to have fun while we are learning and developing. This attitude is an important metaskill in process work. I hope to show in the different cases I present that it is possible to both learn and have fun at the same time. This does not mean that learning always has to be funny; in fact, it sometimes might be very serious, sad or painful, but humor, playfulness and happiness are nevertheless at least as essential as all the other ingredients and feelings which are important and receive focus in psychology. If growing and developing is a part of life, we might as well enjoy it as much as possible.

# IX. CASE MATERIAL

## A. ABOUT THE CASES

All of the following case examples have been transcribed of individual video-taped sessions held either in my private practice or during Process-oriented seminars in Switzerland, America and Australia.

The cases all deal in some way with the topic of the inner critic, meaning that in each of them a critical dreamfigure appears and plays a central role at one point of the process. This role is in each case different and individual, as is the course the process takes and the solution that is finally found. I am interested in showing diverse examples of the appearances of inner critics and a variety of different interventions and solutions.

In spite of the individual nature of the cases, one structural element organizes all of them. This is the structural role which the critic takes in relationship to the other figures and the whole personality. I have organized the cases according to the structural place of the critical figure within the process. Most frequently, the critic appears as a secondary dreamfigure, as the carrier of the new upcoming pattern. The critic also appears as an edgefigure, that is the figure which is against the new and secondary process.

Finally, the critic may be the primary dreamfigure, or identity, which excludes the possibility of the secondary pattern.

This structural order is not a linear development; there are simply different possible processes, and a person's inner critic may appear at different times in different structural places. I also want to mention here that even if the structural elements are the same, there is no such thing as typical work on an inner critic. The work depends completely on the individuality of the client, therapist and context. The presented cases therefore can only be understood as examples and not as fixed models. As a case collection, they demonstrate the application of Process Work to the inner critic and give some ideas about the wide range of personal solutions.

Most of the individual therapeutic sessions took place in seminars. Seminars are all-day workshops, lasting for a day, weekend, or week, in which a group of interested people come together for training purposes or therapeutic sessions. The therapist and the client normally work in the middle of the circle of participants, a set up which is similar to Perl's "hot seat."

The group may play an important role in the process of an individual, either by adding something new, actively taking part by playing roles, or by carrying a certain atmosphere and

amplifying the energy focus. Sessions held in seminars are often more profound and intense than private hours. I have had the experience that seminar sessions often serve as a kind of "light tower" event for the near future, in which an individual might do more integration work in private sessions. I believe that the group situation can be very helpful for an individual by creating this higher concentration which often helps the individual to go deeper in self-exploration.

Because I have often encountered hesitations about doing personal therapeutic work in public, I want to briefly address this topic here. We are all highly interested in the personal and private feelings and states of other people; they are what we gossip about and read in the newspaper. It seems human nature to want to know and find out about other people. In Western culture, we do not usually bring this desire to find out about others into the open. Thus, by doing personal work in front of a group, we break a cultural rule. Through doing Process Work openly, people have experienced that it can be very helpful to work publicly, and that it is actually a wonderful way to bridge the gap between the collective and the individual. It almost seems as if there are a limited number of human problems, which naturally occur each time in an individual form. By watching somebody working, other participants often get in touch with similar aspects of themselves. Thus, the individual in the circle is often not working just for him or herself, but others can profit from the experience. Watching work on very collective

topics, like the work on inner criticism, can especially aid in waking up others' awareness around the topic.

In African tribes this effect is used and applied purposefully. Shamanistic rituals are often celebrated publicly, and simultaneously to healing the patient the whole tribe is healed. This phenomenon also works the other way around; the tribe helps the shaman to heal the patient by chanting and gathering the necessary energy and focus and simply participating. The same effect occurs in seminars. In this sense, psychological seminars can be understood as a modern healing ritual.

I'd like to present the following cases in this spirit, as a collection of possible examples which may give you the necessary courage and curiosity to take a look at your own inner critics.

B. THE INNER CRITIC AS A SECONDARY FIGURE

1. Developing A Metacommunicator: Meditating on the cross road

Cora, a rather shy and quiet 21 year old Swiss woman, starts her work by sitting in the middle of the circle, grabbing a pillow to her chest and looking down at the floor. She seems to be in her own world, and only half present. She does not say anything for a minute, and then starts to speak in a quiet, shy and slow voice while quickly looking up at me, her therapist.

> C: I would like to work on, uh ... that is difficult for me uh... that it is so difficult for me to know who I am, or so ... and I actually also don't know who I am. I have study problems too, I just can't do my studies ... And I feel so often ... it is the age ... how old I am and how old the others are and .... uh ... I feel so alone and it is so painful. (She gets embarrassed and hides her face behind the pillow.)
> S: Hello, where are you? I can't see you anymore.

After a minute she takes the pillow away again and speaks about not being old enough. I try to find out what she means by the term "age" and ask her what she would say if we were ageless beings.

> C: (long pause) I think I would say I'm scared of all these people who are sitting there.
> S: What is so scary about them?
> C: They all have such great processes.
> S: For example? Which one did you like the best?
> C: They are all just better than mine. I think I would like to .... I mean it is time that I should do everything better too. I think that everybody is so busy and knows what they have to do in life and has a profession or some other work and I just don't have that.

I think I would like to have that too.  I feel not useful
... so .... I never know what I'm doing here...(she looks
down  and blank again).  I can't join any discussions for
example and if I only listen ..  it is so painful ... I'm
also interested in it,  ... but it is so painful.  (long
pause)

As  Cora is speaking,  she says  "I don't feel useful," and "I

can't  join  any  discussions." In  these  sentences,  she is

already  speaking from the  role of the  critic,  although she

is  not yet identified with it.  The victim identity is still

closer to her awareness.  Here,  following and amplifying what

is  happening means asking her to  actually be the critic,  to

identify  with it and to  act it out more.  I suggest this to

her,  and Cora looks almost relived as she takes over the role

of the critic.  I then interview her as the critic.

S: So you don't like Cora and the way she is?
C:   (Cora comes  out of her  trance state,   sits up and
suddenly  speaks  in  a much  clearer  and  louder voice.
That's obvious, isn't it?
S: Why don't you like her?
C: She is not able to do anything, she is just not able.
S:   But she is here and  is participating in the seminar
and ...
C: But that doesn't count.
S:   So what would count in  your eyes?  What do you want
her to do?
C:   She should listen less  to her feelings and organize
better and study more. ...  She should be very busy.
S: But what should she organize better?
C: Her life. She should get up early in the morning and
get an overview of the day and then tackle it.
S: But why does she have to get up early?
C: She needs to work, she has to read books and study ...
in  any case  ...  over lunch time  she should  go and do
some  fitness  training.  I allow  her  a  little sport,
nothing that she enjoys much,  but she needs to have some
exercise.  But  she should have no fun.  She should read.
She can't even read a book!
S:   Why shouldn't she  have any fun?  What  have you got
against Cora? Why don't you like her?
C:   (smiles)   I  have  no time  for  things  like that.
Feelings!

S:  But I do have a lot of feelings and suffer from you a
lot.
C:  (After a pause, she drops out of her role and speaks
as herself.)  Yes, I think that is the reason why I have
so many study problems, because of this terrible guy.
What I just did on this side (meaning the side of the
critical figure) I don't experience normally as a
specific person but as the whole world.  ...  Including
me.....  there is only a small part in me who believes,
if I hear from somebody that I'm doing things right, then
I know it is not all bad, but then it is gone right away
again.

I realize here that Cora quickly came out of her experience
and metacommunicated about it, and then fell back into the
victim role. We thus switch roles, and I play her critic,
using the same sentences she just said as the critic. Cora
sinks again into her beginning state of being half in a
trance. Then suddenly she giggles a little. When I ask her
what just happened she says:

C:   I think it is good for me to play this side without
defending myself, because I never experience the person
on the other side so concretely. And that helps me to get
more in contact with the other side and to see it better
too. Normally at home when I open a book I start to read
and then ... then the tears come because I can't read
... and I'm very desperate, because I'm trying so hard
to do it and it doesn't work. And then I feel guilty.

Here Cora tells us again how the critic starts to take over.
It seemed to have relieved her to SEE the other side. Since
this produced such a positive effect in her, I decide to hold
her a little longer in this state of insight and give her time
to develop more pattern for it. I suggest that she sit
outside and get even a better look while I and a participant
act out the drama for her. Cora smiles while she is watching,
but when I ask her about smiling, she had not realized she was

doing it.  She asks for a task while sitting because it is too painful for her to  just watch the  drama.   This is a channel problem in that she is not looking but feeling. I tell her not to feel but to just LOOK. We play out the scene.


    C:   Oh yes  that's exactly  it!   (smiles again  and then giggles)
    S: What do you see?
    C:  Yes,  that is exactly the scene that happens when I'm trying to read something.  ...  I think that side (points to the victim) needs some wise guidance: it is so alone.
    S: Who could give her some guidance?
    C:  (thinking  for a  while)  Nobody...  everything and everybody  I could think of sides with the attacker after a while.


Here Cora already has the concept of a wise guide, but can not think consciously of anything or anybody.  In order for her to suggest  this  possibility it  must  exist;  she  just  has no conscious  access  to it.  Therefore,  I ask her  to tell us a dream,  thinking the guide is  in her unconscious experience. She  dreamed the night before that  a crazy bum was sitting in the  middle of a big street crossing in a half lotus position. Many  cars and  trams passed by  and nearly hit  him,  but the crazy man did not care.  He just sat there,  sort of detached, and Cora thought he was either meditating or drunk.  While she was  telling  the  dream  she realized  that  she  herself was sitting  in a half lotus  position.  With an astonished smile, she  realized  that  at  that moment  she  was  the  crazy man herself.


    S:  Yes,  that is it,  he just does nothing, he just sits

there and watches the traffic, but doesn't react to anything. Just like you, just watch the two figures. And whenever you .....
C: ... But that is so painful.
S: No no, don't feel and identify only with the victim, just sit like that and watch and meditate on it.
C: (After doing this for a while, she giggles.) That's strong. If I don't allow myself to feel and to sink into my feeling state, then it isn't so bad at all, it is actually somehow freeing and funny.
S: Yes, you got it. Just detach and watch and stop feeling.
C: (giggles) You mean if I read a book next time and I can't go on I should just look at what happens?
S: Yes, exactly, thank you. Just like now. Just meditate on your inner drama and be aware that you are being attacked and criticized internally. That will already free you. You don't have to identify with either of these figures. That is like a Buddhist meditation. Don't hold onto or change anything, just be aware of what happens.
C: It's true, it's true! It makes me feel somehow more free. Thank you.

Cora sits back in the circle of people and the work is over.

Since this is the first case example, I will be more detailed in the discussion of the structure and interventions than in the following cases.

There are several indications that Cora's primary identity and process is as the victim. This is indicated in the way she talks about herself and expresses her inner experiences as painful. Her feeling of being scared, her low tone of voice, and her almost movement free sitting position are all characteristic of feeling like a victim of her experiences. Things are happening to her, and she is not identifying with them herself. Her sentence structure, for example, "I mean it is time that I should do everything better too" involves two

137

different types of "I." One "I" is not doing well, and another "I" is critical and compares her to others. From the context and her non-verbal suffering behavior, we know that the "I" which is not doing well is much closer to her momentary identity. She subjectively experiences mainly pain. The other part, which she perceives in the world channel as the critical group, is further away and more secondary. "It" thinks that she should "do everything better too." We can see in the beginning that there must be a critical part in Cora's hiding behind the pillow. She is hiding from a part which is not represented at this point in the process. This part is occupying the visual channel, looking in from the outside. The onlooker position is vacant at this point, and therefore will be occupied by whoever is around. It would be very easy, just by being in Cora's vicinity, to be dreamed up into a position of being critical, and telling her to get her act together and do something useful in the world, because this inner figure of hers has not been consciously represented until now. Cora projects it onto "the people sitting on the outside."

Her occupied channel in the beginning was clearly proprioception. She was looking down and said "I'm so scared;" "I feel that I have millions of things to do;" "I feel so alone and it is so painful," and "I feel not useful." The painmaker, or critic, is further away form her awareness. From her hiding behind the pillow we know that the visual channel is unoccupied, or occupied by another figure, and we

can already guess that the solution will come through this currently unoccupied channel.

She says "I'm scared of all the people sitting on the outside and looking in." Here is the pattern and channel for the solution, that is, sitting outside of it all and not being directly involved, but an onlooker. Her dream which presents the final pattern is also in the visual channel. We can see that it is possible to have the whole outline of the process structure after the first couple of sentences, but not yet the details and content of how this process structure will unfold. It would have been possible to ask her right then to go outside and look in, but we would have missed all the detailed information, and she would not have been able to make the connections with her study problems.

By amplifying what is happening, we follow the natural flow of the process and learn more about the details of the criticism and the critical dreamfigure. By switching roles, changing channels as they occur naturally, and following positive feedback, we find the detached figure in her dream and body position. It is this part, the metacommunicator, which is able to have awareness of both figures without being directly involved. Throughout the process, whenever the two figures confronted each other, Cora solved the problem by having an insight and then starting to metacommunicate about it. Each time she smiled or made a positive remark about being relieved. But this behavior is also an edge for her, since she is very much identified with her feelings and it is an edge not to feel. This detached metacommunicator dreamfigure was

139

not represented in the beginning. It arises out of the conflict and helps her out of the victim state. The whole world was on the critic's side, with the exception of the metacommunicator. Awareness of the metacommunicator brings a solution.

It is an interesting detail that by detaching and not getting stuck in her feeling channel, Cora is doing what the critic tells her to do, namely not to feel so much, to organize herself better and to get an overview. The critic had the right information, but the way it came out made it difficult for her to listen. Not feeling helped her to access this other part. At the end, after she was able to identify with this meditator, she said "it makes me FEEL somehow more free." Now the circle is closed. In this moment, the new pattern is integrated, and she is changed as a whole, including her experience of herself in the feeling channel.

Cora herself was astonished to find and connect the same pattern of the meditator in her dream and spontaneous body position. From channel theory, we know that this is because the same dreaming process organizes both our body and its movements and our dreams. Nevertheless, it is startling to experience this connection, which reveals the intelligence of the process. The same pattern appears in different channels, here in the kinesthetic and visual channel which were both unoccupied for her. If the therapist processes spontaneous signals, it is not necessary to interpret the dream, because

by following the process the client comes to the point of understanding the dream herself. The meaning of the dream becomes self-explanatory. Here the process interpreted the dream for Cora, or the dream confirmed her process.

Let's take a closer look at the dream. We understand that the bum is meditating in a big crossroad and not in a quiet place like in a mountain cave. This is a challenge to stay centered in spite of, or better because of, circumstances. But why does the meditator appear in the dream as a drunk and crazy bum? Although he is sitting in the half lotus position, Cora is not sure if he is just drunk or meditating. Being drunk means being in a different state of consciousness than normal everyday consciousness. Cora, as the dreamer, looks at this information from the viewpoint of her primary process. She thinks the state is craziness or drunkenness because being centered and detached is a different state than her usual state of experiencing and suffering the critic's attack.

Taking an outside and meditative position and being able to metacommunicate is an altered state for her primary process, and therefore appears to her in the dream as crazy.

The secondary critic is first experienced by Cora as the group. The group is better and more advanced than she is, and she is scared of the observers. This means that she is not identifying with the critic, which is therefore secondary. As soon as she herself takes over the critic and acts it out, the experience changes. The critic appears as an inner figure that is nasty and judgmental toward her. It is this negativity

141

and lack of a detached perspective which usually prevents her from picking up the solution. We could say that in some way she is fulfilling the critic's request by developing more awareness.

Cora's solution came when she got out of her beginning main channel, proprioception, and started to use her visual channel. It is very clear in this case that the different channels are occupied by different dreamfigures. The nasty critic, which turned into a neutral metacommunicator carrying awareness and attentiveness, is in the visual channel and has to be accessed in this channel. When Cora said in the beginning "I don't know who I am," she was in the process of developing awareness about herself. This awareness is the momentary goal of her process. A psychotherapeutic school which focuses only on feeling would miss Cora's potential for awareness. Feeling is one side of experience, and recommending feeling might sometimes be incorrect. The critic in this case clearly wants Cora to get out of her feelings for a while in order to develop other parts of her wholeness. In the end of the work, Cora identified with the dreamfigure which appeared in the beginning as the critic and then changed into a neutral observer or metacommunicator which is aware of her experiences rather than just having them. This is similar to some Buddhist meditation procedures in which awareness and attention are the central goals. There is a Zen story about a man who came to the master Ikkyo and asked him for some words of wisdom. Ikkyo simply wrote "attention" on a piece of paper. The man

said that he could not understand and asked him for something more. Ikkyo wrote "attention, attention." After a further request for explanation Ikkyo wrote "attention, attention, attention means attention." (LeShan, 1983, p. 54) This story emphasizes that the content does not matter much as long as one has an attentive attitude towards it. Simple awareness can free one from the state and so change the facts radically. Cora's being half there in the beginning, not making eye contact and looking down is the beginning of the meditative detachment process. This is the state the critic's attack puts her in. At this point, it happens secondarily and without Cora's control. Not following this secondary state in the beginning but following first her more primary intention of working on criticism gave her at the end the content of her meditation and a way to enjoy and utilize it. Her suffering is due to her primary attempt to fight this state, to be more extroverted and talk with the people, read, and simply function in the external world. But Cora's process here is to go first into this meditative state and then to go out into the world with this centered attitude and awareness about herself. This is like the figure in her dream which is meditating in middle of heavy traffic.


2. Picking Up The Critic's Method: Blowing the fuses


During a training class where the students had the opportunity

to work with each other, Chris presented the problem of recently having had a series of little accidents. Chris is a 25 year old woman, and her therapist an advanced student of Process Work. After showing the therapist her bruised heel, which she hit against some stairs just before class, Chris says:

> C: It feels a little stupid, but I just realize that I'm really cold. This is actually much stronger then the heel. I'm even shaking.

In order to keep herself warm she puts her sock back on and crosses her arms in front of her chest. Here she is in a proprioceptive mode, feeling cold. The shaking is an interesting phenomenon, since it combines a feeling and a kinesthetic aspect. The proprioceptive experience of being cold is at this moment closer to her awareness, but we can already predict that movement will emerge during this process. The therapist amplified the experience of shaking by asking her to shake a little more. After shaking for a while, Chris suddenly said that she felt like bending forward. She did this, putting her arms over her head as if to protect herself, and saying in a begging and scared voice, "Please, please don't hit me." Here the work entered the dreaming process and dropped into the middle of a story that is not yet known. What looked like shaking from cold now looks more like shaking from fear of being hit. Although she was not aware of either of these figures, Chris now identified with the victim role. The critic therefore is secondary.

The therapist worked directly with her story by taking over the role of the hitter. He hit her lightly on her shoulder and gave her orders. By following his own intuition about the missing figure, the therapist gave Chris a framework which allowed her to notice and discover more details of her inner experience of the critical figure. Therefore, a wrong guess about this figure is as useful as an accurate one. Chris soon began to correct the therapist, and said some of the remarks she hears internally. A critical figure is telling her not to behave so strangely, to be more normal and less difficult. From the content we can already guess that this might be a parental figure. Chris then came to an edge, standing halfway up by putting her hands on her knees. From her position, we can tell that this is an edge and not a natural role change. The victim figure is still in her half crouched body position: this role is not yet finished.

> C: It is difficult for me because it (the critic) keeps going and going and has no feedback loop at all. It doesn't stop also if I'm already completely defeated. Therefore, I can't imagine how to react to it. The strongest reaction that comes to my mind, I know it because I do it all the time, is to become very quiet and stiff and let it all run over me.
> T: Ok, let's do that then.

Chris giggles and goes back into her bent position with her arms protecting her head. The therapist and Chris continue to act out the scene between the two figures some more. Then Chris says:

> C: It is somehow relieving to hear this voice. This is

145

very strong. When I hear the voice it really gets me.
... It makes me shake. And then it is as if you would
like to make yourself really stiff, stiff like there were
glass around you, because what is happening is so painful
and that is the best way you know how to bear it.
T: Very stiff and glass around?
C: Yes, like sitting behind glass, you hear everything
... but it doesn't go in so deep, so it is less painful.
But it doesn't work quite well, it is painful in a
different way, I can't ... It is as if I can't perceive
anything anymore.
T: Ok, let's go back, and you really go into the
stiffness. I need you to go with your reaction, and this
time don't let yourself be sidetracked. This will make it
shorter and less painful for both of us.

Chris agrees and steps back into the role. While the
therapist plays the critical figure, Chris goes into the
stiffness and cramps up. Suddenly, she has an insight and
understands that the stiffness is there in order to prevent
her from considering and giving into her impulse to hit back.
Before this point, she did not even know that she had such an
impulse. She talks about it, but does not want to do it.
The therapist therefore uses her occupied channel by asking
her to make a picture of this scene and to study the details
of it.

T: Can you see yourself doing it?
C: Yes, I'm hitting with the same strength with which I
sit quietly. It has an extreme amount of strength in it,
everything I have. It is the exact opposite of what my
critic wants me to do. You (to the critic) want me to be
so controlled and normal, and then it is as if my fuses
blow and I really hit this one on the other side.
(giggles) Finally, I can blow my fuses and just really
hit him. (She shows with her arm how she would do it.) I
know who is on your side, it is my father and I think...

While she is talking, Chris lifts her arm and shows in
movement what she sees. The therapist notices her movement

signal and encourages it by slightly resisting it. Chris pushes harder and a kind of pushing match develops. Chris obviously enjoys it. While fighting the figure and pushing it to the other side of the room, she becomes more and more involved, losing her beginning shyness and using a lot of strength. In order to integrate the pattern of fighting in other channels, the therapist asks her to say something which would go along with the fighting.

> C: Just shut up, you ass-hole! (She giggles and pushes him across the room shouting) Shut up! You're right, I'm not doing so good, because of you, Goddam it!
> T: (At first resisting and then giving in) If you are like that, I can't keep my role any longer. I'm finished. You won. Congratulations!!!

Chris looks very happy and radiant. She enjoys having won over the father figure, gives the therapist a hug, and sits down, joining the discussion of the work.

This work began with the presenting problem of a slight injury. Chris was frequently bumping herself on doors and steps. Even though this symptom was not directly worked on, we can now seen how it fits into the process. The hitter and the hit one are both represented in her symptoms. But the focus of the process jumped to the shaking. Chris interpreted this as being cold, which is an attempt by her primary identity to explain something that she does not understand yet. She needs to actually go into the experience before she understands the whole story. We all do this frequently. For example, I tap my fingers on the table and then put it aside by saying "I'm just

nervous," which actually does not explain anything. I have to go into the experience to understand it. In this case, we suddenly dropped into the story of the hitter and the hit one which slowly unraveled in details. When we enter the dreaming process, unexpected things emerge. Up to this point, the inner drama came out in accidents and body feelings which Chris did not understand. Her quietness and stiffness were an unconscious reaction against the inner critic which needed to be developed further.

At the beginning, the critic or hitter is the least represented part, secondary to Chris's identity. Through the work, she discovers who the critic is, its methods and content. This critic is some kind of father figure which puts her down by telling her that she is weird and not normal. We see here that being strange can be an attempt to fight with a rational father. Chris herself is very rational, trying to suppress her irrational body feelings and emotional reactions. Her rational attitude appears in the edge against her irrational reaction of becoming stiff. She says "I know that one ... I become very quiet and stiff." In trying to repress her reactions and strong emotions, she herself is being the rational critic or father who wants her to be more controlled and normal. We can guess that her little accidents will happen when she is under the influence of this inner critical figure, trying to be rational and not following her spontaneous impulses, or "blowing her fuses," once in a while.

Strong irrational reactions are like "blowing one's fuses", that is, having emotional outbursts, or being very quiet and stiff. In an extreme case this quiet stiffness might become a catatonic state and is often a response against a very rational principle within or around a person. Chris's solution involved being irrational and doing something extreme. Initially the critical figure appeared secondarily as a hitter, and by fighting it she actually also becomes it, treating the figure the way it was treating her. By blowing her fuses and fighting back, she uses the critic's method and so actual becomes like it in some sense. It is her process at this time to be strong, feisty and irrational with her inner figure and with other people. This means not listening so much, having less of a feedback loop, following her own feelings, and adapting less to what is expected bringing out reactions more even if they are irrational or go against somebody else. Chris's inner critic models this for her, and her process involves being a little bit more like him.

## 3. Picking Up The Critic's Message: Doing big business

Alice came into my office and told me that somebody had just commented to her that she and her boyfriend were going out for dinner a lot lately. This upset Alice, because she understood the remark as a covert critical and jealous statement about her having inherited money from very rich parents. Through talking more, we found that Alice felt guilty for having so

much money, and thus normally lived rather simply and did not spend much money. I tried at first to talk her out of this behavior, telling her that she should enjoy her luck, but she insisted on her life-style. Finally, I asked Alice if she wanted to work on the problem and suggested that she play the other side, becoming the person who had made the comment to her using her fantasy to fill in any content she wanted. Alice stood up, crossed her arms in front of her chest, threw her head back, looked at me and said in a haughty voice:

> A: You just go ahead and spend all your money on dinners and having fun. You are just playing around all the time and don't do anything real in this world. You should become a business person. You should do some business with your money and invest it and not just blow it by having fun.
> (Alice stopped, came out of her role, and said) Uh, that is my father, that is just the way he talks and the things he would say to me."

At this point, I brought Alice back into the critical role by playing her usual identity and saying that I was not interested in the business world because I had other ideas about life, including having fun and going out. Here the father role answered that this is not what money is meant for, and that he did not work all his life so that she could spend money on fun, but that she should do some serious, hard work. Alice is actually in training to become a psychologist. As her therapist I personally made the assumption that this process meant that she should be a little bit more like the father and be very serious about her studies. I dropped the role and told her that her inner critic might be right and that she should

maybe work a little more. But her critic had other business in mind.

A: (still as her critic) Yes, you too agree with me, she should do more serious work. But I'm thinking of real work, big business with big money and not this stupid psychological nonsense stuff.
S: But what would you like her to do then?
A: Some real business. She should find a place or a project where she can invest my money and get something out of it. Then I don't mind so much if she has some fun too once in a while. (now in a more friendly voice) You know, I'm not that way, I don't have anything against fun in general, but not only fun.

Here Alice left her role and became really excited. She told me that she actually had been thinking about investing some money in an alternative social project but had been hesitant.

S: That is a good idea, why don't you really go ahead and do it and go into business there?
A: But my father wouldn't be into businesses like that, he is into much bigger projects where you make lots of money. He thinks I should do something really big.
S: Let's ask him, he might have some smart ideas about that.

Alice stepped back into the role and body position of her father, and I talked to him. To her astonishment, her father finally agreed that she should do something smaller first, since she had no business experience. Then Alice suddenly remembered a dream. She had dreamed that she gave some money for this project, but that another person gave much more, ten times as much. Alice was very confused about this and wondered in her dream why he was investing so much. She had wanted to be the one to give most of the money.

151

S: What does your inner figure think about this dream?
A:    (as the figure again) Oh yeah, that is right. She
shouldn't think that she can give my money away just like
that and even be proud of it. It is not her money.
S: But I don't understand, she inherited it. Didn't she?
A: No, it is not her money.
S: To whom does it belong then?
A: It belongs to everybody, to the world. That's where it
comes from and where it has to return. She will only be
the middle man, the mediator between the money and the
projects which will serve the world as a whole. She
shouldn't identify as a rich person too much and then I
don't mind if she uses the money in the meantime and
spends some of it to also have fun.

Alice came out of the role of the figure very touched and
moved, with tears running down her cheeks. This dialogue had
truly excited her about the project she had talked about
earlier, and we spent the rest of the hour talking about
details of this.

This case started out with a relationship problem between
Alice and a friend, because Alice was insulted by her friend's
remark. Clearly, her own guilty feelings were activated by the
harmless remark. She felt so bad about having money that she
actually spent less then she would have if she had not
inherited anything. Her guilt feelings did not go away,
although she was living without spending much money,
because the critical figure had not had a chance to express
itself fully. Alice's attempt to not spend much money is a
reaction against her primary identity of being rich. This
primary identity was not right for her anymore, and therefore
the critic emerged as a secondary phenomenon, first in the
form of a remark in a relationship, and then as her own guilt

feelings. The critic was actually bringing her a meaningful message, helping her change her identity and giving her some directions for handling her financial situation. After this work, Alice is no longer a rich person who has to feel guilty, but a mediator who has to serve the world's needs. Only through doing this would she also have more freedom to spend money just for fun. In this case, it was her attitude or identity that needed to change, and not her actual behavior. This case is reminiscent of Adler's theory. One of his central points was that an attained goal had to be "socially useful;" otherwise, a person will manifest feelings of inferiority and develop low self-esteem. This Adlerian postulation was definitely true for Alice's process.

Another fascinating thing about this case is that we can see that what was originally a nasty figure changed as soon as it was brought out and listened to. Once Alice was ready to pick up the figure's message and was flexible enough to listen to it, the dreamfigure also became more fluid, and started to change, becoming a different kind of figure. The nasty father figure changed into a friendly and understanding father figure who had interest in the world as a whole and also in Alice, thinking that she should have fun and enjoy herself. He also advised her on financial matters. Alice as a person with a worldly and social interest found a way to enjoy her money more and at the same time use it to stand up for and invest in her beliefs.

4. Picking Up The Critic's Style: Kiss my Ass!

The use of two languages is a crucial aspect of this case. In order to make it comprehensible also to readers who understand only English, I have translated the German spoken sentences. In order to keep the information created by the use of both languages, I have put the originally German spoken words into **boldface type.**

This work took place in a seminar in Switzerland where people spoke German or English or both. Just before this particular work, the group had discussed the language problem and the need to be more aware about translating for the participants who did not speak both languages. Lea, the client, a rather quiet and shy American woman, had lived in Switzerland for about six months and had learned some German. Therefore, the therapist starts out by asking her in which language she wants to work.

> T: **So, do you want to work in German?**
> L: (in a suffering tone of voice) **I can't speak German....**
> (on the side) That was a double signal!!
> T: (teasing her) Oh, that is what a double signal is!
> (then more seriously) I'm sorry for joking around. What do you want to work on?
> L: (almost crying) **Really about German. About not being able to speak German.** (pause) It is so difficult for me,
> ...
> T: What is so difficult? I know the language is impossible, but what's so difficult for you?
> L: It is not even the language or learning the language, it is that I feel criticized constantly. I just feel like:(in a much louder voice) if you don't learn it you will be never able to talk to the people but you can't talk yet ..
> T: (acting like Lea and whispering to the critic) Keep going.
> L: (as the critic, with a loud and commanding tone) Talk German!!!

T: **Yes, I will!** (like a soldier)
L: But you can't.
T: (talking to the side) That crosses my wires, I'm having some kind of an electrical shortage. (group laughs) It tells me to speak German at the same time that I can't?

They keep making jokes with each other. The critic takes the impossibility of his orders to the extreme by telling her to speak other languages and change her height and hair color. The mood in the room has completely changed into some kind of cabaret, and everybody is laughing and enjoying themselves.

The critic is getting more and more absurd and louder. Then the critic wants to order Lea, who the therapist is now playing, to speak German. Here the critic itself tries to speak German, but stumbles, can not finish the German sentence, and has to switch back to English. The therapist catches her and uses this as a natural role switch. Lea is now back into the beginning role, a low and suffering mood.

L: **I can't speak perfectly so I** .... I better get completely quiet and don't say anything.
T: (as the critic) **That is right! You should be able to anyhow!! Did you understand that? No?**
L: (shyly) Do you understand it now? Is it that what you said?
T: That is right, but I'm not going to show any pleasure in the fact that you understood that. .. How is your Finnish?
L: (now suddenly changing her role, using the humor from before and becoming sort of sassy) Baaaaaad!!! You don't talk Finnish either! (becoming very loud and bold now suddenly)
T: Doesn't matter, don't talk back to your ...
L: Figures!
T: Figures, yes. Thank you. (The whole group laughs.) You do not talk back to your dreamfigures. (Lea laughs and sticks her tongue out.) Your not allowed to stick your

tongue out at me either. (She flips the bird to the figure and everybody in the group falls over from laughter.)

The atmosphere joking and loose for a while and then grows quieter:

> L: But what am I going to do about German?
> T: (Jumping into the role of the critic again.) Learn it!!! Even though you can't.
> L: You don't know all the languages either!
> T: I don't care!
> L: Yes you do!
> T: Well, we don't focus on me, we focus on you!
> L: I'm tired focusing on me. And I also don't want to focus on you either.

Now Lea really amplifies her behavior even more. She sits on the critic's lap, flirting and making faces while still talking about learning German.

> T: (as the critic) How are you progressing in your German?
> L: **I think I stink!**
> T: You stink?
> L: (Smelling under her arms) Actually it is true a little bit. (everybody is laughing) I didn't take a shower yet.
> T: But how is your German, Lea?
> L: **Terrible .... disgusting (laughing)...cute.**
> T: **Cute, disgusting and terrible. Your German is perfect.** I think I'm finished, I can't possibly go on anymore. What is it what you are doing?
> L: I'm being just completely irreverent.
> T: Yes! I love your irreverence. That is the important thing. You are the sassiest .....
> L: (bursting into laughter and hitting her thighs) **I'm a little fresh and have a big mouth.**
> T: **You have big mouth, you're a bold type.** It is true. How can we use that with speaking German?
> L: (thinking for a while, then asking in a low voice) Am I ever going to learn German?
> T: (Yelling) Never!!
> L: (Realizing that she was just being criticized again) **Maybe not,...** what is "so what" in German?
> T: **So what.**
> L: **So what?** How do you say "fuck you"?

T: Fuck you. That is international, you did it before with your hand when you flipped the bird.
L: **Kiss my ass!**

Everybody is rolling over in laughter. The therapist as the critic lets herself fall backward in a theatrical way and plays dead. The group is cheering for Lea and Lea puts her foot on the dead critic as if posing for a picture. She thanks everybody and sits back down in the group.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of this work is its freshness and humor. If we go back to the beginning, we can see the humor in the first two sentences: Lea is complaining and primarily suffering under her inner critic, and at the same time makes the funny remark about just having created a double signal. Another dream figure than the suffering one made this comment. From this point on the therapist is humorous, pacing the beginning mood throughout the work by making funny remarks. She was dreamed up to be this not quite represented dreamfigure. At first, the therapist is insecure about the joking and apologizes to Lea, since Lea was still more identified with the suffering, but she soon picks up on this teasing style. We could say that the more secondary humor and freshness is at first dreamed up in the therapist. By letting herself be dreamed up, the therapist paces the secondary mood and style of the client which emerged in the double signal of simultaneously suffering and making a joke between sentences. Also, the most astonishing feature of the critic is its paradoxical requests and humorous style.

After the role switch, Lea starts to melt these two dreamfigures together by becoming sassy and funny as the victim. She flickers back and forth over the edge by being funny and then depressed. During the process, she picks up more and more the unique style of the critic, and uses this mood back on the critic. When Lea does this, the therapist, playing the role of the critic, has to give in and drop the role.

While role playing, it is important to notice when it becomes hard to keep up a role which is no longer constellated. This can happen when the client changes roles so strongly that the polarization of the field changes. Here, the beginning polarization between critic and victim was no longer present. Lea had in some way picked up on something very characteristic of her critic, and by talking back is no longer acting like a typical victim. This made it hard for the therapist to keep going as the critic, since the polarization requires a victim. By no longer joining the critic in its system, Lea won over it and escaped from its double bind. The humor saved her from this tough spot; being humorous in a tough situation can be relieving because it gives access to a part which stands outside and sees the comedy of the situation. This part is not involved in the system itself. This dynamic also appears in the solving of a Zen koan. Koans are paradoxical riddles which the master gives to his students, and which cannot be solved by rational and linear thinking. An example is the following declaration of the Zen monk Basho: "When you have a staff, I will give you one; when you have none I will take it

away from you" (Suzuki, 1980, p. 33). The only way to solve this type of riddle is by stepping out of the normal and primary identity and system of rational thinking and by doing so discovering the "true," or secondary, nature.

The critical figure forces Lea out of her normal system of being scared and quiet by putting her in a double bind situation and forcing her to create something outside of the old system. This is a big chance, since it frees her to do whatever else is inside. The figure emerges from this conflict and is able to win the battle; is not only sassy and fresh but also able to speak German quite well. It carries a secondary pattern for Lea. This irreverent part of her speaks German without being concerned about doing it perfectly.
People learning a new language often have different kinds of personalities that go along with the new language. One changes the language and at the same time the whole culture that accompanies it. This can be a chance to bring out a part that could not exist within the old system. In Lea's case, it is the humorous and irreverent part of her which was already present in the first sentence, but with which she didn't identify at that time.

## 5. Externalizing The Critic: Go for it!

This work took place during a seminar I led. After an inner work exercise where the participant tries to work by him or herself, Anita, the client, announced that she could not finish the exercise and needed more help. She came into the circle and said:

> A:   (in a very low voice) Uhhh ... uhh... I'm sort of dissolving, I felt so pushed down by my critic ... also ... all these voices.... I didn't know what to do... it was ... I felt very lonely in here. I felt I can't .... I was even scared to come into the group... to say for example that I would want to work with you....and then everything became very chaotic. I'm just nothing anymore and I'm not doing anything right, and then it becomes even worse.

Since she was feeling lost and in a rather painful spot, I wanted to help her fast. Therefore, I decided to pull her out of her spot and have her take over the secondary critical voices. I physically pulled her up, put a pillow where she was sitting before, and told her to criticize Anita, to tell her she is nothing and can not do anything right. This worked. Anita smiled, put her hands on her hips, and told the one sitting on the pillow how stupid she was and that she had better go home right away. While speaking, Anita's voice changed and became stronger and louder, a sign that she had accessed another figure than the one speaking before. She then stopped and looked at me in a questioning way. Since her hands were still on her hips I assumed that this role was not finished and that Anita was at an edge to go on. Therefore, I

joined her on the side of the critic and repeated what she
had just said in order to encourage her in the critical role.


> S: (whispering to A) What is it that she can't do?
> A: You can't come out with anything.
> S: You can't come out with anything, you just sit there
> and don't come out with anything. (whispering again) What
> is it that she can't come out with? Tell her everything.
> A: Yes! ... (smiling and then looking to me) I don't know
> either.
> S: She just can't come out.
> A: Yes! Yes, it is becoming even worse! She has bad and
> stupid thoughts. She is evil.

Anita went on for a few minutes, thinking of more and more
things that she could possibly tell herself. She was actually
enjoying the role, and laughed and giggled. Her
previous helpless state had completely disappeared.


> A:(laughing and obviously enjoying herself) Yeah, she
> really is a stupid ass!
> S: (amazed) Who is a stupid ass?
> A: She, the other side of me.
> S: Which one?
> A: Uhh ... this one (pointing to the critical one), or
> the other, actually both.
> S: ... How come you laughed so much when you said that to
> yourself? What is so funny about that?
> A: You know I think I have never said that to anybody.
> S: What?
> A: Stupid ass! ... My mother always told me that it is a
> very bad thing to do,... you never curse, she said ...
> especially not as a woman.

I took the sudden confusion of roles as a sign that they
were no longer really important, and that something new
had come up: Anita was quite startled by what she had said.
Then, she went on, telling the group that during the inner
work she had already become the critic. She had seen herself

running after the critical mother with a knife, screaming at her. This had already helped her to feel better. Anita then said that she sometimes had thoughts and dreams like this about other people, but that she would never dare to actually scream out loud. This indicated that a real edge was to behave this way with another person. I asked her if there was somebody other than her mother to whom she would like to say such things. Anita agreed eagerly that she would like to yell at her neighbor who was irritating.

S: Is there anybody here you would want to say something like that to also?
A: Huh?
S: Did you just develop a hearing problem? ... (she laughs) What did you hear?
A: If I could say something like that to everybody here.
S: Yes, could you do that?
A: (Anita giggled and then began cursing in untranslatable Swiss German. She then looked at the participants and started telling them that they were a bunch of lazy bums and that they should clean up the kitchen and come on time to the workshop sessions. She told me as the leader to not let myself be interrupted all the time but to go on with my program more. The group was laughing, clapping, and cheering her on. After a few minutes she stopped and looked at me again.) That is great, I have never used such words before out loud.
S: Yeah, that is it.

Since Anita kept standing in the middle of the circle, I asked her if she needed something else. She said no, but still stood and looked at me. I asked her to really check out what she might need. Then she asked me shyly if she should really say the things she thinks to other people so directly because they might hate her afterwards. At that point, a participant stood up, took a patch off his jacket, and gave it to Anita.

A: Ohhh, thanks, that is great.
S: Let me see it. What does it say?
A: "Go for it!" (everybody laughs)
S: Yes, that is just perfect. You should wear it everyday, it is an anchor and it will help you to remember this experience. If you get lost or feel chaotic next time, check if you feel like criticizing or cursing and telling people what you really think about them.

Anita pinned the patch on her sweater, gave me a hug, and sat down. At this point she was finished.

At the beginning of this work, Anita felt lost and was clearly in the victim position. She told us that she heard internal voices and felt lonely and scared of the group. These statements indicate unoccupied auditory and relationship channels because the disturbance comes through these channels. By pulling her out of her spot physically, I took her out of the victim position. Changing a person's body position and location can have a strong effect on a feeling state. I decided not to follow her primary process but to go immediately to the secondary figure, because it looked like her state was painful. While Anita needed my support and encouragement in the beginning, the energy shift happened almost instantly. We know the intervention worked because of her positive feedback: her smiles and giggles, the change of her voice and her body position with the hands on the hips. Once she was over the edge, we also discovered the edge figure, her mother, which stood for the belief that women do not curse and use bad language. Because she had an unoccupied relationship channel, she might have had to bring this behavior out more with other people. For this reason,

fantasizing internally during the inner work exercise or thinking about being loud and critical was insufficient. The behavior needed to be integrated in outer relationships too. She had no trouble thinking of people she would like to criticize; the real edge came up when I suggested that she might do it with somebody in the room. Here Anita suddenly did not understand me. I asked her what she heard, assuming that she had heard the right thing, and that my intervention might not have been exactly accurate. This gave her the opportunity to change it to suit her needs. Anita did change my statement, since she had heard not "anybody" but "everybody." She had an issue not only with one person but with several people in the group. We had made a big mess in the kitchen during lunch and nobody had cleaned it up. Some people had also been unconcerned about coming in time to the afternoon session. I had allowed myself to be sidetracked by many participant's questions and felt that her criticism of me was accurate. Everybody in the group knew that she was right, and had actually felt the same things, but nobody had said anything.

The next step for Anita would be considering doing this in her normal outer world. She would have to integrate this behavior into her other relationships, and it was not possible to go over this edge in the workshop. This is a critical point in therapeutic work: how much a person will be able to use a new pattern outside of a session. A group participant came up just as Anita was thinking about this, and gave her the patch

that fit so beautifully with the situation. He not only encouraged her but also gave her an anchor that could help her remember that she had crossed this edge once already.

Anita's inner critic was clearly secondary. It appeared in the form of internal voices which mainly accused her of having bad thoughts and of not being able to come out. In some sense, the critic is correct, and also models a new pattern. Anita needed to come out more and learn to be more critical and direct with other people. This is what her critic did to her, and where her pattern lies for actually being critical. Once she came out with her thoughts and secret criticisms of the group, her inner critic disappeared. She had picked up on the secondary figure and had become it. In this sense the inner critic was right. Anita had not come out enough with what was in her.

Most of us have trouble in being critical, and have to cross an edge each time we do it. This edge also has its value; it prevents being hurtful and saying everything without thinking first. Learning to be more flexible with these two sides of the edge and to go back and forth between them helps to bring out both sides, the desire not to be hurtful and to also be expressive. Integrating the whole process would not mean simply crossing this edge but doing it in a useful and meaningful way which the other person can hear. In this case, Anita took sides strongly with not wanting to come out

and to risk being hurtful. Therefore her process this time around was to support and develop the other in order to experience that expressing critical thoughts is possible.

In this process the solution came only through cursing and expressing critical thoughts to others. These relationship and world channels belong to our ways of experiencing and expressing ourselves, and are central for many of us. The idea of mostly internalizing things which we find in some psychotherapeutic directions or meditation procedures might be an attempt to balance our normally, rather extroverted culture, but having to internalize everything prevents us from developing and becoming whole within relationships, which can be much harder than becoming whole within ourselves. It is not possible to generalize whether externalization or internalization is necessary. This depends on where an individual stands.

Final Notes On The Secondary Critics

In all these cases the critic appeared as a secondary figure, meaning that the client did not identify with it. The person is not being critical, but being criticized. More exactly, the critical dreamfigure is further away from the person's identity than the one who is being criticized. In all the cases, the clients' personalities changed completely when they stepped into the role of the critic. This indicates

immediately a different dreamfigure is coming into the field. As the critic, they are no longer like the person that presented the problem, or how they identified while presenting the problem. The secondary critic has different characteristics than the primary dreamfigure. When the client takes over the role of the critic, the dreaming process starts to happen, and something new and exciting emerges. Very often the secondary figure actually has something to offer which needs to be picked up. All of these clients had to pick up some of the content or qualities of the critics and become in one way or another like them. Not all of the processes tend towards integrating this figure. Some of them are challenged to fight the figure, and to fight the figure they have to become a little bit like it.

Some secondary figures come out as nasty, stupid, mean and not interested in the person at all. Once we start giving them some attention, listen to them, and maybe find a way of fulfilling some of their needs, many of them change radically. For example, Alice's father figure actually became her financial consultant and Lea's critic modeled wit and humor for her.

In unraveling secondary figures, we discover unknown territory. We do not simply switch between primary and secondary dreamfigures, but follow an unraveling process which begins with a critic, and during which the different parts involved change, merge together, become different figures, or

give rise to new figures. A nasty critic may bring out a detached meditator, change into a smart advisor who brings a new view, challenge the appearance of a figure standing against it, be fresh, or be the type of person who is free to bring critical thoughts into relationships.

In the following cases the critic does not bring the new pattern, but actually prevents the secondary pattern from emerging. In process work, this type of figure is called the edgefigure.

## C. THE CRITIC AS THE EDGEFIGURE


### 1. The Critic As An Adviser: A heart like a hotel


In this case, Rita enters the circle of seminar participants and begins the work by saying that she is very sensitive and is afraid to express her ideas and creativity, which she knows she has inside. Then she says that this just happened before when she was doing an exercise.


> R: When I did this exercise before and you came by, I said that I was scared. I thought that you are the teacher and I was scared that you would judge me or something.

While talking about her experiences, Rita stretched her back and shrugged her shoulders several times. The therapist decided to work on this repetitive signal, assuming that it would somehow be connected to her primary presenting problem of being afraid and not being able to express herself. He stood up, went behind her, and put his hands on her shoulders. Rita immediately started to push against his hands, and the therapist gave her more resistance. The more he pushed, the more Rita pushed back, obviously enjoying this a great deal. Smiling , she asked the therapist to really push down, which he did. Finally, she almost lifted him up, and the group was impressed and admiring.


> R: It really feels good.

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T: Doesn't it? What feels so good about it?
R:  The feel of your weight. I mean in the moment it felt
like  just to have that ...  uhm  it felt like  a lot of
energy.... But I wouldn't want to do it all the time.
T: Why not?
R:  Because the more I had to do it the heavier it got. I
got tired and it felt like it could hurt me.
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Although  Rita enjoyed  using her  strength,  a  process which
emerged  when  the therapist  amplified her  secondary signal,
there  was a part that stopped her.  She came to an edge,  and
said  that she was scared  she might not be  able to endure or
could  be physically hurt.  The  therapist asked her where she
had learned that it is not good for her to keep going when she
gets  tired.  Rita suddenly started to cry and remembered that
as a child she had often been sick,  and thus pictured herself
as  a sick person who could not  do a lot of things.  She told
an  example of how she sometimes got scared after climbing two
rungs on a jungle gym, froze and could not go on.

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R:   You know I  always feel that  any anxiety or tension
will make me sick.
T: Where does that come from?
R:   It  is  just this  negative  voice in  my  head.  It
belittles  everything I do and  tells me  that  I'm not
strong enough and not good enough.
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Since Rita used the generalization "everything," the therapist
asked  her in  which other areas  this also  occurred and Rita
said that for a long time she had had the idea to write a book
for parents,  but that this voice criticized her,  telling her
that nobody would be interested and that a lot of people could
do  it better,  and that she would  not want to waste her time
writing  a book anyhow.  At this point the therapist took over

the role of the critical voice and began to belittle her. During this intervention, it became clear that Rita especially feared disappointment.

> R:    (in a whiney tone)  Yes,   there is a part of me that can't handle rejection and disappointment. It is like I'm going to die from it.
> T:    (staying in his  role as the  critic,  and taking it quite far by saying in a serious tone) Yes, you are going to die from it.
> R:    (suddenly waking  up and  remembering her experience from  before,  changing her mood  again and speaking in a theatrical  and humorous way)  But I'm strong!!  (she is flexing  her arm  to show  her muscles)   I'm even strong enough to handle disappointments.
> T: (still as the critical voice) No, never! You are going to get cancer.  Just go back and don't do anything, eat a lot of vitamins. But don't make any plans for books.
> R: (growing insecure again) What are you saying to me? Do you mean something terrible is going to happen?
> T: Yes, something terrible will happen! Terrible, you are going to get sick again.

At that point, Rita became disoriented; here is the edge.  The therapist told her  to sit outside  and watch while  he and a participant  acted out the scene for her.  Rita looked in from the outside for a minute,  then suddenly stood up,  pushed the person  who was playing her part,  took her place,  and sat up straight  in  front  of  the  therapist  who  was  playing the critical voice.

> R: (screaming into the therapist's face) What do you mean something  terrible is  going to  happen!  It  is already happening  ...  you  are  the  terrible  thing  that  is happening to me all the time!! It can't possibly get much more terrible than this.  I'm not living at all!!  I'm on hold all my life.  But I'm strong, much stronger then you think.  I'm  going to write an  article,  and I am strong enough  to even handle  a rejection!!!  You'll see.  I'll prove it to you.
> T: (dropping his role) Yes, that's it. You got it.

R: Yes, I am strong enough, whatever might come. A few rejections won't hurt me and they will make me stronger. (jokingly showing her muscles again)

The group began clapping and laughing. Rita and the therapist sat together and discussed what had just happened and possible future crises which will challenge her. During this discussion, Rita said with surprising insight that she would need some crises and maybe rejections:

R: I'll need it to know that I can live through it, that I know I'm strong and can trust myself.

After this she sat back in the circle of participants and joined the discussion with the group.

In this case the inner critic was an edgefigure, the figure that tried to keep her from her secondary experience of being a strong person who is able to live through rough moments. This critical figure made her afraid and tried to keep her from going out into the world and expressing her creativity. The therapist, by not following her primary content in the beginning and working directly with a secondary signal, and thus accessing her unoccupied kinesthetic channel, gave Rita the experience of the secondary process of being a strong woman. Rita found herself in the middle of a strong physical struggle after having just said how sensitive and scared she was. Since the therapist did not follow her primary process, the following work connected the two processes and dealt with the edge. For some clients an experience of the

secondary process is momentarily sufficient. This is not the case here, since Rita brought up the edge and worked on integration by saying that she did not want to fight all the time.

Rita's signal of stretching her back in the beginning was a communication between two figures; the one pushing down and the one lifting up. The pushing figure was the critical edgefigure which kept her in her primary identity of being sensitive and fearful. This inner critic said that she was a feeble person who had better not try to do much. It warned her that she might get sick or die. The therapist's intervention of entering her system and engaging in a role play as the critical voice introduced Rita to a whole set of inner figures. Going over the edge and back a few times helped Rita to gain more insight about these parts. It is through her occupied visual channel that she could finally structure and integrate her experiences. the secondary strength pattern was no longer a split off and isolated experience. Rita was able to accept the critic as a challenge and a chance to bring out her strength even more.

This reminds me of a story I once heard about a long distance runner. Whenever he ran a race, his mother would bring him a big dish of mashed potatoes right before the start. At first he was touched by his mother's effort to cook his favorite meal and would eat it all. One day, he actually told her that he could not run well after having eaten such a heavy meal. His concerned mother replied: "But darling, that is why I'm

bringing you this food. It is really not good for you to run too fast."

Rita's edgefigure was similar to this overly concerned mother. It actually appeared to be quite caring and interested in Rita's health. But, under a closer examination, it is clear that the figure is quite different. Rita was right to feel belittled by the voice, which tried to keep her "home" and not let her become a successful writer. The critic would not permit the feeble child to grow into a strong woman who could face anything.

Paradoxically, the same figure which tried to keep her back actually had the opposite effect once it was understood. Having to persevere in spite of the critic gave Rita a chance to develop all her strength. This was apparent in the beginning, when the therapist pushed on her shoulders and Rita lifted him up. Her strength grew in proportion to the amount of weight she had on her shoulders.

Resistance can challenge us to bring out all our potential energies and capacities. If experiences are too easy, we do not have to use all of our potential. Bandler and Grinder (1979, p.161) report a case of an inner critical voice which had the function to motivate and challenge a woman to complete her college studies. Don Juan also said that only the one who sees that it is impossible to become an impeccable warrior and tries to do it anyway is a real warrior.

## 2. A New Figure Against The Critic: A ritual against vampires

Doris, an attractive business woman about 32 years of age, came into the circle. While the video equipment was being set up, she stood playing with her sleeves, then stepped towards the therapist, moving her arms forward as if they wanted to do something and then pulling them back.

    T: Did you want to do something with your arms?
    D: Actually ... I wanted to give you a hug.

She hugged him, first with one arm and slightly turned away. The therapist helped her over the edge by pulling her a little closer, and they both stood hugging for a minute.

    D: (giggling) It feels good.
    T: Really?
    D: Yeah.
    T: How come you don't have more of this? (D is shrugging her shoulders) We'll see.

The therapist stopped hugging Doris and asked her if she wanted to work on something or if she just wanted to hug more.

    D: Uhh ...(they are sitting down now) I'm having difficulties being myself. I decided to have a good feeling about myself. I want to be myself and I'm starting to feeling it and I'm wanting to keep going that way and suddenly all this negative and critical stuff comes in. I need some support with how to not get affected by it so much and sucked in. I don't know how to do it. (she is sad now and close to crying)
    T: Yes, ... uhhh how would you be if you could be completely yourself?
    D: A very open and loving person.
    T: Yes, a very open and loving person. A friendly person!

D: Yes, if I didn't always have something to fight off.
T: Yes, (talking to himself) now, let's see how or what stops you from being yourself completely.
D: Am I allowed to say something?
T: Sure. ... Did you just ask me if you could say something?
D: ... Yes ... (giggles) ... You know that reminds me of my mother, she used to always ... tell me not to interrupt or talk back. She always comes back again and puts me down, you know. She is this negative and nagging figure that always comes back.

While speaking, Doris pointed with her hand behind her back. The therapist therefore asked her if her mother came from behind and if Doris could show him how she appears. Doris stood up and leaned on the therapist's back, saying that her mother was not physical at all but that she feels a heavy weight when her mother is constellated. This feeling prevents her from being herself and feeling good. At one point the therapist suggested a role change and he leaned on Doris's back. She started to move back and forth slightly. As the therapist asked her what she was doing, she crawled out from beneath him and said that she was trying to get away. At this point she still appeared depressed and sad.

T: That was simple, wasn't it?
D: Yes. But I don't want to have to fight her all the time. I wish there were a pill or some magic and she would be gone. I'd like to make her go away by magic.
T: How does magic work?
D: I don't know. ... Yesterday I saw a movie about vampires and they made a cross like that (she shows the cross with her arms), and then the vampires could not do them any harm. I'd like to be able to do that with my mother too.
T: Yeah! Do you know why the cross works?
D: Because they hate religion.
T: And do you know what else is also very good against vampires? Garlic! Just point it at them and they leave

right away. They hate the smell of garlic. So, what was it that your mother couldn't stand? What did she hate the most?
D: When I wanted attention. When I wanted to be with her.

Doris showed what she meant by attention by moving over to the therapist and putting her hand around his shoulders as if he were her mother. Then she reached an edge, moved her arm away, and started to cry. When the therapist encouraged her to go on, she first blew her nose and then moved closer and cuddled up with the therapist.

T: That is what she hated the most? Now I know what you have to do with her when she comes back. Do you know now how to get rid of your mother?
D: No,... Do you mean by cuddling? (giggling)
T: Yes. Just walk up to the next person you see and say, "I want to be close to you for a minute, could you give me a hug?" I bet your mother will run away and leave you alone. That is what you did with me before, you just came up and gave me a hug.
D: Yeah, exactly!
T: Just grab the next person, don't even check to see who it is. That is like a cross against vampires.
D: (smiling happily) Yes, that would be an anti-dote for my mother.

While saying this, Doris looked around at the group, so the therapist asked her if she wanted to try it immediately. Doris stood up, hugged somebody from the group, and began to smile. The therapist asked her if she wanted to hug somebody else, but Doris shook her head "no" and said that she had brought some of her paintings with her and would love to show them now, something she had never had the courage to do. While people were admiring her pictures, Doris grew very shy and intimidated. She then remembered her work, approached people, and crawled under their arms until she

177

felt better again.  After a few minutes of this, everybody sat down to talk about the work.

In this case the critical edgefigure made Doris feel bad about herself. This created the need for closeness with other people and thus pushed her into the more secondary behavior of cuddling up with people and seeking closeness and attention.

Doris gave a double signal right at the beginning: one part of her was about to give the therapist a hug and another part stopped her.  Her arms and body movements were about to hug, and then the impulse was interrupted. This is the edge. One is about to do something, and then does not do it for one reason or another.  The edge is where the primary and secondary processes meet.

Although one could see the two parts in Doris's movement right in the beginning, it was not possible to determine which one was primary and which secondary.  Only when she had gone over the edge, hugged the therapist and given congruent and positive feedback was it clear that the energy was more in the closeness than in the distance.  The secondary hugging and being close with people was not far away from her awareness and she was able to cross the edge easily as soon as the therapist helped her along. While hugging him she was at first not congruent, and gave a small double signal in that only one side of her body was involved in the hug. The therapist tested her process by pulling her closer and making the hug more complete.  If she had had a process of creating

distance, she might have resisted, but the hugging was very congruent. The question now became, what has kept her from being like this and living her needs for closeness all the time? What would be her edge or the edgefigure? Her presenting problem had to do with wanting to be herself, being sad about not being able to do it, and not feeling very important. This pattern appeared again when she asked the therapist for permission to say something. Whom was she asking? Since the therapist personally did not feel he needed to be asked, he must have been representing another figure. This was Doris's mother, who was also in the field and had not been represented yet. The physical interaction with the mother and shaking her off did not get especially positive feedback. Doris was still in a depressed state which had not changed during the fighting. Her secondary process for the moment had more to do with being close to people than fighting, so the fight did not contain much energy. Doris went on to create a little fantasy about doing magic. Clients themselves often suggest the therapeutic method they need. At first it was not clear what she meant by magic, but then she gave the example of the cross against vampires, the pattern which would also work for her. The therapist helped her to apply this type of magic to her own situation, and the same secondary figure which appeared in the beginning, the hugger and cuddler, appeared again. In retrospect we understand which figure interrupted her spontaneous impulse to hug the therapist at the beginning.

Identifying the edgefigure and gaining some insight and awareness about it might have aided Doris with integrating it. Edgefigures need to be addressed and dealt with.

When Doris showed her pictures and looked for support from others as soon as she felt criticized and insecure, she was integrating the new pattern. Integration itself is a process, and not everybody wants to or can apply insight right away. Often there are many small steps involved. One of the important ones is discovering which figures or principles stand at the edge and prevent one from going over.

In this case, the edgefigure was a critic. The critic was the figure which interrupted the secondary behavior, the hugging, that Doris was about to do. The edgefigure, in the form of the mother, stood for the belief that it is not good to get to close to people, especially not physically. This is also a strong collective edge in most western countries. Simply hugging somebody outside of ritualized greetings and farewells or outside an intimate relationship is frowned upon by our society. Especially in the American business world, where Doris and her mother come from, hugging is not a usual way of behaving. Doris and her mother both had the same edge to be free with expressing love and the need for physical touch. The idea of going up to somebody and asking for a hug is definitely outside of our culture's socially adapted behavior. This reminds me of the story of don Juan teasing Castaneda about being so sentimental about his friendships. Castaneda

asked don Juan if he did not need friends and if he never had the urgency to talk to somebody about his intimate personal life. Don Juan laughed at him and said that whenever he had the need to get something off his chest he just grabbed the first person who came along on the street, invited him or her for a coffee, and asked if he or her would be kind enough to listen because he needed to talk to somebody. Don Juan told Carlos that, "it is so unimportant who it is that you might as well get it over with as fast as possible and do it like a warrior." Doing it like a warrior means not trying to prepare and think about relationships in advance but to take care of them as they come up.

### 3. Doing It Anyway: Something terrible is going to happen!

This case took place during a relationship seminar led by Arnold Mindell. Curt and Beth had met each other during this seminar and decided to work together. By following their flirting signals they ended up together under a blanket where they were hugging and kissing a little bit. Curt was suddenly turned on sexually to Beth. This made everybody in the room shy, and Arny, the therapist, suggested that they might not need him anymore and could go on by themselves. Curt said that he felt incomplete because this is a place he knew and had encountered in many relationships. He wanted to continue with Arny's help and find out more about getting turned on. Beth agreed, and Arny suggested that instead of putting their

181

sexual contact into the future that they might go more deeply into it now. He asked both of them what they meant when they talked about getting turned on, since this could mean something different for each individual. After Beth had talked about her experience, Curt also tried to talk about being turned on.

C: I felt invited and welcomed.
A: (jokingly) That could also be a house warming party. What is it like to be physically turned on? (everybody giggles) What happens inside of you?
C: I get a little scared. It is in my genitals. The beginning of an erection. There is somehow more then that; it is wanting to be with you as fully and wholly as possible.
A: What does that mean to be fully with somebody?
C: (to Beth) To feel one with you.
A: Show her what you mean.

They looked at each other for a minute, and then Curt reached over, shyly held her hand, and looked into her eyes. He then moved closer and rubbed her shoulders until they both giggled in embarrassment. Beth said that she felt playful and wanted to be tender with Curt. Arny said that he thought they should be alone now and that not everything has to be integrated, some things just have to be lived. Again Curt asked for help.

A: What do you need help with? You look sad, are you?
C: (to Beth) It is so easy in some ways to be with you and to
be really with you.
A: Do you mean to sleep with her?
C: Yes. I could do that and I see how easily this can happen and that frightens me because in this moment I feel love for you. But it's not the first time that this has happened, I have felt that love many times. But how can I go through life with this love for you and for so many others and sleep with you and then the next hour or the next day feel love for somebody else?

182

A:    (as the critic talking with a different voice) You
shouldn't be doing that, you are a very bad boy. (hitting
him with the sleeve of his sweater) Now, you shall not
love so much.  This shows low character.  Evil ways, this
is an evil man, they shall not love so much and so many.
(the group and Beth and Curt all giggle)

Arny asked Curt to show him the critic on the outside, and

they switched positions.  Arny was even more "evil" than Curt,

hugging Beth, making lust-insinuating noises, and telling Curt

(as the critical figure) to go away.  Curt watched without

reacting;  he was still feeling guilty and could not really

change roles.  Arny then took over the critic again, told Curt

to stop, and humorously called him names.

A: How can you love so many people so often? That is what
is wrong with you.  You have a heart as big as a hotel.
More than one room won't do.  How can any woman trust a
man like this?  Ick.  He isn't how I educated him to be
and how he should be. He is a bad person.
C:    (getting up and pushing the critic down) Sit! Sit
there and feel guilty.
A: I don't feel guilty.
C: You can feel guilty for both of us. You are the guilt-
maker. You are a fucking guilt maker!
A: That is right you identified me properly.
C: God, you are! You are not flowing with the Tao.
A: I'm not with the Tao at all. You thought you could get
under the blanket and get away from me but nobody keeps
me out. I'm guilty, I'm evil.

Curt then started to talk to Beth again, telling her that he

would like to get this guy out of the scene but that it

would not work because he always came back afterward.  Curt

said that he wanted to deal with him now and include him.

Arny asked him to sit outside again and to look in and be

critical.  This time the role switch worked, because Curt

himself had stepped out of the role and had started to

183

metacommunicate to Beth. Arny acted like Curt, reaching slowly for Beth's hands while looking deeply into her eyes. Curt told Arny to "verbalize it, for God's sake." Now Arny pulled Curt back into his spot and told him to model the new behavior. Curt picked up Beth's hand again and then gave her a hug.

A: I can do that too. You go outside and see if you are happy now or if you want to keep criticizing me. (they switch roles again)
C: (after watching for a while) No, there is still something that is not right. Oh shit!! You are too slimy and behave like a fucking evil old man.
A: I behave like an evil old man? What is wrong with that?
C: I don't like what I see. I don't like the look in your eyes, I don't like the way your head is ... you're being too sleazy. Just be yourself!
A: Yes, show me the difference.

Arny pulled Curt back into his role and Curt sat down, then made a somersault backward, rolled over to Beth, and playfully pulled her to the floor. They both rolled around on the floor, playing and having fun. After a bit Arny spoke.

A: This looks very different. What is the difference, actually?
C: It is more direct and spontaneous and not so sweet, more playful!! Lighthearted!!!

Beth came over, gave Curt a hug and pulled him out of the circle. They sat down together and the work was finished.

The problematic moment for Curt was when he became turned on. He was not interested in going ahead and having an affair, but

needed help, although he did not know with what. Later he said that he recognized this situation and that normally he just jumped over the edge and felt guilty about it afterward. Now he wanted more insight into this process. Curt had an internal conflict about getting involved with Beth. One part came out secondarily in his flirting and getting turned on, and another, which was normally more primary, was faithful to one woman and more traditional in relating. When Curt was confronted with this secondary flirting side, he came to an edge and started to feel guilty. The edgefigure prevented him from going on. At first this figure stood for the belief in monogamous relationships, and Curt felt guilty for his feelings and impulses to experience love with other people.

Arny tried to have Curt take over the edgefigure. The first role switch did not work since Curt was still involved in feeling guilty. He had to experience the critic before being able to step into its role. Curt identified the critic as the guilt maker and became aware that this part is the one that plagued him afterward. Then he was ready to take over the critic, and Arny challenged him to really be critical. Now the normally unconscious and repressed critic had a chance to come out, and this started a process during which the critical figure changed and became a relationship advisor. It took a bit of time to discover the specific criticism that he was trying to be too serious, romantic and sweet, when he really felt playful and foolish. The critic did not want him to be an evil old man, but to be straight, direct and less

sweet.   In the end,   the critic was  not against his getting involved  with Beth,   but against  the way  he was  doing it, acting  more adapted,   romantic and sweet then he was feeling. The  edgefigure which was  at first used to  be the critic and first  looked  like a  moral guilt  maker actually  helped him develop a new way of relating.

The  critic turned out  to  be his  own  self-knowledge,  his ability  to  stand  outside and  see  that he  was  not acting according  his  feelings.  This  critic  was  a  beginning metacommunicator  who is able  to talk about  his feelings and what is going on inside. Curt had a process of developing this metacommunicator  and more  awareness.  This is  the reason he did  not want to  simply get involved with  Beth,  but also to become  more conscious.  This  might be one  reason why people go  through several  partners;  to  develop more consciousness about their feelings.

It  is a cultural  edge to fool  around when meeting somebody. We  normally think that  we should be  serious,  sensitive and feeling.   This is actually only one possible way of relating. Behind  Curt's holding  back was  playfulness which  needed to come  out,   important  lightheartedness which  also  needed a place.

Final Notes On The Critical Edgefigure

These three cases are examples of the critic appearing around the edge. The edgefigure is the personalization of beliefs and paradigms which are against the emerging secondary process. Edgefigures may stand for personal edges and belief systems, as in Rita's case of personal fear. They may also stand for more collective taboos and societal attitudes, as in Curt's case. Edgefigures are frequently inner critics. The inner critic in this constellation is very close to Freud's idea of the superego as a censor which sits at the passage between the id and the ego. In Freud's personality concept, the superego controls the material from the id, changing and disguising it to pass the standards. When the critic appears as an edgefigure, it has a similar function: preventing the secondary material or pattern from appearing. If the secondary material slips through, the individual will feel guilty afterwards, as has been clearly demonstrated in Curt's case. He normally has moral hangovers after getting involved with a woman.

Although these three cases are different and not comparable in content and process, they share the appearance of secondary material and the arrival of the critical edgefigure which is against the secondary and normally repressed pattern. Each client developed individual ways of dealing with these critical edgefigures: Rita learned to take the critic as a challenger and motivator, Doris developed a ritual to protect

herself against the critical 'mother' and Curt had to listen to the figure and include its advice in his actions. Meeting the edgefigure and learning to deal with it often requires small steps and the development of insight and awareness. By not honoring the edge, meaning the figures in people which are against change, and only furthering the secondary pattern, one risks the later appearance of the critic, which creates guilt or shame. After having jumped over the edge, one falls back into the primary process. Having a breakthrough can be important in certain moments, because it gives an experience of the secondary process. But in order to integrate this experience into everyday life, one often has to deal with the edgefigure as the part which is against the new pattern. Going slowly and learning to process and honor the edgefigure is a way of integrating the new secondary pattern in a more conscious way. This is democracy in a psychological sense, a way to pay attention to all the different parts within people and not to favor only one.

## D. THE INNER CRITIC AS A PRIMARY FIGURE

### 1. Getting Away From The Critic: The solution is vacationing

In this case Lori, the client, and the therapist are both psychology students participating in a training seminar, where participants work with each other for half hour sessions. Lori began talking about herself while sitting on the floor and leaning back, and holding herself up with her arms:

> L: I don't .... know what to do? I know I want something impossible. I have something very specific to work on, and I want to finish the problem in 25 minutes once and for ever. I'm always on a diet. I have been dieting all my life and my eating is very disturbed. I have trouble being a woman. I just feel I have the wrong body.

Lori was talking energetically and was obviously upset with herself. The therapist tried to work with her statement about having the wrong body.

> T: You said that you have the wrong body. But what is the difference between a male body and a female body?
> L: No tits.
> T: And what is it like to have tits? I don't have too many tits and don't know how it is to have breasts.(the therapist is a man, and the situation is therefore funny, so everybody laughs)
> L: It is like having something extra hanging off you all the time, just hanging there.
> T: It is just hanging? Just hanging around. Let's try to hang around a little bit then.

Lori seemed to be going along with the suggestion, but then lost interest and fell back into complaining and wanting

to change. The therapist tried a few other interventions, but none of them went anywhere. Lori rejected all of them, and it looked like nothing would work. Lori herself noticed this and said:

> L: Sorry for being so impossible.
> T: You know it is funny, normally I would have all the time in the world to sit with you and listen to you. One part in me wants to go on working. But there is another part which can hardly go on and just feels like relaxing. It is pushing me back and just wants me to relax and sort of give in.

After having tried several interventions, the therapist now brought in his own reactions. The double signal he missed in the beginning now came up as his own reaction. While lying on his back and relaxing, he said that this reminded him of a ship cruise, just lying on the deck and not doing anything. The therapist stopped focusing on Lori and followed his own process under the assumption that the two of them are in a field and his own reactions might have something to do with Lori's process.

> L: (laughing) I would get seasick for sure.
> T: If you had to relax, what would be the situation you could relax in?
> L: I never relax.
> T: So then I'm going to do it alone. You can work some more if you would like to. I'm going to be here and just relax. I love not having to work.

The therapist gave up his job of working with Lori and focused on himself. He began to complain that he had the same problem and often could not relax. He was half asking Lori to help him work on this problem. Lori giggled and said that

this was the funniest situation she had ever been in. Since the therapist took over Lori's primary process, she was free from it. In a field, the same role can only be occupied by one person. Therefore, Lori suddenly sprawled out on her stomach and said that if he could not relax she would relax for both of them. The therapist picked up on her role switch and helped her relax by taking over the role of the worker.

> T:   I think it is time to start now and to do something. Please Lori, let's work on something. (pause)
> L: Am I supposed to say something?
> T: Yes, you have to say something very important and wise now.
> L:   The solution is vacationing. (she is stretching, demonstrating relaxation.)
> T: From what?
> L:   From my own personality and having to change all the time or something. I just want to go on vacation!! (laughs)

For a while Lori looked very happy and enjoyed being on vacation. After a few minutes she sat up, put her head in her hands, started to cry and metacommunicate about her state.

> L:   I wouldn't even know what to do if I didn't have to work on something all the time and suffer and stuff like that. I always have the feeling that I have to work on myself and change all the time. I don't mind working on myself but that is slavery. I can never take a break. Vacationing is never going to work.

The therapist used the same method that worked before and picked up Lori's role. He acted depressed and hopeless and said that nothing would work, that he was a bad therapist and

that he needed a therapist himself now, to work on the tension in his shoulders. Lori understood that the therapist was acting like she had, and started to giggle again.

T: Do you feel some tension too?
L: Actually I do, but it is different. I felt it was a good solution actually to just go on vacation and then I felt suddenly that I was back to the beginning and that I didn't understand anything and that everybody must be bored and that it wasn't an important solution. I feel like I work so hard all the time to be likable and valuable or something and I don't want to do it anymore. (now sobbing again) And I want to be likable if I just lie on the floor and don't even understand the process structure.

Lori again sprawled out flat on her stomach and did not move. The people from the group told her that she was very cute and more than likable. After a while, Lori stopped crying and started to laugh again. She sat up, said that she felt done now, and thanked the therapist. The two hugged and sat back to listen to the discussion.

Lori gave a strong double signal in the beginning: although her voice sounded upset and one part wanted to work on her eating problem, in her body signals was another part which was leaning backward. This leaning back is the beginning unraveled signal of the relaxing process which emerged later.

The content of Lori's sentences showed her primary process of wanting to work and rid herself of the eating problem forever. This part of herself, the critic, was working on her. The vacationing, her secondary process, was in her body posture of

192

leaning backward. Her very first sentence unconsciously emphasized the "I don't.." by the break that followed the word "don't." The pause indicated that there was not only the part that wanted to work but also a large part that did not want to work and would resist any intervention which had the goal of working on her.

Another interesting and humorous indication of her secondary process emerged around associations to her female body and having breasts. The main characteristic of breasts for Lori was that they were just hanging around. This is the second indication of her secondary process of "hanging around," or vacationing and not working on herself. Paradoxically, as soon as the therapist wanted to work on the problem, Lori had to resist, since working would have followed her primary process of fulfilling the critic's demands. Her resistance during the work was a resistance against her critical primary process which was trying to change her. Therefore, she could not go along with any interventions that involved working, even if they were heading in the right direction.

It is interesting to see how the therapist, after having tried all kinds of interventions, was dreamed up to relax. The secondary signal which he missed in the beginning was dreamed up in his own body. This is a good example of how the most unrepresented dreamfigure in a field, in this case the relaxer, can be dreamed up in anybody in the field. This is one of the reasons why it can be very helpful if the therapist has a way of bringing in his own reactions. Only when the

therapist stopped working on Lori and focused on himself did he get congruent positive feedback from her. Since he took the role of the one needing help she was free to just go ahead and relax.

Working on herself had become a primary state for Lori. The critic was working on her, and any attempt to work with her would be at the same time proof that she was not okay, and additional material for her critic. By not noticing this and insisting on working on her, the therapist would become a helper for the primary critic, and would therefore encounter a lot of resistance. When the therapist finally took over her primary process of wanting to work, Lori was polarized into the secondary state and shouted that the solution was vacationing. After having relaxed for a while, she was able to metacommunicate about what was happening and had some insight into the pressure to change herself all the time in order to be likable. For Lori, psychological work had become a way of confirming and adapting to the inner critic which told her that she was boring, not valuable, and not likable enough. Her secondary process for this moment was to relax and be herself, and not even do psychological work.

Usually, the critic can bring a person to work on him or herself and to grow and develop, as we have seen in the preceding cases. This attitude of working on things and integrating them can become a primary state. Lori, as a psychology student, had learned to work on herself and was applying this idea like a program. But no program is right for all situations, not even integrating the critic. Sometimes it

is the moment to repress things, drop out, and just have fun relaxing and going on vacation.


Final Notes On The Primary Critic


In a case like Lori's, where the critic was primary, meaning that the critic itself wants to work on something, the goal is not to integrate the critic. There is already too much critical energy and the secondary pattern is to get away from the critic. People like this need to learn to take a break. In my experience with hundreds of cases, I have seldom seen the critic as a primary figure, and have therefore only presented the case of Lori. It seems the critic is far more frequently a secondary phenomenon.

This opens up some questions and gives room for hypotheses. Why did I encounter fewer primary critics than secondary ones? It is my suspicion that a positive attitude towards our inner critics is less frequent than is trying to repress them. Only after we have worked on the critics many times does this become a primary nature of ours, and then it is time to also learn to relax. Much more often, we are so busy trying to fight the critics off that we do not get to this stage. There is no one attitude that is the final solution to criticism, not even the willingness to integrate them. It is rather the flexibility to have access to all of the different states

which is vital. Perhaps we are frequently closer to the vacationing part than to the part that is ready to integrate criticism.

In cases where the inner critic appears as a primary process, when wanting to change and integrate the critic is primary, the individual has a secondary process of learning to relax or enjoy itself, to dance, hang out with friends and have fun. Also simply enjoying oneself can be difficult; it is almost as if there is an edge against happiness. Especially people in psychological circles, the so called 'growers club', are accustomed to feeling miserable and depressed. Being happy makes one almost suspicious: it indicates that one must be repressing something, being unconscious, or having too little depth. Many psychological directions stress the feeling and experience of pain, sadness, misery, suffering or criticism so much that it is almost a hypnosis. Feelings of happiness, pleasure, enjoyment and well-being become a secondary process. In order to be whole, one has also to have times of simply enjoying, having fun, and being happy.

# X. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this dissertation has been to study the phenomenon of self-criticism in detail. Specific aspects of self-criticism which have been covered include both the diverse nature of individual cases and the way self-criticism, when unraveled, can lead to important information. Another important purpose of this work has been to demonstrate the Process-oriented approach with several cases and to locate this approach to self-criticism in the context of work which has been done in other psychotherapeutic schools.

This work began with several questions. The first question was whether it could be possible to utilize inner criticism for individual growth and development, as a challenging component of the human search for wholeness. Usually, when attacked by an inner critic, we suffer. Lacking tools with which to unravel critical processes, we simply want to rid ourselves of them and live a more harmonious life. Case studies in process work have shown that impossible, difficult and irrational moments are often the seeds of new and wonderful developments. The goal of a Process worker is to discover these seeds and to water them, so that they may flourish and bloom.

This central hypothesis has been explained in detail and illustrated through numerous case examples. In each of them,

the encounter and process around the inner critic contributed new elements and further depth to the individual's growth process. The critics supported development in a certain direction, challenged the expansion of awareness, gave rise to a new figure or part, unfolded a new project or world view or became wise messengers or advisors.

The second question was directed toward the conditions under which the inner critic reveals its meaning. In Chapter VIII about stalking, I indicated that Process-oriented psychology is not only a collection of tools and methods, but a certain kind of life philosophy or attitude. This philosophy is characterized by its optimism and by a special attitude of dedication to the self, and the individual's perceptions and beliefs, as well as to the events in the world and around us. These inner experiences and external events are seen as more than accidental and causal chains of events, as potentially meaningful steps on one's path, if we are able to discover them as such. This optimism in Process Work is the result of exact observation and empirical work with numerous clients who were able to use all kinds of painful and difficult situations as doors into a new world.

In Chapter IV on Process Work, I introduced some techniques and tools which were later applied in the cases. As explained in this chapter and illustrated in the case discussion, it is apparent that these tools are subtle and not easily put to use. Process work demands a great deal of training and knowledge on the part of the therapist, since not every tool

is applicable in every situation. Which method will lead to a solution depends on the individual situation between the therapist and the client; no methods work for all inner critics. I have illustrated that inner critics are not uniform, but each is unique and individual. When a critical dreamfigure appears, it is important to discover its circumstances of appearance first, meaning its place in relationship to the other dreamfigures. It is also important to know its structural place; whether it is primary or secondary, a metacommunicator or an edgefigure. Each of these figures requires unique attention, needs an individual solution and specific integration work. The channel structure is also crucial to the work. Is the critic talking or is it been seen? Does it move or appear in the form of a feeling? What kind of content and style does the critic bring? What signals and double signals go along with it? Once we have found these signals and learned to unfold around them further, we have become part of an unpredictable unraveling process. Since all the inner critics are unique, we will have to meet each of them anew. Therefore, it is important to observe them with a researcher's mind, to stalk them carefully according to each signal situation, and not to assume that we already know them.

The third question considered why inner critics themselves do not reveal their purpose and deeper sense but create pain and suffering. These figures may not reveal their messages automatically because we have edges and resistances to certain

parts of ourselves, and do not allow them to naturally flow into our life and behavior. Our edges often leave us stuck on one side, on the side of the victim which is experiencing all the pain and suffering. These edges are a challenge to our awareness and potential to become conscious. We first have to learn to stalk and understand our own parts. Then we can integrate and use them, and no longer have to be stuck in either the role of the victim who is plagued by pain, torment and misery or the role of the critic, who is negative and judgemental. Very often the inner critic, as the dreamfigure which is the self-reflective part of an individual, is a beginning of such awareness.

The question about enjoying the encounter with the inner critic has answered itself through the discussion of different case examples where humor and fun were important aspects of the work. It seems as if when following their processes and picking up secondary signals people, not only become aware, but also have a sense of "rightness" and joyfulness that reveals itself in a humorous atmosphere during the process. This atmosphere often includes both the working client and the other participants. I hope to have shown that psychology and individuation are not only painful and serious, but can be spontaneous and a reason to enjoy and celebrate oneself.

What can now be said about the overall purpose and meaning of the phenomenon of inner criticism?

The topic of inner criticism is not unique to a few individuals, but can be related to in some way by almost everyone. Although all inner critics appear very individual and different, it seems as if everybody has had at one time some experience of feeling criticized internally. I am thus compelled to consider inner critics as a general quality or feature of the human psyche. Jung might call this an archetypal quality, Freud might speak of a drive, and others might speak of inherited roots or tendencies of the human mind.

If we recall Kant's definition of critique as the capacity of the mind to investigate itself and its way of functioning, it is clear that the critic is the part within us which is capable of self-reflection, and therefore self-consciousness and awareness. This human ability to self-reflect, if not the main difference between human beings and animals, may be one of the more influential ones. The ability to self-critisize can be seen as the distinct human potential to self-knowledge. An inner critic is not just another part pushing into the foreground, but a special part which is able to self-reflect. If we consider the critic as this part, we can say that it is the part which has more self-knowledge than we identify ourselves as having. It brings hidden parts and sides of ourselves into the foreground and helps us develop and integrate them further. The inner critic can become a kind of visionary which goes beyond our momentary state of development and includes further developmental steps, or a finalistic and

more total view of ourselves. It is as if the critic has knowledge about our potential.

From this perspective, I am criticized not only because I am not doing well in comparison to others, but because I am not living my whole potential. The inner critic is a part of myself which has a vision of my future self and in its own way believes in this vision. The critic plagues and pushes me and does not give up until I develop and use more of my potential qualities. I am actually criticized for not living up to the vision of my future self. In this sense, inner critics can be seen as manifestations of a the human drive or archetypal potential to more growth, development and awareness. I mentioned earlier that inner critics often drive us into change and further growth. It seems as if the critic is a carrier of a hidden knowledge that we are capable of more and the future visions about ourselves and the tasks we have to fulfill in our lives. In this sense, the inner criticism we suffer from is in proportion to and an indication of unused potential.

This purpose became very clear in the case of a female client of mine. Her nasty inner critic was telling her to jump out of the window and kill herself. When we worked with this critic, we discovered that it wanted her to do at least 'something' courageous. Being courageous in her case had to do with taking professional risks in her career. As soon as she changed her life and returned to her profession, the critic stopped

bothering her. When she quit her job, it came back and forced her to pick up professional life again, this time in a more risky way. She then started her own business. Her critic knew that she had these talents and potentials and literally pushed her into developing them.

This brings up the last question about long-term change. In all the cases discussed, we were looking at a very specific and momentary situation and constellation. This might bring up curiosity about long-term development or integration.

In none of the cases discussed have we found a long-term solution such as eliminating the inner critic permanently. I do not think that this would be possible, and it has not been my goal. My intent has been much more to illustrate different possible methods and examples for dealing with self-criticism under various momentary conditions.

Having inner critics is similar to being hungry. When we get hungry, we eat. We do not eat with the intent to never become hungry and never have to eat again. Eating every day is simply accepted as part of being alive. It might be the same with our inner critics. They are a basic human drive or characteristic, and will always be there to make sure that we keep changing and developing. If we integrate them today, they probably come back tomorrow. In each situation we will have to open up again to let the critics express themselves, and each time they will have something new to teach us. But some change is possible, and I believe that it does not always have to be as painful as it often is. It is my experience that the inner critics and

their characteristics change and are no longer so devastating, hurtful, and mean if we learn to invite them in and let them participate in our lives more easily.

But how do we learn this? Since we do not life in a culture where such tools or attitudes are taught in kindergarten, we will have to learn them later. The only way I know is by practicing over and over again. This means first being attacked and trying to repress the critics, then feeling miserable and victimized until we can not take it any longer and are forced to work our way out, then feeling better and starting all over again. By discovering hat we actually can experience enlightenment by facing the critic, the barrier against trying this will hopefully grow smaller each time, and eventually we may develop a flexibility and belief in working with the inner critics which allows us to simply go back and forth whenever we need.

Therefore, the long-term solution lies in a transformation of our attitude rather than in the disappearance of the inner critic. It is not a question of simply getting rid of the critic, since self-criticism is a basic human condition which help us to grow and keep moving towards the future. We need inner critics. But if we learn to focus on them with the same ease as we prepare and eat breakfast, our inner critics will no longer bother us much, but may develop into a constant source of enjoyment and immense learning. How about making a daily psycho-hygienic ritual of working on the inner critic? I am sure we all would be much more creative, lively, unconventional and incredible beings. The long-term solution

is not a critic free state but an attitude that allows us to be flexible and have enough trust in our own experiences and perceptions to follow them up and help them to develop further.

I hope to have shed some light in an often dark and lonely corner of human existence by introducing and applying the idea that self-criticism or the encounter with an inner critic is not only pathological and a neurotic outgrowth of past experiences, but has the potential to lead us into the future and bring sense, enlightenment, growth and enjoyment into our lives. I hope to have illustrated that inner critics can be a positive inner guides which challenge the individual on the path to wholeness and individuation. These critics are the carriers of and believers in future visions of individual development. I hope to have demonstrated this and perhaps to have awakened an interest in meeting the inner critics on different terms, as hidden potential. If we learn to treat them differently, they may become wonderful companions on the path to individuation.

The inner critics are like uncut diamonds. The bigger they are the more work one has to do, but the bigger they are, the more value they have once they are polished.

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206

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