

DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY OF ART

SHAUN MCNIFF



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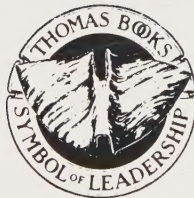
DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY OF ART

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**DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY
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I

INTRODUCTION

You must descend before you ascend . . . Henry Miller

By descending far down into the depths of the soul, and not primarily by a painful acquisition of many manual skills, the artist attains the power of awakening other souls . . . Ralph Waldo Emerson

Attending to Soul

The subject of art and depth psychology has emerged from my work in the arts and psychotherapy. I am not as interested in the combination of the academic disciplines of art and psychology as I am in viewing art as depth psychology. I have discovered that the arts, as Nietzsche said, “deepen” life. I use the term “depth psychology” because my work within the arts and psychotherapy is directed towards engaging the mysteries of the psyche together with the most intimate and complex aspects of human relationships. Although our artistic methods are different from those of the early psychoanalysts, we work with the same terrain. Depth psychology is soul psychology and there are obvious differences between the goals and methods of depth psychology and the experimental studies of behavioral science. Depth psychology is closer to religion, philosophy and the arts. It is part of a tradition that precedes behavioral science.

Psychoanalysis and early depth psychologies have been described by their critics as religious and artistic creations, and not science. I affirm

this relationship between depth psychology and older traditions for the study of soul. Theories always give way, and ultimately subordinate themselves to life, what I have described as the terrain that we share. The theory, like the artwork, is an interpretation of the terrain, which ultimately generates further interpretations. Life and interpretation continue and not necessarily the theory. We are always working from the basis of our personal experience, our craft and our historical epoch.

A depth psychology of art is without fixed and all-encompassing theoretical explanations. It is more subjective, aphoristic, fleeting and descriptive of multiple aspects of art. My descriptions and dialogues will move from one observation to another in a way that parallels artistic interpretation. The movement of art is constant. There are no permanent resting points. The pause is temporary, and a bridge from one experience to the next. An interplay of ideas increases depth and brings us closer to an experience while giving form to complicated configurations of thought.

I am motivated by a desire to integrate the artistic and psychological traditions at a time when the distance between them is great. I also want to reflect on the soul and the depths of the psyche from the perspective of my experience within the arts and psychotherapy. Our profession has not matured to the point where it can begin to realize its “potential” depth and intelligence that results from its formation in both “art” and “psychology.” We have the opportunity to establish a research tradition formed by a full cooperation between art and psychology. I may do little more than stumble along this ambitious path but I hope that my effort will encourage better prepared and more numerous travelers in the future.

Since committing my life to the arts in psychotherapy, I have imagined the discipline as something other than it is at the present time. I do not wish to deny the value of the actual things that people do within the profession on a daily basis. There will probably be little future improvement upon the practice of the art itself, as we can see evidenced by the history of psychoanalysis. The first experimental analytic studies may have in fact moved deeper into the soul than subsequent institutionalized processes. Therapists will revive the tradition of depth psychology by claiming the soul as their terrain. Within my vision, artists will become primary therapists who advocate advanced and lifelong training and self-improvement. The profession will not only transform the nature

of art but it will assist the older art history, studio art and humanities disciplines in the interpretation of the lives and works of artists.

In the past I had difficulty referring to myself as an art therapist because of the discipline's tendency to take on adjunctive roles within medical systems. I now realize that I have the freedom to re-imagine the nature of the profession and the tradition from which it emerges. My definition returns to the classical origins of the word psychotherapy as "attending to soul." The arts are soul's physical manifestations and expressive language. I have found that it is through concentration on organic things that we gain access to soul. Therefore soul psychology, also known as depth psychology, cannot exist without the arts, and art therapy is a primary method of attending.

The discovery of the need for an integration of the arts and psychotherapy has originated in the personal lives of art therapists. By attending to our longing for creative transformation, we learn more about what we can do to help others. The beginnings of our profession together with one of our most important sources of research are in the process of self inquiry. Art therapy is a manifestation of an old and often suppressed religious tradition based upon creativity, imagination and participation in the artistic process.

Style of Inquiry

I see psychology as an interplay of multiple and changing elements. The aphoristic style fits my interests in the breadth, multiplicity and the particulars of life as they manifest themselves on a daily basis. The aphorism relates more to natural dialogue and poetic expression than it does to psychological system making. It corresponds to the process of art where images emerge in synchrony with the emotions and converge into compositions which best articulate their expression. I do not wish to give the impression that this interplay is a process of effortless improvisation and illuminations. The artist knows the lifelong dedication to the improvement of craft. Behind the art object there is often an unrecorded trail of work, critical judgment, selection, rejection, re-structuring and polishing. The illuminations of art flow out of this labor, which when properly

pursued, helps to prepare the artist's ability to see and respond to creative feelings.

My style of inquiry is more concerned with closeness and intimacy than it is with distance. I respect the commonplace and the events of daily life which manifest themselves in successive instants. We give shape to this process through the focus of concentration and the themes of personal perceptions. Images appear and leave while we dream and move through our waking life. Insight, illumination and discovery occur in flashes, and meaning is given after the fact, through the interpretation of the image. Within this flux of instants, depth of experience can be attributed to the convergence of energies and elements of consciousness on particular points of concentration. The history of art and poetics has taught us that the universals are engaged through the particulars, the material things and events of daily living. Through artistic convergence many different elements are gathered together and given a sensuous form which makes them accessible to perception.

The ability to see, to open to what is before us and within us, and to become engaged, are fundamental to the experience of artistic depth. The images of most artworks are relatively constant, and the degree to which we experience them in-depth is dependent on how open and responsive we are at the particular time. Although struggle and perseverance are not foreign to the experience of depth in art, openness demands flexibility and the ability to let go of the pre-occupations of the moment in order to respond to fresh and unexpected events.

Behavioral science has not been an adequate forum for psychological inquiry into the arts. Therefore, we cannot continue to use traditional psychological terminology without a critical rethinking of meanings and definitions. The arts will shine through psychological investigations that use metaphors and language that are native to the creative process. It is not possible for me to begin an "in-depth" study of the arts without exploring a diverse set of ideas. Once the ideas are presented then it is up to the reader to orchestrate their interaction just as the artist shapes the interplay of images.

What distinguishes art as a mode of inquiry is the unequivocal subjectivity and individuality of its perspective. Artistic descriptions do not give the pretense of being without bias. The inevitable projection of a point of view is celebrated and therefore comes closer to soul which is as D. H. Lawrence said, distinguished by its individuality, spontaneity and

contradictions. If we are to explore the depths of the psyche as manifested in imagination, dreams and imagery we gain access through the arts. The artist lives to establish a personal form which allows the soul to take the organic shapes which acknowledge its being and serve its mission. The striving for individuality corresponds to the desires of the soul. Each artwork is an awakening or liberation of soul. The liberation is never permanent as confirmed by the artist's inability to realize full satisfaction from past creations. The eternal drive for more is not possessive and greedy but rather a desire for continuing vitality.

Experts in the psychology of art often present themselves as men and women committed to the discipline of rigorous and objective science. They are perceived by many as the eminent experts who illuminate the dark, passionate soul of the artist. Yet psychology in the classical sense is not behavioral science. My psychological tradition is one where art thinks about itself while inquiring into the nature of life.

Imagination and soul cannot be isolated within scientific formulations. The rules of science are one of many imaginative perspectives. Art is endogenous, produced from within. It is a self-discipline, a deepened sensitivity. There is an unspoken acceptance within the arts that life will never be explained with finality. Labels and analytic judgments simply stop, or temporarily arrest, the ongoing process of self-discovery. Observations, descriptions and explanations are part of our human nature, they express a longing for relationships with other people, life and history. Our attempts at explanation are manifestations of a desire to acknowledge and intensify the experience of life. They inspire others to respond with their interpretations. Art is never an end in itself but exists to stimulate more art.

Art objects embody the events of their epoch, giving form to what is experienced by particular people in specific times and places. Yet there is also a continuity of the fundamental dynamics and forms of artistic expression. Although there has been a recurrence of universal symbols in different cultures for thousands of years there has also been a consistent diversity of meanings attached to them . . . In *Apocalypse* D. H. Lawrence said:

Symbols mean something: yet they mean something different to every man. Fix the meaning of a symbol, and you have fallen into the commonplace of allegory (1982, p. 53).

There will never be final and fixed explanations for recurring symbols. The intent of the symbol is to do the reverse by keeping the imagination open and fluid. Interpretations are translations from one metaphor to another. Artistic inquiry is an imaginative contagion that keeps the process moving.

This book is comprised of four sections. I begin with a review of "Nomenclature" and a description of the need to think about art with language, images and concepts that correspond to its nature. The subject of "Interpretation" is a longstanding interest of mine as well as the *modus operandi* of a depth psychology of art. The "Re-imagining of the artist" is taking place through the work that we are doing today in the arts and psychotherapy. I deal with it within the context of depth psychology and with a desire to fuel the ambitions of my profession.

What is perhaps most unusual about this study may also be considered the most natural element of an artistically based inquiry into the depth psychology of art. I have decided to create the book with words and with my pictures. The decision to proceed in this way was more of an instinct than a conscious plan. There is a need for art therapists to investigate their personal artistic expression and to perceive art as a mode of psychological research. Inquiries of this kind are not intended to replace the disciplined and sensitive studies that we do on the artworks of other people. Support for one position or method does not imply the denial of others.

I hope that my experimentation with this form of psychological inquiry will help to make it possible for others to arrive at this way of working quicker than I did. For too long my identity as an artist has been on the sidelines. I think that this is true of our profession as a whole. Those of us who are committed to careers as artists as well as therapists and psychological investigators do not have to experience the radical separations that have characterized our work in the past. I think that these separations have been an unavoidable part of our beginnings which result from a coupling of psychology and art within a relationship where the former has been the dominant partner. Art has taken a secondary

position. It has been examined and controlled by the “higher” conceptual faculty of psychological science. My goal is to transform the relationship and create a new fusion in which the partners go further in their commitment to one another and merge, into a new, or perhaps very old, primacy, an offspring which is not bound to the dominance and subordination roles of the parents. My vision of this work involves the creation of a form of psychological and artistic inquiry which exists completely unto itself, a form that is neither psychology or art as we have known them.

I am grateful to Paolo Knill, Helen Landgarten, Catherine Cobb and Margot Fuchs for their critical reading of the first draft of the manuscript. Again thanks to Payne Thomas, Editor and the staff at Charles C Thomas, Publisher for producing this book together with the three previous volumes that helped to generate and shape my thoughts.

II

NOMENCLATURE

The first step in establishing a depth psychology of art is the search for language which evokes feelings that resonates with the mission. The artistic psychologist takes liberties with language and feels free to take words out of their familiar professional context and sometimes even uses them imaginatively. I agree with James Hillman's criticism that conventional psychological language is without soul. I have never been comfortable with it. The depth psychologist uses language poetically and is always investigating the evocations of words and their metaphoric connections to emotional life. Fixed meanings stop the workings of imagination, personal association and the creation of fresh insights. I recall an undergraduate philosophy teacher asking me to define my terms. In psychology we do too little of this. Even when we are not intentionally carving out new areas of inquiry, language is to be constantly questioned with its presuppositions and biases subjected to ongoing review and transformation.

Psychology:

The Greek origins of the word "psyche" are connected to soul, breath and life. Western religious traditions have distinguished soul from the body and the profession of psychology has virtually abandoned soul for behavioral science. I feel that the orientation of this depth psychology of art is closer to the original concept of psychology which involved a poetic study of soul. The classical discipline of psychology is therefore distinct from behavioral science. I support Hillman's call for a revisioning of psychology and I believe that there can be a renaissance of classical inquiry through the integration of the arts and psychology.

My colleagues in the arts and psychotherapy refer to our psychological approach to the arts as “soulwork.” Howard McConeghey has described art therapy as “soul-making.” Our purpose is one of awakening consciousness to the experience of soul. Art is a mode of access to, and expression of, soul. Psychology is the disciplined reflection on the process. I am of the opinion that depth psychology cannot exist without art. The early psychoanalysts based their work on images that were evoked through dreams, storytelling, dialogue and free-association. Depth psychology has been expanded through the arts and psychotherapy which augment the expression of soul through dance, drama, music, voice, the visual arts, poetry and other media.

Just as depth psychology is dependent upon imagery, artistic studies of soul are dependent upon psychological reflection. Literature, poetry and theatre are the art forms which have been most closely identified with psychological investigations, perhaps because of their verbal orientation and their primary role in the pre-psychological traditions of ancient and classical philosophy. The entire history of philosophy, as well as psychology, has maintained an unbroken continuity of poetic and artistic inquiry, which offers convincing evidence of the vital connections that exist between art and soul. Music, dance and the visual arts are equally psychological in their interpretations of life. Some may argue that their non-verbal qualities enable them to gain more direct access to soul.

It matters little whether one art form is more soulful than another, but it is necessary to maintain an openness to the many ways in which the soul manifests itself, and becomes intelligible to human sensibility. This study will be biased toward the visual and verbal arts because of their ability to be presented within a book format. Hopefully, a psychology will nevertheless emerge which will apply to the those art forms which cannot be directly expressed within a written context.

Many scholars have fervently called for a revival of the tradition of soul within psychology. These include Otto Rank and James Hillman. Thus there is little novelty in advocating a psychology of soul. Within the arts D. H. Lawrence and Friedrich Nietzsche have pursued a similar purpose.

Depth:

In nature the word “depth” is closely associated with water. The organic origins of psychological depth are in the fathomless sea. Depth suggests inward as well as downward motion, immersion. It tends to suggest the past rather than the future. We speak of “the depths of winter” but rarely the depths of any other season. Depth is therefore associated with pain, hardship, depression, darkness, self-consciousness, brooding and what Nietzsche referred to as “the magic of the extremes.”

Depth, in a religious sense, is connected to what we suppress and deny in our cultural history of ascent. Religions within “civilized” society have cast the depths and darkness into an evil context. They have favored the heavens and transcendence. Concepts of depth have been influenced by projections from the body. Our religious culture prefers metaphors based on upper zones of the body and it degrades lower human functions. The same applies to the heaven and hell dichotomy and our fantasies about what is above and below.

We think in terms of “penetrating” the depths and this suggests a feminine quality that is closely associated with the “she” of the earth and sea. In our artistic culture there have been many distinguished efforts made by “men” to penetrate the depths, suggesting a desire to grasp that which is most distant, and attractive, to them. It has been said that the woman lives closer to the depths of emotion in her daily, emotional experience and does not have the same longing to replicate this organic experience within the philosophical realm. But things are changing dramatically during our era in terms of things masculine and feminine and there may not be significant differences between the male and female experience of depth. Life, and even those things that have been previously described as feminine, the sea and the earth, are much greater than the projections that we make from our bodies and minds. In the experience of depth, genders meet while maintaining their specificity.

I do not wish to imply that depth and descent are more important than light and ascending emotions. I need both extremes as well as the many other qualities of art.

Soul:

Psyche and soul are synonymous. However, in recent history the former has been used in the secular context whereas the latter has closer ties to religion. This separation between the sacred and the profane is artificial and it has confused psychological inquiry.

“Soul” is the word that artists throughout history have used to describe the essence of what they are. Our psychological studies of art within the twentieth century rarely make reference to soul. They have created an imbalance toward the secular. I have called this study a “depth psychology of art” because I desire a revival of the sacred, passionate and soulful nature of art. As I suggested above, soul may be interchangeable with depth since they both suggest downward movement, darkness, density, intensity of feeling, and even depression. Because soul is a property of all things, it does not fit with a psychology of logical analysis, labeling and classification. Soul psychology is more evocative, suggestive, emotional and organically present.

Soul can be defined as a presence which may be expressed, as D. H. Lawrence suggests, through “vibrations.” Therefore it is experienced through the emotions and senses in cooperation with mind.

The organic and emotional nature of soul is fundamental to my use of this word, and its relationship to art. Soul is not separate from the body and from physical things. It is their material essence, their vitality, that which is native to a person, place or culture. The life-giving experience of soul is active, contagious, inspiring, and energizing.

Ancient cultures perceived soul as breath and wind, the energy of life. The depth psychology of art can be perceived as a “back to nature” movement. Art allows us to live within a natural, organic and sensible world. The artist’s longing for awe is an expression of a desire for the most complete relationship to nature and soul that is possible. The desire to go back to nature, back to soul, back to passion, is generally an unconscious motive which manifests itself in our contemporary interests in shamanic religion and rhythmic music. The rise of the arts within psychotherapy are expressions of back to nature motives within a mental health field that has become pathologically technocratic, with an over-emphasis on drugs.

The experience of soul is a nature fundamentalism that embraces the upper and lower planes of consciousness and various other directions. The “separation” from, and “loss” of, nature result in alienation. Psycho-

therapy is an effort to establish a vital, spontaneous and satisfying relationship with nature, within and without. The movement toward nature and soul brings psychotherapy to art.

Emotion:

Emotion is the active, motor element of art. It generates and responds to expression.

Health:

A condition in which pathology is transformed into the affirmation of life.

Psychoaesthetics:

The depth psychology of art fits within the context of what I have described as psychoaesthetics rather than traditional psychoanalysis. Psychoaesthetics includes analytic inquiry but is not restricted to it. Analysis cooperates with poetic reflection. Imagination, sensuous investigation and the varied modes of artistic thought are involved by psychoaesthetic inquiry. The recent trend to perceive psychology as a behavioral science has yet to realize, that like philosophy, psychology cannot engage the totality of the psyche without aesthetics and direct sensory experience. The older philosophical tradition includes both the philosophy of science and the philosophy of art. The belief that psychology is behavioral science completely overlooks the contributions of the arts and sensuous thought to human understanding.

This attempt to establish a depth psychology of art is more sympathetic to discovery through poetic inquiry than that it is to analytic reduction. The process of inquiry suggests open and imaginative investigation, close examination, questioning, looking into, seeking, asking and listening. Analysis and the related concept of psychoanalysis are not as compatible with art. They divide and separate parts from one another and their principal focus is the operation of the reasoning mind within a logical system of thought. Analysis is the dualistic complement of synthesis.

We do not analyze and reduce works of art to categories established by the intellect. We inquire into what the artwork means to us. The process is ongoing as contrasted to the analytic objective of resolution. Inquiry encourages reason together with aesthetic judgment. A depth psychology of art must complement psychoanalysis with psychoaesthetics. The psyche is more than the reasoning and logical mind.

Manifestation:

Artistic images are manifestations. They “emerge” from the interplay between the artist and media. The religious qualities associated with manifestation, revelation and emergence are useful in describing the way in which the image appears because these words suggest that it comes from a place that is not completely associated with the technical activities of the artist. The craft of the artist is an essential part of the manifestation process but these skills are instrumentalies, ways of making contact with the image that further its emergence. The creative process is an interplay between making and emerging. The belief that soul speaks through the artist is closely associated with the prophetic function in religion, and the medium within the spiritualist tradition. The prophet is an inspired interpreter of the gods. Oracles function in a similar way. I believe that art aspires to these older traditions. Reference to the organic substance used by artists as the “medium” suggests a divine agency, a material through which the message is transmitted. Artists are comfortable with these older psychological concepts and frequently use them to describe their experience.

Although art is for me a religious activity, it differs from organized religion in many ways. Where religions focus on prophets from the past, art suggests that we are all prophets in potentiality. The history of art also makes it clear that some are better than others. Revelation is occurring constantly. Art demonstrates that we need only the desire and sensitivity to witness the process. The prophetic functions of artists who serve society, or dedicate their lives to art, can again be compared to religion. The “calling” of art is close to the religious vocation in that both the artist and the religious person commit themselves to a contemplative life.

Artistic manifestation is a process of health. I have observed how people beginning to work in my art therapy training groups have an

intense desire to express themselves. The urge for self-revelation is often reversed into a fear of expression. The instinct to reveal the self is strong in the beginning of a relationship. It can be likened to the contractions of birth, the urge to be present. We find it more difficult to maintain the self-revelation impulse in long-term relationships. The beginning is characterized by a need to be seen and heard as well as a desire to influence others. Art therapy can be described as giving people the opportunity to be seen and heard and to influence another person. It also enables us to confront our resistance to opening the heart. The self-revelation process goes on in spite of our internal obstacles. Our most severe restraints on expression are also manifestations of our inner life.

The world is constant expression and the artist strives to stay open to fresh impulses of creative energy. Certainty is sacrificed to opening. Some manifestations are more energetic or soulful than others. The artist longs for the “deep” and spontaneous wellspring of expression which contrasts to the habitual behaviors of a personal or cultural routine. In the arts depth is usually a characteristic of tone, style and commitment; the way a person operates or expresses emotion; the quality of an interpretation of experience. The forms of art are markings left along the way. One measure of the value of an artwork over time can be assessed by its ability to embody the events of an epoch. It can be said that the truly great artworks also transcend their material context and give form to the archetypal qualities of life.

Unconscious:

I use the word “unconscious” as an operational term referring to the absence of awareness. I do not think of it as realm, place, or part of the psyche, inhabited by images and memories. It is not even an energy or motivational force. When the psychoanalysts attributed motivational powers to the unconscious, they used it to replace the older, deeper and more evocative soul. They chose a secular and neutral concept that could be adapted to a scientific framework. The unconscious could thus be limited to their definitions. Soul, by contrast, has many meanings within all of the cultures of the world from shamanism, to the College of Cardinals, and rock and roll. These concepts often conflict with one

another. I prefer this multiplicity and range of meanings. It fits my image of depth.

The psychoanalysts also projected a modern organizational structure onto the psyche, dividing it into “divisions” that interact with one another but which also perform distinctly different tasks. The psyche cannot be divided and classified in this way.

By clarifying the confusion between “soul” and “unconscious” we go deeper with each. Soul is a quality of all things and we give it more attention by becoming aware of what is immediate and present, but unconscious. By looking at the word, unconscious, negatively, and with reference to aspects of life that we are not aware of, we assume that these things are right before us, and capable of being perceived. These distinctions return us to the world of phenomena, real things.

D. H. Lawrence described the unconscious as “darkness.” He did not accept the Freudian suggestion that the unconscious was a cellar of repressions, but rather imagined it as a “fountainhead.” He perceived the unconscious as a spontaneous and passionate source of life and motivation and rejected the negative image of the unconscious as “a shadow cast from the mind” (1986, p. 212). Lawrence also preferred the older, more mysterious and intangible “soul” over the “unconscious,” and he felt that soul manifests itself through the process of creation. He concludes that “Religion was right and science is wrong” (*Ibid.*, p. 214).

Psychology did succeed in transforming soul into its concept of the unconscious. The idea fits within the larger mechanism of a self-contained theory. The temporary logic and acceptance of the psychological explanation will in time shackle the imagination, just as rigid religious ideas obstructed the explorations of early psychoanalysts.

My childhood religious introductions to soul maintained that every person has a unique and eternal soul. At this point in my life I do not think possessively about soul, or my soul. It is not something that can be owned. However, the association of the human being with soul adds dignity. It makes us, and all of life, more sacred than we imagine ourselves and the world within secular, psychological concepts. Lawrence’s reflections on soul support the idea of uniqueness. He believed that soul is a highly individualized phenomenon which manifests itself subjectively. The arts unconsciously manifest soul in the vast particulars of creative expression and continue the vitality of its presence in the world during an epoch when its name has been repressed. In the ultimate sense I must

agree that the organic embodiments of soul, as unconscious as they sometimes are, may be more important than the name, or doctrines, of soul. The radical artist, and the radical materialist, encourage us to live only with the things themselves and our organic sensitivities. The organic world of soul will continue to exist below and outside consciousness.

Religion:

My sense of religion is not restricted to collective belief and worship. In *Art and Artist*, which appeared in 1932, Rank contrasted art and religion and maintained that there was a dualism between “individual desire” and “collective belief.” He said:

the development of art has always striven beyond religion, and that its highest individual achievements lie outside purely religious art, until in modern times it completely emancipates itself from that influence and even takes its place (1968, p. 16).

The depths of the interplay between art and religion are suggested by contradictory, or paradoxical statements in Rank’s theory. Just before declaring that “personal creativity is anti-religious,” he says that art “is religious from the start” (Ibid., p. 15). He describes how the arts, throughout history, have objectified the changing ideas and beliefs about the soul. The soul therefore becomes physically present and known through the material forms of art. Rank suggests that the art of “primitive man” was the individualistic expression of a self-reliant person prior to his becoming part of a collective and “sedentary” agricultural community. The same can be said of early religion.

Institutionalized religion has not been able to embrace its anti-thesis and the extremes of religious doctrines and laws have turned away people of individual conscience who desire free and open inquiry, as well as people desiring to engage all religious traditions. Art has provided a tradition for many of these “free-thinkers” and thus continues its historic mission of giving form to changing concepts of soul. A conceptualization of religious consciousness and reverie which includes both institutional and non-systematic forms resolves the paradox between the collective and the individual, the thesis and its anti-thesis. Art need not

oppose religion or attempt to prove its superiority by “going beyond”; it continues as a manifestation of primary religious instincts.

Art as Unconscious Religion:

I would like to approach a definition of art, as we see it today, via the negative by saying that it is a form of unconscious religious expression. Twentieth century psychology has had little direct contact with religion. The early psychoanalysts repressed the religious consciousness and tried to convince us that the sexual appetites were our most fundamental human desires.

D. H. Lawrence, widely associated in the world of literature with the liberation of the sexual nature of humanity, clearly stated that erotic expression, as important as it is, serves a religious motive which is manifested in what he described as a “deep sense of purposive, creative activity.” Lawrence described how a person is “lost” without this.

When he makes the sexual consummation the supreme consummation, even in his *secret* soul, he falls into the beginnings of despair (1986, p. 109).

Religious consciousness has been severely repressed by both art and psychology as they unconsciously carry on the work of the soul. Religion, not always characterized by illumination and benevolence, suffers from a backlash, caused by its history of oppressive, blind and cruel repression. When sexuality and other fundamental expressions of soul are unduly repressed by a society’s religious institutions, they go underground and begin to express themselves in other ways, often outside conscious awareness. Psychoanalysis, originating in an era of relatively severe sexual inhibition, clearly documents how the sexual impulse will manifest itself in areas outside sexuality. The same thing happens with the repression, or rejection, of the religious impulse which will manifest itself outside institutional religion. Those who severely criticize “religion” are typically driven by a deep religious purpose and an often unconscious desire to renew the religious instinct.

Institutionalized religion is a mode of human organization, control and politics. Art is an unorganized religion, a de-institutionalized religion,

an unconscious religion. The artist's sense of religion is generally concerned with the universal human desire to make contact with soul and the source of life. Art's religious instincts are focused on the depths, the experience of awe, mystery and imagination. The combination of art and religion deepens both. This vision of art must be distinguished from the gallery conventions and trends. The soulful essence of the religious experience, is without the rules, regulations, dogma, and politics which have more to do with historic functions of governance in both churches and art institutions. Lawrence Durrell, one of the twentieth century authors who has most thoroughly explored the psyche through art, wrote in his novel *Sebastian* that:

Absolutes spawn restrictive systems; but provisionals in their elasticity allow us to breathe (1983, p. 175).

Religion has created an unattractive image for itself in many periods of human history. Tolstoy described how churches used the arts to stultify and hypnotize (1951, p. 86). Religion is always in need of artistic transformation and renewal. Whereas art, forever connected to the religious impulse, must be similarly revived. This is the message of Nietzsche. His "death of God" image was concerned with the destruction of the old religious culture. It is a profoundly religious fantasy, corresponding to the cycle of death and resurrection. Since he could not find the means for personal and cultural renewal within organized religion, Nietzsche turned to art. He said that "Art raises its head where religions decline" (1984, p. 105). Those who associate Nietzsche exclusively with nihilism are themselves overlooking and negating his positive message of renewal.

The association of art with religion is an expression of our longing for depth and soul. We have taken the political manipulations of religion, in both its conscious and unconscious forms, to their limits and we again desire something deeper. We respect and value the different religious traditions within the world but we see how the politics of institutions often serve the ambitions of those who desire to separate and control life in the name of God. What they are actually doing is promoting their national, tribal or sectarian culture within a world of competing ideologies.

All of the religions of the world have served important political, moral and health functions. Their rituals and traditions reflect these positive

motivations. The two essential themes that I see within religion are political and poetic. When I talk about art as religion, people cringe who have had negative experiences with organized religion. They are equating religion with their negative political experiences within its institutional framework. The functions of governance, fund-raising, dogma, moral codes and social control are expressions of religion's political nature. Although I may be critical of religion's tendency toward excessive prescription, I do not negate its fundamental political mission. Historically, it has been a vehicle for both oppression and liberation. Art itself can be viewed from a similar political perspective.

The poetic dimension of religion is closer to depth psychology. It embodies love, healing, mystery, divine expression and human attempts to become involved with creation. The word poetry derives from the more ancient, poesy or poesis, which means "creation" or "a making." The artist comes closer to "The Creator" through participation in the process of creation in art. If we believe that God is in fact speaking, through human intermediaries, in the scriptures, then the primary documents of all of the world religions confirm that God speaks poetically, through literature and art. It would then seem logical that people who aspire to a life close to God, choose to immerse themselves in poetic expression.

Poetry is the mainstream, the fountainhead of religion. It does not matter whether one contains, or originates from, the other. The two are dependent on each other like water and a storage vessel. They are completely interdependent, often merged and always changing. Poetic expression, in both oral and scriptural forms, is the instrumentality of religious continuity through the ages. The religious imagination is kept alive and revitalized through poetics which enable it to stay close to the depths of human emotions. We can open to any page of the sacred scriptures of the world religions and find poetry. The following passage from *The Koran* shows a masterful poetic use of metaphor, drama, imagination and personification.

... so God raiseth the dead to life, and showeth you his signs, that peradventure ye may understand. Then were your hearts hardened after this, even as stones, or exceeding *them* in hardness: for from some stones have rivers bursted forth, others have been rent in sunder, and water hath issued from them, and others have fallen down for fear of God.

The Koran, Chapter II

D. H. Lawrence, Nietzsche and W. B. Yeats tried to deepen and renew religion through art. Although their values were formed by the religious environments in which they were raised, they could not engage the depths of the soul within the religious conventions of their contemporary culture. They turned to art, which would at first appear to be outside religion. However, my belief is that by engaging art, they went *inside* the religious consciousness where all cultures and the continuities of history complement rather than oppose one another. Writers, playwrights, and poets, often using scripture as a primary source of artistic inspiration, have carried on the traditions of depth psychology through the ages. This is probably because they work in the same medium. Literature has complemented scripture with its portrayals of life.

The art forms of dance, music, the visual arts and storytelling are closer to older, shamanic and pre-scriptural religious consciousness. There is an immediacy of sensory experience. Images and feelings are made tangible through sound, the body and objects. The sensory qualities of the arts parallel the sacramental tradition in religion where the invisible manifests itself through "sensible signs." Every religious tradition continues the ancient practices of divination which assume that God's desires are revealed by nature through "signs and wonders".

Rock and roll music can be viewed as an unconscious religious expression, establishing a continuity with early ecstatic traditions, shamanism and tribal rhythms. As with other primal forms of religious expression, rock and roll embraces darkness and light, the passions, the body, the group, and fundamental rhythms. Rock and roll is distasteful and threatening to religious orthodoxies because of its direct access to the emotions, the soul and bodily instincts. These artists are sometimes shamanic performers who unconsciously act out the archaic ascent into the heavens and the descent into the underworld searching for lost souls. Like shaman's, they are "psychopomps," who use costuming and shocking behaviors together with ecstatic dance and song to stun people out of their routines which insulate them from the pulsations of primal emotion.

Shamanic traditions define illness in terms of lost or abducted soul and this fits with rock and roll's portrayal of the artist as an intermediary who might be trying to regain the lost soul of a love relationship or even the lost soul of our era. The Beatles were the white shamans who flew with *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds* and the Rolling Stones are the black

shamans crying out for *Satisfaction* and *Sympathy for the Devil*. The Rolling Stones sanctified the passions of the lower self, the satanic dimension, that was both fabricated and repressed by religions committed only to the upper self. They liberated the gods of darkness and enabled them to take their place again within the pantheon of soul.

Shamanic and aboriginal gods are portrayed with bulging eyes, cave-like mouths, massive teeth and tongues, large sexual organs, and other expressions of their sensual and passionate nature together with combinations of animal, serpentine and human features. Within the Christian tradition the devil is depicted in these sensuous and beastly forms, revealing religion's repression of animal life and sexual impulses. We tend to project diabolic attributes onto elements within our nature that we fear and repress. Rock and roll resurrected aboriginal imagery and revealed that it was magnificently human and not to be feared. It achieved William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in which darkness and light live together with a respect for all forms of life.

Rock and roll's massive appeal can be attributed to its universal and unifying rhythmic power and its liberation of the primal religious instincts of the psyche. Long before the emergence of rock and roll as a dominant cultural force in his native England, D. H. Lawrence criticized "modern music" as excessively analytic and restricted to the "upper plane" of consciousness. He yearned for passionate art which transmitted "vital vibrations." Although it is pure speculation to imagine whether or not Lawrence's critical consciousness would have supported our contemporary rock and roll, his psychology of art was driven by the same repression of the primal instincts that ultimately empowered rock and roll, and which account for its remarkable lasting power. In 1921 Lawrence called for a resurrection of primal, rhythmic music that was to later emerge in his novel *The Plumed Serpent* (1926):

Time was, however, when music acted upon the sensual centres direct. We hear it still in savage music, and in the roll of drums, and in the roaring of lions, and in the howling of cats. And in some voices still we hear the deeper resonance of the sensual mode of consciousness (Lawrence, 1986, p. 67).

Depth in music is as Lawrence suggests, associated with “the sensual mode of consciousness” and the rhythms which summon the lower planes of the body, the pulse of the blood and the body’s ecstatic expressive powers. This music is an integral part of what Lawrence described as the “savage” consciousness and its religious expression. The “horrors” that stiff society attaches to the culture of rock and roll are manifestations of long repressed human depths.

Its vast cultural impact on the masses throughout the world validates rock and roll’s ability to release and *transform* unexpressed instinctual energy. I believe that rock and roll not only manifests an unconscious shamanic religious consciousness of primal rhythms, but serves a healing function in helping to restore tone and organic vitality to the body, the soul and culture (McNiff, 1987).

Art:

My description of art as unconscious religion is an idea, an opinion, which is nevertheless in keeping with a tradition of definitions beginning with the Greek conceptualization of art as an imitation of nature. None of these definitions and ideas contain everything that art was, is, and will be. I introduce the unconscious dimension to revive connections between art and religion and to re-engage primal sources.

The history of definitions given to art has been characterized by intangibility and abstraction, largely a result of art’s proximity to soul, which was equally elusive. Within this abstract context I believe that art is a process of ensoulment. It expresses and responds to the energies of soul, and is thus a medium of depth psychology. But this definition is not tangible and specific enough to satisfy my desire to understand what art is.

Art defined organically, phenomenologically, is all of the things that we do in its name and this results in the generation of a huge list of activities ranging from classical painting, sculpture, poetry, literature, music, dance and theatre to conceptual art, performance art, and the perception of life as art. This organic definition of art as including the various activities done under its aegis, and within its tradition, assumes eternal frontiers, new forms and fresh transformations which embody the material consciousness of the artist’s epoch. The dominant art forms

of our era—film, video and electronic music, were inconceivable at the beginning of this century.

This organic definition supports art's multiplicity, its many forms and our inability to establish a single, absolute classification for its activities. Art exists because we need a conception of human experience which has few restrictions together with the most sophisticated forms of discipline and craft. The organic nature of art has been expanded to include the aesthetic perception of values. The way in the Dada artists took objects from everyday life and placed them in a museum context to be perceived as works of art, provides an example of how artistic action ultimately incorporates aesthetic theories, returning them to organic life.

Art has often been defined as the anti-thesis of science. I see this opposition as suggesting a close alliance between art and science as partners in the inquiry into existence. Art is however presented in the negative, as "a non-scientific mode of learning." Classical definitions of art are almost exclusively focused on beauty and the imitation of nature. They are extensions of the Platonic tradition of speculation and the transcendence of material forms whereas science is closely linked to Aristotle, empiricism, formal logic and proof. This strict dichotomy has contributed to both the nobility of art as well as its irrelevance within, and separation from, the practical spheres of life.

The influence of Plato's ideals and concepts about art have not only survived, but they have been magnified for over two thousand years. The classical notion represents beauty as goodness, truthfulness, contemplative delight and divine perfection. These qualities are contained in nature and therefore art imitates nature's perfection. At the end of the 19th century George Santayana expressed the Platonic position in *The Sense of Beauty*.

But in certain moments of contemplation, when much emotional experience lies behind us, and we have reached very general ideas both of nature and of life, our delight in any particular object may consist in nothing but the thought that this object is a manifestation of universal principles. The blue sky may come to please chiefly because it seems the image of a serene conscience, or of the eternal youth and purity of nature after a thousand partial corruptions . . . Those intuitions which we call Platonic are seldom scientific, they seldom explain the phenomena or hit upon the actual law of things, but they are often the highest expression of that activity which they fail to make comprehensible (1955, p. 8).

Santayana's celebration of Platonic intuition in philosophy also applies to the closely related traditions of poetry and scripture. The Platonic perception of art's relationship to nature suggests the principle of correspondence and the artist's participation in the larger energy of creative transformation. Beauty is a value judgment and an expression of desire. From an organic perspective the Platonic experience of beauty results from the sympathetic response within an individual to external forms. To the extent to which Plato's highly abstract interpretation of art, based upon the archaic principle of correspondence between the universal and the particular, became an all inclusive definition of art, then we have the beginning of the tradition in which interpretations of art begin to replace, and govern, art itself. Plato's interpretations are imaginative and valuable, as validated by their longevity. But they must be recognized as interpretations, abstractions, which cannot completely embody the organic and highly diversified phenomena of art. Art is not an imitation of nature, but it is nature, manifesting human existence, feelings and constructions. The longevity and eternal appeal of art is to be attributed to its organicity and its ability to continuously generate interpretative responses.

Art is an interpretation of experience and this dimension will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. When a single interpretation such as the "art as imitation of nature" idea begins to dominate consciousness, the stage is set for the rise of its anti-thesis. For example, artists have popularized the notion that nature imitates art. Evidence to support this point can be seen in the social effects of contemporary film, music and video. Political artists use their expressions to change attitudes, policies and the course of history. Rather than taking a position on one side of the dichotomy I prefer the interplay between differences.

Investigations of the practical and organic nature of art reveal the entrepreneurial psyche of the artist who takes risks, acts as a promoter and impresario, creates markets as well as objects, moves decisively and quickly in response to opportunities, follows instincts, takes advantage of moments, transforms social scenarios, desires adventure and constantly works with, or against, the material world. Popular concepts about the lives of artists continue to favor images of contemplative idealism rather than practical involvement with daily life.

Will:

Many of my closest colleagues have a negative image of the will. They think of it as an oppressor, an emotional whip which coerces the person to follow its rules of order. I believe that the desire to eliminate will is confused with a longing to live without oppressive guilt.

My image of the will is more spontaneous, creative and positive. I have adapted the tradition of freewill to support a therapeutic philosophy of artistic transformation. Freewill is the anti-thesis of strict and hopeless determinism. The will is soul itself, voluntas, animus, the process of making decisions and finding direction, shape and discipline in life. It is a commitment and purpose that need not be inflexible and narrowly focused. I experience will as energy, desire, focus, concentration, discipline and art's motive power. D. H. Lawrence, himself a critic of will when too broadly defined and universally associated with its negative manifestations, did make the distinction between negative and positive will in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious* where he contrasts the will as "soul-impulse" against its "automatic fixations." He concludes that the will is the faculty that we use to free ourselves from "automatism" (1986, p. 248).

Otto Rank has been the most prominent advocate of the free and creative will within the tradition of depth psychology. Therapy, as envisioned by Rank, is an art that liberates and refines the transformative will and the creative energies of soul (1950 and 1950). He perceived the soul as an energetic power which also suggests a description of the liberating will.

Rank's will psychology reinforces the belief that there are connections between the artist and the "neurotic," both of whom have been endowed with strong, creative wills. I do not wish to suggest that the artist and the "neurotic" can always be differentiated. We might use them as names for elements within the individual psyche. Where the artist is able to focus the energies of transformation in positive "acts of will," the "neurotic" uses creativity to fabricate distortions. As I have stated in my "artistic theory of mental health and therapy" (1986), psychosis is imagination turned against the self.

In *Truth and Reality*, Rank described how we have historically tried to justify, and excuse, acts of will through religious morality which subordinates the human will to the will of God, or the religion's conceptualization of humanity's base and evil nature. Psychoanalysis, under the illusion

that it was departing from the moralistic tradition, simply replaced the will of God as the primary determinant with the “id,” their term for instinctual impulses (Rank, 1950, pp. 222–223). Psychoanalytic philosophy, takes responsibility away from the individual and provides what Rank described as “consolation” in its laws of causation which maintain that there are determinants outside the consciousness of the person. The psychoanalytic concept of the id, with its negative implications, is close to the older religious concepts of the lower passions. Freud and those who were subsequently absorbed by his ideology, concentrated on the sexual and pathological dimensions of the will impulse. They did not see its connection to creativity. Within the moral context there is little innovation within psychoanalysis, but rather a changing of names and an adjustment of the ancient “upper” and “lower” dichotomy to Freud’s framework.

Rank said that Nietzsche was “the first and has been up to now the only psychologist” (Ibid., p. 226). He recognized the individual will as the source of creation and power, and attempted to free it from the restriction of moral traditions. Nietzsche’s objective was one of making an artwork of his personal experience, something that Rank perceived as a thoroughly psychological activity which could even affirm the artist’s “evil will.”

He was himself, which is the first requirement for a psychologist (Ibid., p. 226).

Freud by contrast is perceived as a system builder and a maker of scientific rationalizations which are essentially moralistic. The Freudian interpretation shifts responsibility from the individual and has resulted in an increase in the guilt of parents and society. Rank supports the autonomy of will as the creative force in art and life. He echoes Sartre’s belief that we make ourselves, our lives.

In my view the patient should make himself what he is, should will it and do it himself, without force or justification and without need to shift the responsibility for it (Ibid., p. 229).

Rank's psychology was intended to liberate the creative will from the moral "compulsions" and what he described as the "counter-will" of ideologies and psychologies. His moral mission can be seen within a phenomenological perspective if we compare the individual being "himself," and making "himself," to the object or the artwork being perceived as itself and speaking for itself. The art object, the image, the material, have existences of their own which interact with the will of the artist. The world, and the creative process, can be perceived as an interplay of wills which cannot be reduced to the causal laws of a single psychological system within the context of what I call clinical realism. The individual will, must, as Rank said of Nietzsche, be itself, and from this context of self responsibility and awareness, it can more sensitively interact with the phenomena of the world, without reducing them to reflections of its personal perspective.

The manifestation of will in the person, and the interaction with art materials, does not assume that everything in the world moves according to the desires of human consciousness. I do not advocate a revival of magical thinking in which the will of the individual establishes an alliance with the supernatural for the purpose of control. I perceive will as a principle of intention, transformation, desire and self responsibility. In the case of my personal will I can easily subordinate it to the larger will of the world, or nature. Willfulness demands sensitivity to the interplay with the wills of other people, to collective goals and service to social causes. In my life the will does more responding than initiating. It is an energy of interplay with the emergence of feelings, images and situations. The will does not negate concepts of fate and destiny. It takes advantage of moments. It responds, acts and creates in cooperation with other forms of life. When chance interrupts a course of action, the will enables us to adapt and change and ultimately transform conflict into new life. The creative will is responsive, sensitive and expert at the interplay with chance, accident, surprise and phenomena that manifest themselves independent of its intentions.

In *Moby Dick*, Ishmael reflects upon the extent to which he can shape his destiny while he sinks into the reverie of weaving a mat with Queequeg:

...aye, chance, free will, and necessity—no wise incompatible—all interweavingly working together. The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course—its every alternating vibration,

indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events (Melville, 1961, p. 214).

Interplay:

Art as interplay advocates exchange and dialogue between different positions, wills, materials and philosophies; between what is inside and outside; and between the artist and nature. The interpretation of art is a free interplay between the consciousness of the artist, the image and the interpreter. The interplay is limited within the context of social and clinical realisms where interpretation follows the rules of the prevailing theory of reality.

My psychology is essentially a process of interplay. I avoid becoming fixed on one side of a dualistic argument. The two positions need each other in order to exist. The perception of “two” opposing forces may in itself block access to a more resourceful interplay between other possibilities.

Clinical Realism:

I refer to the belief that art and the psyche can be explained within a rational science model, as expressions of clinical realism. Interpretations of this kind take place within the Freudian tradition which follows the idea that the expressions of artists are determined by hidden biological and social influences which can be revealed through reason. Clinical realism reduces artworks to what it believes to be the motivating determinants within the artist's psyche. Motivations are of course limited to the interpreter's theoretical framework. Clinical realism reduces everything that it observes into its concepts.

I am not against being clinical or realistic. Clinical realism is a name that I give to a literary genre, a bad one in my opinion, which has dominated the psychiatric and psychological interpretation of art. The problem lies in the effort to interpret art according to principles of scientism, far removed from artistic experience, and the belief

that rational science holds the key to the illumination of the artist's psyche.

Science is not at fault. It is a pre-eminent manifestation of human imagination, questioning and disciplined inquiry. Clinical realism is also bad science. In his inspirational treatise on the essence of scientific thought and method, W. I. B. Beveridge (1950) declares that scientific research is itself an art that cannot be restricted to fixed procedures and concepts.

Obsession:

In the relationships that artists have with ideas and images, there must be an obsession, something to hold attention over long periods of work. In-depth treatment requires time, sustained energy. Insights and revelations emerge from prolonged relationships. There must be a concentration of forces, a focusing of powers. Surface encounters contrast to depth. Truman Nelson told me that each of his books was the result of an obsession with a particular idea, person or event: "I cannot write a book unless it is an obsession. It cannot be a desire." The artistic obsession arouses and manifests our deepest feelings. The successful artwork then provokes a corresponding obsession in others.

Simplicity:

The simpler, the deeper. Pare the work down to the most essential language. A clean description, without excessive sentimentality, will allow people to have their sentimental reactions. Focus and direct engagement are essential to depth.

Evocation:

An evocation is an act which calls forth, summons, and inspires. A depth psychology of art is more concerned with evocations and suggestions than definitions.

Sacrament:

A sensible sign for the invisible life of soul. Art is part of the archaic and mysterious sacramental tradition through which soul is manifested through visible symbols.

Recurrence:

The images of art are more closely associated with a process of recurrence, renewal and rebirth than they are with invention and evolution. The individual artist's style and skill grow, evolve, improve and also decline. But this personal experience cannot be projected onto the broader context of art. The history of art does not suggest perfection over time and there is scant evidence to support evolutionary advancement toward higher stages of consciousness. Perfection has been achieved within different epochs in the forms of Renaissance architecture, the sculpture of Phidias, the operas of Verdi, the voice of Maria Callas, the plays of Shakespeare. There is rarely a consistent, evolutionary improvement, even within the works of individual artists who typically move in and out of grace. Every work is an attempt to make contact with the wellspring.

Artists do perfect and refine their styles and go through periods in their work. The same applies to the history of art where artists from a previous generation influence their successors in the perfection of a "period" style. In this case the style is not as characteristic of an individual as it is of a collective effort made by many artists during a particular historical epoch. I prefer periods, to stages, since the latter assumes hierarchical and linear movement. Evolution, with its upward movement, is actually an avoidance of depth. Evolution focuses on what is considered by the interpreter to be of value. The investment of energy in what is valued as "good" propels its advancement and ensures the decline of phenomena which are overlooked and discarded.

The process of recurrence enables images from the past to manifest themselves again in the present, where they are reborn and receive fresh interpretations. In the arts we see more evidence of recurrence rather than evolution. The former is a primary manifestation of depth, continuity and the survival of vital and relevant forms. The great periods in art are typically times of renaissance; when classical forms are revived and

reinterpreted within the consciousness of the epoch. Depth is established through bonds with antiquity and the constancy of the artistic pulse. Recurrence also supports tradition and an understanding of the past, not as a restrictive text for action, but as an inspiration for action. As with rhythmic music and drumming, depth is associated with repetition and subtle variations. The recurrence of images and rhythms takes us out of ourselves and into the universal, or religious, consciousness. Religions themselves adopt the recurring images of history. The Christian sacrificial altar is a transformation of its pagan antecedents whereas the image of the madonna and child connects Catholicism to ancient archetypes of the mother, the child, creation, the family, fertility, nurturance and virgin birth.

The concept of life itself as an art, exemplified by Nietzsche and other artists who strive to make artworks out of themselves, is a recurring theme in the history of art. Michel Foucault describes how classical Greek culture placed more emphasis on the “style” of a person’s life than on the observation of codes of moral conduct. Lifestyle followed a strict moral discipline which was geared toward harmony with the forces of nature.

... classical antiquity’s moral reflection concerning the pleasures was not directed toward a codification of acts, nor toward a hermeneutics of the subject, but toward a stylization of attitudes and aesthetics of existence (Foucault, 1986, p. 92).

Poets constantly describe how they read the works of their predecessors for inspiration. In an honest moment, the poet may say “I read to steal.” The “lifting” of, or concentration on, images from the works of others, conscious or not, has less to do with theft and more to do with the fundamentals of artistic depth. We see evidence in the work of master painters who after proving themselves by achieving success according to society’s innovation and originality criteria, then desire only to reinterpret the classics rather than bother with the vanities and illusions of invention. The artist who becomes immersed in the recurring images of art contacts vitality, depth, companionship, and the energy that flows from the fountainhead. The significance of the artist’s statement lies in the interpretation and the style of presentation which give a new appearance to the recurring theme.

The artist's voice deepens when it lets go of its egotistical craving for invention and recognition and surrenders to rhythm. As with drumming and trance, variations emerge spontaneously and effortlessly once the artist loses self-consciousness through immersion in rhythmic process. Artists cannot operate in this way without a mastery of technique which allows their souls to become instruments of recurrence.

Classicism:

Classical artworks are distinguished by their lasting power and continuous relevance. They are archetypes, exemplary patterns, which are continuously discovered and re-discovered in contemporary life. Since classical forms are not fixed permanently in the past, there is room for continuous expansion. Classicism complements the varieties of individual interpretation.

Interchangeable Interpretations:

Religion, psychology, art, physical science, business and other disciplines are systems for thought and action that provide metaphors and forms for the containment and interpretation of life. However the systems do not always understand their interchangeable nature. They do not see that they are themselves interpretations that have shaped and biased life throughout their existence. We have yet to achieve a culture of interplay between philosophies, a culture dedicated to what it has to learn from others.

Imagination:

The faculty of imagination is closely tied to, and is perhaps synonymous with, art. Both deal creatively with life situations. Stereotypic conceptions of art and imagination suggest whimsical, capricious and unrealistic fantasy, play-acting and make-believe. When imagination is most vivid it has been associated with the bizarre, delusion and madness. These attitudes originate in the conventional definition of imagination as the ability to create mental images of things which are not present.

Rather than conceiving of imagination as the essential process of thinking through the integration of images, memories and speculations into new relationships, it has been cast in the more frivolous context of idle fantasy. This suppression can only be explained as expressing a fear of imagination by the prevailing concepts of realism. Imagination can be unsettling in that it suggests change, alternatives and radical revisioning. The imaginative transformations of science, art, business and religion change the structure of our world.

As I said previously psychosis is imagination turned against itself. The devastating power of psychosis suggests the consequences of the abuse and misunderstanding of imagination that is widespread in our culture. Our realities are products of imagination. Therefore the neglect, or repression, of imagination opposes the natural functioning of the psyche.

I believe that imagination is the integrating faculty of cognition and creativity. Genius and innovation are dependent upon it's ability to transform phenomena and establish new relationships. Yet our schools place little emphasis on the education of imagination, preferring more mechanistic objectives, firmly established within the dominant, and always outmoded, concept of reality, which can be measured, scored and thus used as evidence to support the institution's values. Education itself has been severely lacking in imagination and it thus projects this state of mind into what it considers to be essential to learning. Imagination has difficulty functioning within institutional and prescriptive settings because it does not operate within established forms and tight regulations. It is flexible and spontaneous and can only live within a context where there is room and support for going outside the perfunctory pattern.

Imagination is furthered through contrast and comparison within the broad context of culture and history. Ironically, the revitalization of imagination in the present is best served through a deepened understanding of the classics and the way in which themes recur throughout history. In order to understand and transform our present realities we must enter into the realities of different cultures and historical epochs, exploring similarities and differences. Within the present cultural context, educational barriers between disciplines must be taken away with the emphasis shifted to the works themselves, classic achievements, organic events, which always integrate varied disciplines. Depth of understanding is achieved through breadth and the focusing of varied resources on

specific undertakings. Imagination requires that the lines and boundaries between disciplines be relaxed so that new combinations can occur. Education from elementary school through advanced graduate training is committed to the separation of resources and rigid distinctions of mind, that are reinforced in the material context by boundaries between studies, rules of procedure, and an over-emphasis on containment.

Educational institutions are structured in a way that suggests a fear of imagination. But yet imagination seems to flourish in response to this repression and institutional prescription. It functions best when it goes contrary to exaggerated and limiting structures that provoke a divergent response within the individual. The imaginative curriculum is usually operating underground and outside the formal structure. The imagination suggests other possibilities and asks "Does it have to be this way?" Imaginative thinking is metaphoric in that meanings are transferred from their ordinary context to different, and often unusual situations. The metaphor suggests a transfer, comparison and analogy between images and phenomena. Imagination depends on this interplay and juxtaposition of meanings. It is interpretative, highly subjective, and not limited by concepts of objective reality. Gaston Bachelard believed that the imagination's deepest insights precede experience and go beyond the objective world. Rather than being shaped by perceptions of things in the material world, the images of imagination are "*projections* of a hidden soul" (Bachelard, 1983, p. 17).

The imagination is not, as its etymology suggests, the faculty for forming images of reality; it is the faculty for forming images which go beyond reality, which *sing* reality. It is a superhuman faculty . . . The imagination invents more than objects and drama—it invents a new life, a new spirit; it opens eyes which hold new types of visions. The imagination will see only if it has "visions" and will have visions only if reveries educate it before experiences do, and if experiences follow as token of reveries (Ibid., p. 16)

Bachelard's emphasis on reverie and dreaming helps to explain why imagination can flourish within repressive and bland educational environments. It transcends the immediate experiential context and enters reverie, day-dreaming and the creation of a different reality. It creates a counter-reality of its own. I disagree with Bachelard's position that

imagination is “beyond reality” or “superhuman.” These intangible suggestions work against the imagination by taking it out of the organic context of a person’s life. Experience does educate imagination and it provides material for transformation. Imagination leads and follows experience. To assert one position does not require the negation of the other. Visions and reveries are as experiential as the lifting of an arm.

Education is often so highly structured and prescriptive that it indirectly serves as a strong generative force for imaginative reverie. In this context “day-dreaming” not only provides a mode of escape, but it also stimulates an *active engagement* of the mind. I do not wish to suggest that restrictive environments are ideal for the education of imagination. They only serve as evidence of how strong, the innate tendencies toward imagination are within the human psyche.

It is possible for schools to evoke imagination intentionally, and within a supportive context. But this will not take place until education understands what imagination is, how it works, how it can be engaged, and what it can do for us. The sphere of imagination must be expanded from art to all of life, and art itself can thus extend its boundaries. Education can begin by studying the history of the imaginative tradition, its recurring forms and images. By looking at the deeper and broader context we will evoke the daimons of imagination in contemporary life. As James Hillman suggests, we must undertake a depth psychology of culture itself. As suggested by writers who “read to steal,” the imagination is stirred and inspired by reading the classics. Although I do not dispute Bachelard’s concept of imagination emerging from reveries, I am keenly interested in how it responds to material things and commonplace events. Imagination is trained by deepening its organic sensitivity. When I write, I need to read in order to generate ideas. I have observed how looking at the paintings of other artists stimulates my personal art-making process. I look at other houses to generate ideas for my own. Art and imagination depend upon cross-fertilization. Art generates art, and imagination provokes imagination. This is why tradition, history and cross-cultural studies are so important.

James Hillman describes his therapeutic work as educating the imagination:

For me therapy is basically the evocation of imagination: it’s training, working, struggling with imagination. If I were to say that it has to do

with healing, I'd have to say healing the imagination or healing the relationship to the imagination. If I want to say therapy has to do with raising or deepening the levels of consciousness or intensifying it, I'll still put therapy in connection with imagination as the developer of a psychological sense of imagination (1983, p. 48).

Imagination is educated in therapy because it has been abandoned by educational institutions. The depression and burn-out that we see within the profession of teaching suggests this alienation from imagination.

It may be possible that imagination is most vital and alive today in situations where we least expect it to be. We might hope to see imagination flourishing within education and the arts but this is not always the case. Imagination flourishes in environments where there is an openness to varied possibilities and the desire to take advantage of fresh opportunities and events which are outside the ordinary, or which revitalize and deepen our perception of the ordinary. Conventional educational environments *over-structure* the learning process in response to their fear of emptiness and chaos and they consequently, eliminate the freedom that is necessary for the interplay of imaginative reverie. Educators of the imagination realize that our metaphors shape our realities. They also know that we can chose, change and re-energize our metaphors.

A business consultant once told me that people and institutions generally do not view the events of their lives as opportunities, they see a fixity. He described how he is becoming a better consultant as he progressively lets go of his personal structures and opens to the structure of the situation before him. He responds imaginatively, rather than imposing his structure on the environment. He described how his diagnostic precision has increased as he becomes more spontaneous. We talked about how the metaphors of art and business can complement and invigorate one another. He felt that the application of the artistic metaphor to business suggests the discipline and skill of the artisan as opposed to haphazard expression. He said that the artistic element refines imagination and gives dignity to the workings of business. I said that it might be interesting to conceptualize the psyche as business since the world of commerce embodies dynamic flux, the unexpected, making deals, ventures, new relationships, transformations. My experience within the ancient market places of Jerusalem has generated a respect for the business

archetype. Perhaps business is the most universal "in the world" phenomenon of our culture and the most organic manifestation of imagination. Why not integrate business and art and re-imagine them both?

Education is generally unable to facilitate this interaction. There is an inability to be with the person and allow the structure to emerge. Education wastes imaginative opportunities by telling people what to do, rather than exploring what they can do. Rather than training people in how the imaginative and interpretative processes operate, education generates labels, classifications and fixed interpretations of events. Imagination is a sensitivity which enables us to experience what may be taking place outside our personal experience, outside our cultural labels and standards of reality. It helps us to establish a sympathetic understanding for the experience and values of other people.

It is difficult to separate the idea of imagination from art. I see few distinctions. My definitions of art actually attempt to bring them into a more complete cooperation. Imagination, as with the closely related concept of soul, makes itself visible through the physical experience of art. The arts help to discipline and sharpen the faculties of imagination. They also leave records which contribute to the creation of a tradition. Imagination, soul and art are perhaps nothing but different evocations of the same energy, but this idea may be a regression to the tendency to see everything as a unity, an all-encompassing and superphenomena which extinguishes the desire to investigate the differences, the multiplicities and the recurring variations of life. Art exists because it places its emphasis on these organic forms and not on an unifying idea.

Genius:

That which is native to, and characteristic of, a person, place, community.

Therapy:

The Greek origins of the word therapy suggest serving and attending to another. Through therapy art serves life. Art, as the physical manifesta-

tion of soul, has an important place within a context where therapy is defined as “soul making” (Howard McConeghey) and as “the evocation of imagination” (Hillman). As I said when introducing this study, I view art therapy as attending to soul.

Rank, Ross and myself have defined therapy as an art. It is a performing art, which can be improved through the interplay of psyche and techne. To the extent to which therapy is directed toward depth, it has become one of our era’s most effective modes of access to soul. The combination of art and therapy furthers the depth-oriented objectives of both. Therapy has been the studio of depth psychology in my life. The therapeutic studio has the compassion, discipline, concentration, vulnerability, pain, the desire for meaning, and the religious attitude toward the sanctity of the other person, and life, that are needed to evoke the soul.

I came to therapy as a way of life by chance and without a plan. Perhaps it came to me. When it appeared, I seized upon it as a life-work, instinctively, only sensing, and not yet knowing, that it was the place where the soul could be found within our era. The highly commercialized and trend obsessed world of art offered little encouragement as a workplace for the artist of soul. Therapy conducted within the medical tradition, or the clinical model of professional psychology, was equally discouraging. Yet an integration of art and therapy, based upon the classical experience of soul and imagination, might achieve a liberation, inaccessible without a combination of resources.

I have discovered that it is through the sensible and organic experience of art, that we immediately gain access to depth. Talking by itself does not allow for sustained immersion. Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished.” We can adapt this statement to psychotherapy and say that wherever soul flourishes, it will create the arts. Therapy is a work of art in which soul is welcomed and attended to.

Before her death at the age of 34 in 1943, Simone Weil initiated a philosophy of political, religious and creative transformation based upon compassionate attention. According to Weil the ability to give attention to a suffering person is a demanding skill. In describing the attentive way of looking at life she said:

The soul empties itself of all of its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth (Hellman, 1984, p. 89).

Weil suggests the broader social and spiritual dimensions of giving attention to others that I have always sensed within the psychotherapeutic process. This ideology of therapy contrasts to the technological values of behavioral science. The giving of attention is guided by aesthetic sensibility and affinity with the feelings of another.

Transformation:

Life is an ongoing process of transformation. Organic forms are in constant change with their physical appearances suggesting that nature's movements are creative and transformative. The energies of art correspond to those of nature. The artist becomes conscious of the transformative process working within, and without, and cultivates it, like a gardener who selects certain species of plant life, influencing and supporting their growth.

Healing and Art:

The transformative energy of art corresponds to, and possibly is, the energy of healing. In both art and healing we transform pain and conflict into affirmations of life and states of well-being. Healing occurs in the telling of the story and hearing the response of another person.

Asylum:

Art and therapy offer asylum to the soul, a safe place, a sanctuary, where the sometimes destructive work of transformation can take place. Since both art and therapy give asylum to the soul, then it makes sense to combine the two, and increase the resources of the sanctuary.

Asylum suggests temporary relief and protection from torment and

oppression. It is a place where life begins again and changes. The association of repressive and tormenting practices of institutional mental health with the word “asylum” indicates how places originally designed to offer refuge and support can themselves become oppressors. Art and psychotherapy liberate asylum from the identification with the instruments of oppression and revive its use within the world as a place offering help and relief. For many in our era the tormentor of the psyche has been the self. When people are liberated from political and economic oppression, and abuse within the family and the community, we find that forces against the self are quickly manifested within the self.

Spontaneity:

Associations to spontaneity suggest the ability to take advantage of the opportunities of the moment, immediacy, openness and flexibility, fresh responses to stimuli which engage the resources and passions of the soul, vitality, self-generativity, improvisation, that which is indigenous to the person. Spontaneous acts emerge from passionate instinct with little premeditation. They come naturally, authentically. These actions might at times deteriorate into blind and insensitive impulse, and this leads us to believe that spontaneity can be cultivated and educated. Art is a form of disciplined spontaneity. Attempts to define spontaneity reveal close relationships with imagination, soul and the process of manifestation. These areas are so closely connected that distinctions are little more than a matter of emphasis, and the articulation of different qualities.

Soul is expressed through spontaneous actions. D. H. Lawrence's art attempted to liberate what he described as “the free spontaneous psyche, the effective soul” (1986, p. 234). Life itself is generated through spontaneous acts and rarely from calculated planning. J. L. Moreno's revolutionary theories of psychotherapy are based upon spontaneity and creativity which he viewed as the fundamental elements of healthy transformation, what psychodramatists call “new responses to old situations.” Following Nietzsche, whose writing corresponds to the spontaneous eruptions of soul, Lawrence's depth psychology is presented as a flow of “dynamic reaction.”

The soul bursts day by day into fresh impulses, fresh desire, fresh purpose, at these our polar centres. And from these dynamic generative centres issue the vital currents which put us into connection with our object. We have really no will and no choice, in the first place. It is our soul which acts within us, day by day unfolding us according to our nature (Ibid., p. 130).

The first objective in artistic training is one of helping people to express themselves spontaneously. For many adults the process can be difficult because they find that their instinctive reactions have become solidified into patterns of rigid control. They have lost contact with expressions that are native to themselves. Cliches and stereotypes have replaced internal expressions. Our conscious and unconscious educational experiences have been so focused on taking external things into ourselves, that we have lost the ability to cast images from the emotions into the world. When the artist gains access to spontaneous expression, or what might be called *the source*, images emerge in the form of "flow." The process is routinely described as taking over the artist. The flow can be exhausting, and artists frequently find it difficult to disconnect, because they fear that it will be beyond their reach when they set out again. The artist's skills correspond to the spontaneity of soul. The will and technique of the artist are reactive. They are cultivated responses to what emerges spontaneously.

Principles of spontaneity apply to every aspect of life and human relations. I urge students to deal with interpersonal conflicts and problems within their immediate context. If we let the situation pass from the moment, we will lose the opportunity for complete engagement. When we try to bring it up again, it will have changed, I will have changed, and the other person will have changed. We will all be part of a new context that will shape our actions and thoughts. If we try to introduce unresolved issues from the past into the new situation, there will be confusion and a lack of gratification. We will be stuck in old business that may have little to do with what is most immediate, and we will once again miss an opportunity to engage the present. The more baggage we carry with us, the more our reflexes will be hindered. Travel light, as empty as possible, and there will be greater space for the accommodation of the present. Severe psychological conflicts are generally old baggage, repressions of energies that were never expressed spontaneously, and have subsequently been

internalized to such an extent that the psyche becomes emotion turned against itself.

Opposition:

The liberated society, group or person allows varieties to flourish and live interdependently. Individual values do not try to dominate others. The mature point of view is the one which can respect its anti-thesis within a committed dialogue. If liberation is to be effective, it must be ongoing and never attached to a single point of view. Within the creative process, opposition is a necessity. It creates the conflict which fuels the process of creative transformation and energizes imagination. The domination of a point of view is dangerous because it stops the interplay. Nietzsche spoke of “the magic of the extremes” and suggested that an existence without polemics, is without vitality. Truman Nelson when speaking to me about his lifelong commitment to radical causes described how he feared life in “the rotten center.” The polemic is useful because it causes friction, energy, fire and it gives us something concrete to go against. This can be likened to the child establishing identity and autonomy by going contrary to its parents.

I have often thought that there may be considerable truth to the opposite of every position I take. The wise mind encourages these oppositional forces to interact and bump against each other. It would seem that there are as many truths as there opinions and it is opposition that gives birth to new forms. Art’s cathartic, tragic, comic and most passionate statements are characterized by an arousal of tension through the opposition of contradictory emotions which ultimately merge into spontaneous eruptions of feeling.

Emotional Jujitsu, the Principle of Interpretative Reversal:

Master teachers throughout the ages have shown how the psyche speaks through reversals revealing the paradoxical nature of expression. The more I take a situation for granted, the greater its potential for emotional and cognitive reversal. If I give a tremendous amount of energy to my attempts to prove a point, and if I do not have a secure and

sophisticated sense of inner balance, then I supply the adversary with the force that can be turned against me. Psychological damage to the self often occurs when a person loses inner equilibrium while fighting for a position. The conflict becomes so thoroughly internalized that the person ends up fighting against the self.

The principle of reversal suggests that the resolution to a problem is often the opposite of what I set out to prove. If I invest extensive energy in a particular course of action this preoccupation may be a defense against a new opening. The deepest illuminations in art and learning typically reverse our most habitual tendencies and ingrained values. Mahatma Gandhi exhibited a masterful sense of instinctual reversal in his advocacy of non-violent resistance. He and Tolstoy distinguished themselves morally through self-imposed frugality while others strove for material possessions.

Freud's principle analytic tool was his ability to reverse the emotional tables of a person's life and this arousal in turn motivated further exploration of the depths. The particular answers or explanations are not as important as the effect of the process of emotional jujitsu. It provokes a sense of wonder and amazement which is in itself satisfying. The jujitsu effect comes from turning a person's energy back at the self. If I exert large amounts of energy to deny a feeling or to maintain a delusion, then this force can be multiplied and increased when it is turned back at me in the form of a revealing observation about what I am in fact doing. In order to master the art of jujitsu in either the physical or emotional realm the artist must have a sophisticated sense of personal balance and control and the ability to respond to, as well as initiate, action.

In the arts, humor and tragedy are achieved through the reversal of situations and fates. Severe psychological tension is lifted through radical reversals of emotion, but unfortunately, people generally see the jujitsu of the moment as a cure, not realizing that within the context of extreme fluctuations, the problem may soon reappear in a new form or symptom. The resolution does not come through the "flip" of the moment, achieved through another person's deftness, but rather through the longer and more committed course of establishing a personal sense of inner balance and sensitivity, through the mastery of the art of living.

The extreme and sometimes shocking emotion that accompanies frightening dreams may indicate the dream's effort to communicate something useful. Panic and fear can be reversed into a sign that the dream is trying to help. A repulsive man who appears in a dream may be

trying to get my attention. The waking mind tends to be habitual and resistant to change and radical reversal which demand considerable emotional energy. I believe that these resistances have more to do with natural tendencies toward routine and repetition than with defense. However, the innate needs of the psyche for protection are indisputable. It takes courage and considerable motivation to risk major changes, to upset the equilibrium and live with the loss and uncertainty that go together with the implementation of something new.

The reversal of meanings that we give to images in artworks and dreams can be a useful mode of interpretation. This way of approaching the image is in keeping with the paradoxical dynamics of communication that often characterize dreams and artistic expression. For example, the terror associated with killing or being killed may suggest a need for renewal or the abandonment of certain life patterns. Guilt experienced when hurting a person in a dream might be telling me that the person is hurting me. The principle of reversal is used to encourage imaginative and open speculation through which new possibilities for insight and action come to our attention.

Artworks and dreams cannot be reduced to single causes. The exclusive reduction of a complex life pattern that exists in the present, to a conflictual relationship to a father, or a mother, can sometimes be an avoidance of responsibility and an infantile psychological resolution which lays responsibility on the doorstep of the parent. Our past lives with parents are only parts of an intricate interplay with the world.

I do not use the principle of reversal as a definitive rule for art and dream interpretation. It would be misleading and harmful to suggest that the true meaning is always the reverse of what we see. The process of reversing the situation is only a means of access to the inner world of paradox. It is a continuation in our waking life of the way in which dreams work while we sleep. The belief that an image in a dream or artwork is always the self, or the anti-thetical insistence that it is always to be distinguished from the self and perceived exclusively as "itself", are equally one-sided. They eliminate the possibility that the image may in fact be more than one thing. It may be both an expression of myself and something totally distinct from me. The use of the interpretative reversal reveals the depth of psychological paradox, embodied in both dreams and artworks, where things which contradict one another can live together in a complementary relationship.

Destruction:

As Nietzsche suggested, the new culture cannot appear until the old one is destroyed. Destruction and creative transformation are partners in art. We have more difficulty accepting destruction, perhaps because it is not only difficult to let go of what is familiar, but possibly because it is even more difficult to take risks, open to new situations, and make fresh starts. Destruction is the dark and demonic side of creativity, the whirlwind which makes clearings for beginnings. An aesthetics of destruction will serve us well, helping us to befriend the fire that often fights against the will in order to clear away obstacles to spontaneous living. We therefore oppose destruction, thinking it will destroy "us," when it is actually emerging in response to inner needs for renewal. Creative destruction is "de-structuring" and is to be distinguished from oppressive, cruel and tyrannical acts taken against other people or things. Transformation cannot occur without de-structuring the forms from which the new life emerges. An aesthetics of destruction helps us to see how events emerge from each other and how extreme positions feed one another.

Fear of destruction is partly an expression of our material culture where energy goes into protecting and preserving "things." Objects of "value" are enshrined within sanctuaries. This contrasts to the Eskimo shaman who carves artworks with the goal of destroying them within rituals expressing the transience of material life, and the life-death cycles of nature. Our fear of destruction is also a projection of the fear of death.

Theory Indigenous to Art:

Within our era, psychology has been intrigued by the vitality and depth of expression embodied by art and it has been occupied with studies of art and artists throughout its history as a behavioral science. However, psychological scientism, has resulted in the abuse of images and artists. Psychologists, beginning with Freud, assumed that their rationalism could reveal the "real" motives of art. As Stephen Levine has documented in a recent essay on interpretation (1988), Freud discovered how the psyche expresses itself poetically through images but he systematically tried to replace fantasy with reason. Rationalism with its theories characterized by clinical realism considered itself to be the principle

mode of understanding. The psychological interpreter will tell us “what is really going on.” Psychology abandoned the openness, humility and endless curiosity of creative science, and turned to what Otto Rank described as “scientific absolutism.”

Following Freud, science has ruled art in the interpretative realm. Artists have repeatedly expressed the fantasy that if they understand their deepest motives and conflicts, their creative powers will disappear. Attitudes of this kind spring from Freudian scientism which believes that if the conflicts of the “id” are made conscious, they will be resolved. Artists therefore fear that if their conflictual sources of motivation will be exposed to reason, the resolution will take away the motive power of their tensions. There is validity to this belief only within the framework of Freudian theory. If a person steps outside its influence, the fear disappears. Understanding clarifies and strengthens artistic motivation and exposure to the sources of art inspires further artistic expression. The motive powers of soul cannot be reduced to categories of reason.

To this day psychology has not realized that its interpretations are the projections and the fantasies of interpreters. These judgments become abusive when they are presented as “facts.” Psychological interpreters have literally gone crazy over the years with their projections because they are based on delusions of rational certainty, diagnostic precision and psychological authority. Granted, certain interpretations hit the mark closer than others but this accuracy is to be attributed to the interpreter’s empathy and art.

Theory indigenous to the arts stays close to what is native to the creative process. Art is interpreted by art within an organic psychology which values sensory thought.

Technique:

There has been too much emphasis placed on technique in the training of artists and therapists. The technique is the outer form, the external manifestation of soul. We have invested our educational energies on superficial structures as contrasted to their generative sources. It is an old problem and concerns the illusory acquisition of what is materially present as a source of power and skill. Eastern and western spiritual traditions have consistently maintained that the self and the soul are the

focal points of training since they are the sources, the instrumentalities of action and creation. Socrates spoke to the youth Charmides about how the Greek healers of his time were correct and clever in their technical procedures but they did not engage the soul. "Let no one," Socrates said, "persuade you to cure the head until he has first given you his soul to be cured by the charm. For this is the great error of our day in the treatment of the body, that the physicians separate the soul from the body" (Plato, *Charmides*, 1985, p. 103).

There has been little change since the time of Socrates. Teacher education, and the training of psychotherapists, is heavily focused on acquiring techniques rather than a Socratic emptiness, openness and preparedness of soul. In therapy, clinical realism generates prescription which then leads to mechanical implementation. As time passes we see only the external forms and do not look beyond them. The same applies to narrow concentration on technique in the education of artists.

Technique can be perceived as style and personalized skill. Art's appeal is closely connected with the style, or the distinctive flavor, of the work. Style today is typically perceived as an expression of individuality, whereas in other epochs it was more collective. Within the collective tradition there is more emphasis on the communal nature of soul and artists work together to articulate this feeling. The fusion of individual efforts into a common style corresponds to the inner experience of soul within the collective tradition.

The refinement of technique is essential to perfecting the artist's expression in both individual and collective traditions. There is a correspondence between technique and soul, an interplay between them. What is done to improve the outer forms of expression effects the inner source. Within our culture the manifestations of soul are individualized and technique must have the flexibility to follow the lead of soul. When technique is dominant, soul is repressed. I do not want to suggest technical submissiveness to soul, but rather a dynamic interplay between forceful and sensitive partners, who can both lead and follow, within the larger context of the dance.

In order to further either soul or technique, both must be engaged as suggested by Socrates. The history of the various spiritual disciplines reveals that soul is equally dependent upon technique. It is evoked through the perfection of physical movements. The perfecting process strives toward a disciplined yet spontaneous technique, a distinct style.

Organic Thought:

Our concepts about who we are, and what we do, have taken us far away from an organic connection to experience. They make it difficult for us to perceive the phenomena before us and to actually understand what we “do.” Art helps us to relate more directly to things through organic sensibility. We can add to the many definitions of art the suggestion that it is a form of organic knowing.

Thinking organically involves a return to the thing in itself, “das ding an sich”. Poetic thought places its emphasis on images and their evocations as contrasted to concepts that have little relationship to organic things. Organic thinking is not simply practical thinking, it is deeply rooted in a respect for the things of nature, and their existence outside the context of human thought. Organic inquiry starts with the thing, event, experience and uses whatever disciplines can contribute to deepening understanding.

Interpretation:

I perceive the interpretation of nature and art as an interplay between interpreters and the organic things that they are reflecting upon. A sympathetic relationship is established in which the interpreter and the object act on one another in a way which generates a new phenomenon, which is the interpretation itself. Interpretation is our principle mode of cognitive and emotional orientation within the world. It is a subjective and imaginative faculty that has been so thoroughly abused and misunderstood by psychology that a large section of this book will be dedicated to an investigation of its nature.

Gesamtkunstwerk and Psyche's Multiplicity:

Gesamtkunstwerk is a term used by Richard Wagner to describe his commitment to more than one art form. Paolo Knill and I have worked since the early 1970's to expand the resources of the creative arts therapies through a revival of gesamtkunstwerk, or what Dr. Knill has referred to as “intermodal” expressive therapy. We have consistently maintained that the separation of the arts provokes a corresponding split within the

psyche since thought and emotion are constantly mixing, going between, and combining different modes of perception.

Since the psyche constantly manifests itself through different sense experiences then it seems illogical for the creative arts therapies to divide themselves according to media specializations. These divisions have more to do with the history of training artists and art education. We have however, consistently recognized that there might be truth in the reverse of our position, as inappropriate as it appeared to be. The strength of specialization lies in the power of numbers and the support that it receives from the established traditions of arts academies.

In our work with dance it was necessary to integrate the making of rhythmic music rather than use recordings. Visual imagery appeared in the midst of our rhythm making and we had the choice to either deal with it, or put it aside. Receptivity to the varieties of artistic phenomena and the psyche's expressions seemed more important than the tradition of staying exclusively within specializations. Our phenomenological concern with the interplay between things, media and people in art seemed closer to the life process. Because it includes the other arts, theatre is an art form that could contain all aspects of our practice of therapeutic *gesamtkunstwerk*. But we did not want to give up the specificity and organicity of the other media. If the performance is to engage life, it must be open to the multiplicity of the psyche and its multi-sensory expressions.

Image:

Images are the organic and sensuous forms of imagination, dreams, cognition and the arts, the phenomena themselves.

Symbol:

Symbols are images which refer to something other than themselves. Symbolism is a function attached to imagery; it suggests both personal and universal meanings. The symbol generates multiple interpretations as distinguished from the sign which has one meaning.

Metaphor:

Metaphors are images which are used symbolically for the purpose of comparison, articulation, elucidation.

Correspondence:

The principle of correspondence connects thought and physical things. Correspondence and its persistent focus on what is directly experienced through the senses, reveals the interdependence between the perception of nature and cognition. It reveals the workings of image, symbol, metaphor and art's interpretation of nature. Interpretation translates perceptions of nature into corresponding, and related, images in thought and art.

Within folk healing traditions the principle of correspondence, or similarity, refers to the practice of performing particular external actions with the goal of stimulating a corresponding inner reaction. For example, the person hoping to be purged of illness might step into a flowing river with the hope that the current will carry away the malady.

Openness:

I built my "Artistic Theory of Mental Health and Therapy" (1986) on the concept of "opening". I described how artists and therapists open to the deepest places in themselves so that others can do the same. As therapists we often discover that the reverse happens much of the time. We open to our emotions by experiencing the lives of other people. Opening is a constant challenge. Looking into the face of another person and listening to them can be frightening, perhaps because we unconsciously fear the loss of ourselves. We are typically more involved and interested in personal business. The artist opens to elements of life that are often overlooked by people who are absorbed by preoccupations and routines of work and daily living.

Artists and therapists serve as instrumentalities for the presentation of the lives of other people, and phenomena distinct from themselves. At other times artists and therapists open to their inner lives, and use this to reach others. Looking into the self can be as threatening as looking into

the face of another person. Opening requires humility, discipline and a desire to contact what I do not know.

But if you remain open, if you've no fixed ideas, no plans, no ambitions, if you can stay vulnerable always . . . Henry Miller

III

INTERPRETATION

I contain multitudes . . . Walt Whitman

There are no moral phenomena; just moral interpretations of phenomena. . . .
Nietzsche

The Interpretation of Art

The experience of depth in art results from the process of interpretation which is often taking place unconsciously. We are apt to describe our interpretations as perceptions. When I look at an artwork and experience an emotional response, my looking is a process of interpretation. How else could the art object stimulate and engage my mind and emotions?

The intentional interpretation of art is widely misunderstood and limited in both psychology and art history. Both disciplines attach excessive emphasis on labeling and the classification of images according to a particular frame of reference. Art interpretation studies are too often associated with the accumulation of dates, information and the prevailing theories of explanation. The same applies to the psychological analysis of artworks. Drawings are interpreted according to a theory of psychopathology and diagnostic categories are attached to the person on the basis of the analysis.

For nearly two decades I have written about abusive psychological interpretations of art. Abuse can be attributed to the fundamental prob-

lem of an individual “expert” who authoritatively tells us what an image or artwork “means.” The damage is compounded by psychological systems and guides for the interpretation of art. Interpretation is a process of projection. Just as the person making the art object, which is itself an interpretation of life, projects inner concerns into the formation of the image, the interpreter of the artwork similarly projects the self into the subsequent interpretation of the image. One interpretation follows another. The attempt to fix a label or meaning to the image shuts off its continuing powers of evocation. The artwork is a fountainhead of interpretations. It can never be reduced to a single meaning. I believe that the artwork has to be seen for what it is, and allowed to generate varied responses. An art critic described how he discovered that his reviews of the same works over a twenty year period are often dramatically different. He came to the conclusion that there can never be any single, fixed and definitive interpretations of art. He asked himself whether he had changed over this period of time or whether the art object itself had the ability to change.

Fortunately, it does not take us long within the art therapy studio to discover that the image has the ability to generate multiple interpretations. This is strikingly clear when we do group work. I have found that the dynamics of the group correspond to the varied elements that exist within not only the image, but also the individual person. We have also discovered in our studio work that in order to build a strong, cooperative and sensitive group, it is necessary to value variety and to encourage the free revelation of the individual souls of group members. I believe that depthwork with groups depends upon making it clear that there is not a single and correct way to be within the group. If the soul is highly individual as D. H. Lawrence tells us, then it is necessary to approach it with a respect for multiplicity, surprise and the discovery of what we do not know or previously did not see. I am continuously amazed at how I see more when I listen to groups of people interpret artworks. The presentation of varied interpretations deepens my involvement with the artwork and increases my respect for its evocativeness. I think of the world as *polyveritas*, many truths. As Walt Whitman said:

Do I contradict myself? Very well, I contradict myself. I am large,
I contain multitudes.

We have gotten into trouble throughout history when we try to impose a single interpretation upon the world. This singularity is contrary to our human nature. The same problems occur within art interpretation where this ingrained tendency to think in terms of a single truth, that we of course carry within ourselves, cuts us off from the deeper, polyphonic experience of art.

The artwork is a constant source of imaginative renewal. I know it for what it is to me personally and for what it may have been within the larger historical context. The objects and events of our lives can be known in different ways, at different times and in response to different needs. This multiplicity of certainties contrasts to the way in which people try to convince the world that there is one truth. Throughout history we see the “truths” of those in power being imposed on people who disagree. *Polyveritas* affirms our ability to know and understand our experience. The ambiguity and negative resignation of our era is a result of the confusion that must occur when we persist in looking outside of our experience for authority and truth. When the reigning constructs of truth and understanding do not fit with our experience, and when we have not discovered our personal ability to know life, then there is chaos, ambiguity and a loss of nerve.

Henry Miller admired the self certainty of simple people.

No, it would be wrong to assert that I always have doubts. For instance I am now starting to believe in what I'm doing, and basically, I was certain quite early on. Yes, I think I can say this—even outside my books, being certain about what I am and my ideas generally, a strong feeling of certainty, even. I've always fought against “knowledge,” against intellectuals. That's what's important. In my opinion, intelligence alone leads nowhere and intellectuals can never be certain of anything. They're men who are always doubting. They talk as though they “know” but they don't know—at least I don't think so. Whereas a very simple man who is, let's say, rather religious in temperament, can have that certainty. And for me it's a marvellous thing to meet human beings like that (1971, pp. 34–35).

Humble people do not project their interpretations and certainties onto the world as a whole. They speak only for themselves and openly listen to how others may view a situation differently.

The critic may ask: *If the artwork is nothing other than itself, and if your interpretations are projections of personal consciousness, then why bother interpreting?*

Looking at art is a process of interpreting forms, colors, compositions and subject matter. We take the process further by consciously engaging in a dialogue with the image and responding imaginatively and from the deepest places in our personal lives. I would like to see art history, literature, poetry, music and theatre taught in this way rather than according to the restrictive principles of logical reductionism that students are often submitted to. Teaching the appreciation of the arts through rules and classifications is an attempt to make art something other than what it really is. The lifeless, scientific dissections of psychological art interpretation have origins in earlier analytic studies of poetry and literature. The English novelist Anthony Burgess described how his university training in literature was “true to the scientific tradition of Cambridge.”

... once a week we got down to weighing words, assaying images, and measuring rhythms in cyclostyled extracts from works unnamed so that reputation should not film the innocent eye (1985, p. 6).

Rather than respond to an artwork with emotion, we have learned to respond with the analytic mind. This contradicts art's emotional purpose.

Art can be interpreted personally, poetically and with images that support its evocations. Art is not created in order to provide material for analytic reduction. It is intended to provoke thought and reflection as well as the transmission of emotion and feeling. The effective artwork establishes an intimate relationship with the interpreter. Responses which have depth will reflect the ability of art to move into and through the soul and to arouse sensibility.

Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825) in his 1804 book, *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (*School for Aesthetics*), declared that poetic expression cannot be literally defined. “Nothing can actually be defined except a definition itself” (1973, p. 15) and “Only something beautiful can awaken as well as define the beautiful” (Ibid. p. 11). He believed that art can only be interpreted by another artwork and images which “mirror kindred life.” He specifically mentioned how inner experience cannot be dissected with a

“psychological anatomical knife.” Jean Paul saw the poet as a person who locates the marvels of life “in the soul” from where they generate the powers of “reproductive imagination.” Works of art clearly “outlive their explanation” (Ibid., p. 26).

Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which has had an immense effect upon the history of academic art interpretation, is the anti-thesis of Richter’s position. Art is approached through rules, definitions and a method which values distance and highly structured analysis. We are trained to look at the artwork in terms of a theory of construction and not to know the thing itself. The same problems can be seen in the dogmatic histories of religions. The theologian Hans Kung has described how there can be no uniform theory of Christianity and the interpretations of Jesus by the early Christians:

... vary with the different situations in which the proclamation is made and with the different character of the communities and authors-
... There is a *diversity of interpretations, shading into one another, at many levels* (1976, p. 419–420).

Kung says that the historical facts of Christianity must “be freed from the restrictions of the older terminology” (Ibid., p. 426) so that they may continue to transform the world.

The different interpretations illuminate and complement one another (Ibid., p. 462).

It is interesting that when presenting his ideas about “discriminating interpretations” Hans Kung distinguishes literary scholars from theologians by stating that with the former group the issue of “historical authenticity is comparatively unimportant.” Is the historical fact of Guernica unimportant when we interpret Picasso’s painting or the actual events described by Truman Capote in his novel *In Cold Blood*? I do not think so. With art as well as religion, and the inseparable relationship between the two, historical events and epochs provide the impetus for responses by the interpretative imagination. Lasting events and artworks are capable of being continuously reinterpreted and transformed by people within the changing context of their experience.

Aristotle's *Poetics* has generated rigid attitudes toward art interpretation. Students have been expected to read the classics according to a single code of analysis and they consequently find themselves confused when their imaginative and emotional responses deviate from the authoritative script of interpretation. Too often we have been taught theories of interpretation and not the great artworks of our civilization. Students who rebel are turning against the mode of instruction and not against the work of art which remains inaccessible to them. Aristotle's *Poetics* reads like a manual for a mechanical device. It is full of limiting definitions and rules of art and specific statements about what should and should not occur. It is far removed from poetic feeling and should be called *Analytics*.

Aristotle quantifies elements of art and thus lays the groundwork for the subsequent tradition of student memorization of his system. The process is complicated by the significant differences that exist between English translations so the student who has memorized "The Four Aims of Characterization" according to one source might see different elements in another translator's interpretation. The following passage presenting "The Six Elements or Aspects of Tragedy" (*Poetics*, VI) demonstrates how the method is more mathematical than poetic:

Every tragedy, therefore, has these six necessary elements which make it what it is: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and music. Two of these elements are the means of imitation, one is the manner, three belong to the objects imitated, and besides these there are no others. We may say that most poets use these elements; every tragedy, in much the same manner, has spectacle, character, plot, diction, music, and thought (Aristotle, 1958, p. 13).

Subsequent interpreters and students of "classical poetics" continue Aristotle's analytic method. As with other traditions, followers make their "contributions" by taking the process further and deepening the confusion of students who respond to art with direct and intense feeling. Consider how the following translator's commentary makes Aristotle even more complicated and farther removed from the phenomena of art:

Clearly, music and diction (language) are the means of imitation; the three elements which belong to the model are the plot, character, and

thought. This leaves spectacle as belonging to the manner of imitation. This is different from the manner of imitation as defined in the first chapter, where the manner lies in its being either narrative or dramatic presentation (see ch. 4, note 2). The contradiction is, however, more verbal than real, for the dramatic presentation involves, indeed in a sense is, the spectacle, and the close connection between the two has just been emphasized (Ibid., p. 13).

Generations of students have been alienated from art by instructional methods based upon literary dissection according to a strict method of rules. As an adolescent, I recall my personal confusion and my feeling that these principles did not relate to the emotional content of the literature that I was reading. But how can an insecure adolescent stand up against Aristotle and the long academic tradition of reducing classics to emotionless rules of interpretation. I was told by a graduate of a prestigious eastern university: "I did not enjoy *Moby Dick* or Shakespeare. I found them frustrating and confusing because I had to fit them into someone else's interpretation." Great art is too often taught according to right and wrong formulations as opposed to encouraging students to experience the work on a personal basis. Students need to be given the freedom to respond emotionally as contrasted to being told to read an artwork with the goal of formulating the "correct" analytic response. We can be trained to respond imaginatively and critically from the authority of our experience and personal judgment.

I encourage teachers to introduce artworks to students as expressions by other human beings which are intended to provoke emotional responses. After making personal interpretations they may become curious and interested in what other people and scholars have to say about these artworks. But the understanding of art must begin with a personal engagement with the artwork as a thing unto itself. There has to be enjoyment and engagement. This organic and lasting relationship becomes the basis for expanded knowledge. There are some who would go even further and take all of the texts of artistic criticism from the university libraries in order to free people to experience the works directly and without the influence of the vast interpretation industries which severely bias the ability of the artwork to activate and transform consciousness.

Formal rules of interpretation have flourished in the brief history of the psychological analysis of artworks. As with Aristotle, these systems

of psychological interpretation have little poetic feeling. Everything in the image is interpreted within the context of the prevailing psychological theory. Where academic interpretation industries have generated impersonal, analytic and factually oriented dissections, the psychological tradition has been engaged with an idiosyncratic projection of its psychopathological theories onto the artwork. Every element of the image is reduced to some form of clinical pathology according to a particular theoretical orientation. I refer to this process as the reduction of artistic imagination to clinical realism. Art has been packaged according to the narrow standards of the clinic.

The critic asks: *If art is in fact a projection of its makers, and an expression of their interpretations of the actual material of their lives, then isn't clinical realism an effective and practical way to make use of creative expression within the helping professions?*

Clinical realism does have redeeming, and perhaps even essential characteristics, when it comes to the therapeutic use of the arts. There are situations when the artist is striving to make a direct statement or other instances when suppressed sources of torment emerge unintentionally through the artistic process. In this context clinical realism may be defined as a practical and humane effort to engage the artwork as a helper in transforming an oppressive life situation. Clinical realism becomes pathological when it replaces the imaginative response to art, and when the psychological interpretation of artworks follows stereotypic formulations. These rules of interpretation are an expression of the belief that the reasoning mind, operating within a context of clinical realism, has the ability to explain the "real" meaning of art. The psychological theory becomes far more important than the experience of art and it limits the process of interpretation which is no longer capable of engaging us imaginatively.

Some might think that opening to the formative powers of imagination sounds like a form of madness. Perhaps it is, or maybe it is the fundamental principle of psychological health in which life is perceived as an interplay between many elements and as an attempt to make vibrant connections with the physical environment. The expansion of interpretative possibilities becomes a therapeutic process, a means of renewal and the opportunity for a fresh and inspirational start.

Then why are the psychological theories of Freud and Jung so influential?

Because they are imaginative and ambitious and they cleverly adapt the recurring themes of the many psychological traditions. I see the

Freudians and Jungians as participating in a form of tribal and magical thinking. They are not only receiving the sense of security that comes from the tight boundaries of a closed society but they are returning to tribal thinking which according to Nietzsche, is based upon the belief that nature will be influenced by a system of laws made by people.

The thinking of men who believe in magic and miracles is bent upon *imposing a law on nature* (Nietzsche, 1984, p. 82).

People want to have their thinking directed by something outside themselves and this is another reason for the influence of Freud and Jung. Of course, the theories are highly intelligent and still generative many years after their creation. They embody the concerns of our epoch and tie them into the larger historical context. I prefer a Socratic emptiness and ongoing philosophical inquiry rather than following the tribe with its fixed explanations and regulations. Psychology goes too far when it tries to contain life within its theories. I see it the other way around, with interpretation being one of our most varied and human responses to the phenomena of life.

When interpreting art, I consider the modes of operation that I am critical of, and do the reverse. For example, most art interpreters show a tendency to leap after meaning, to attach a label and assert themselves in relation to the art object. I have found it to be more productive to go slowly and let the image work on my imagination. I have referred to this as “tantric art interpretation” through which we intentionally withhold meaning in the interest of expanding the effect of the image on our sensibilities.

There is too much of the interpreter’s ego in art interpretation together with an excess of psychological cleverness. I have found it useful to acknowledge that I do not know what an image means. It is good to engage the artwork with an open mind ready to be filled with fresh insights. Rather than “analyze” artworks I prefer to “respond” to them and become involved in what can be described as a dialogue with the image. The personification of artworks helps us to hear what they have to say to us. Communication with personified images suggests that creative interpretation is more like telling a story than attaching a psychological label. Rather than encouraging the distance of traditional objectivization,

I support personalization, subjectivity and an acceptance of the thoroughly projective nature of art interpretation. The most soulful interpretations are those that activate the individual's sympathetic consciousness. I try to be faithful to my tendencies toward reversal by telling students to feel free in taking positions that are opposite to my own. As I said earlier, I cannot say that the other point of view is without truth. I simply believe that we have had too much labeling and psychological dissection in the interpretation of artworks, an unhealthy imbalance.

Art As Interpretation

The interpretation "of" art is sometimes confused by the fact that art is itself an interpretation of experience. The word, "interpretation," has many meanings: the clarification of meaning; elucidation; explanation; translation; the expression of meaning through art; decipherment; exegesis. The classical usage of the word in our culture is associated with *hermeneutics*, the science of interpretation with special emphasis on the texts of scripture. Interpretation comes to us from the Greek language and it is thus rooted in antiquity.

It is interesting that we have to give attention to the process of interpreting the concept of interpretation itself. My purpose is not to confuse the reader with these gyrations, but to reveal the intricacies of the interpretation process, and to encourage a renewed, or revisioned, sensitivity, that will enable us to go beyond the literalism and reductionism that characterize concepts of interpretative labeling. Even within dictionaries where we look to find definite guidance as to what a word or concept *means*, we are faced with multiple possibilities and meanings. The primary obstacle to deepening the art of interpretation in its many forms, is the narrow and limiting definition that we give to the word within our culture.

By viewing art as an interpretation of experience, we expand the process. Artists who interpret external objects establish a sympathetic correspondence between different elements which include: their consciousness, or soul; the object of contemplation; and the materials of expression. It is possible that the artist's perspective may be more inter-

nal than external, yet there is always the formative influence of past organic experience which shapes the images of reflection. An interplay between these elements takes place within the process of artistic transformation that generates forms and images which emerge from a fusion of energies. It is likely that the art object will reflect the individuality of the artist's soul, the prevailing material styles of the era, the material constraints of the media as well as some degree of relationship, depending on the style of representation, to the internal or external object of contemplation. The interpretative process of sympathetic correspondence will be described in more detail at a latter point.

Art is known for its subjectivity, its breadth of possibilities and the many forms that it takes. In the artistic sense the word interpretation becomes the equivalent of subjectivity. One artist's interpretation of an event, or a person, may vary radically from another's. Art is no longer imitation, or description, but interpretation. This concept of art clarifies how the more generic process of interpretation works. Why is it that we celebrate variety and the individuality of the interpreter's soul, in the making of art, and then shift to a literal minded system of definitive explanations when we "interpret" the work of art?

I believe that the answer lies in the radical split that exists between art and life within our culture, and our intellectual history. Within a context which fully integrates art and life, the subjectivity and the art of interpretation is ongoing, just as art continues in the actual living of life. One interpretation follows another in different media. Artists interpret experience within the media of their disciplines and the people who respond to these works continue the artistic and interpretative process. Some are driven to fashion permanent records of their interpretations within the physical media of the arts while others are content to work with consciousness. A religious commitment to art inevitably leads to the art of living, to an embrace of all phenomena as holy as suggested by William Blake. The history of the "art-life" tradition suggests that art is an instrumentality which can help us to deepen life, to appreciate it more, to expand our sensibility and our interpretative powers. This contrasts with the tendency that many people have to live according to the literal interpretations of others, experts and authorities. The arts are interpretations which arouse our ability to interpret life for ourselves, directly, and with the help of the interpretations of companions.

Psychological Literalism

In order to grasp the magnitude of the problems and abuse created by the literalism that characterizes the history of the psychological interpretation of art within the twentieth century, I would like to offer some examples of what I mean by clinical realism in the interpretation of visual artworks. This process is generally diagnostic and implies that the expert interpreter, or the guidebook to interpretation, will be able to explain what a picture means. Of course, meaning is limited by the distinct boundaries of the interpreter's mental constructs. Literalism holds itself forth as presenting a realistic, strict and explicit adherence to the object being reviewed. But a discipline of this kind is only found within the traditions of phenomenology where the image is encouraged "to shine and speak for itself". The phenomenologists recognize the subjectivity of the interpreter and therefore perceive interpretation as an "inter-subjectivity" between the object of contemplation and the observer. Literalism does not recognize this dynamic principle and projects its consciousness onto the object. The "realistic, strict and explicit adherence to the object" is in fact a strict adherence to the application of the interpreter's theoretical doctrine. There is no interpretative interplay. The object triggers a mechanical response and label within the already established psychological doctrine of the literalist.

Clinical realism is essentially a psychological fantasy in which interpreters cast themselves as highly objective analysts. The projections of psychological interpreters often soar into clinical confabulation. Lawrence Kubie, M.D., in his influential and widely read book *Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process*, originally published in 1958, offers an example of psychological literalism when he says:

in an artist the same unconscious fear of the bodily can masquerade as a pure devotion to the abstract in art (1971, p. 78).

Interpretations of this kind apply the principle of reversal literally, and in a way that gives the impression that the workings of the psyche can universally be reduced to similar "facts." Kubie's interpretation is based upon a belief, emanating from Freud, that art will manifest hidden

motives and desires and that images are expressions of the artist's repressed sexual desires.

My criticism of Kubie's interpretation does not deny the sexual implications of art. I do not accept his literal and global application of the Freudian principle of repressed sexual motivation to what we call abstract art. Literalists have consistently maintained in their diagnostic interpretations that certain forms of non-representational art manifest schizophrenia, a fragmented consciousness and a flight from the "world of reality." The Jungian analyst Erich Neumann in another highly acclaimed book on the psychology of art, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, originally published in 1959, said:

in modern art we find the same phenomenon. The dissolution of the outside world, of form and the individual, leads to a dehumanization of art (1971 p. 119).

These interpretations mask value judgments and an inability to establish sympathy with the art object and the intent of the artist. With few exceptions, the psychological diagnoses and interpretations of clinics as well as the application of these modes of operation to the broader context of art, exhibit "an unconscious fear" (Kubie) of art, manifested in the analyst's pseudo-scientific attempts at explanation rather than engagement. These psychological interpretations consistently insult art and artists, who have nevertheless adopted them out of their personal need for explanations.

Neumann presents the most stereotypic of these interpretations, mimicing Freud, in his description of the creative person as a

highly dubious variant of human nature; he remains fixated in childhood, and never grows beyond the prescientific stage of symbolism (Ibid., p. 179).

Freud himself said that the artist

does the same thing as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously—that is, which he invests with large

amounts of emotion—while separating sharply from reality (1968, p. 144).

The era of art interpretation, embodied here by the statements of Freud, together with Kubie and Neumann, by far two of the more sensitive and less outrageous examples of the period, really did believe that artworks were to be explained by a higher, analytic consciousness. In addition to obscuring the way in which artistic interpretation works, these theories are based upon a radical separation of art from life. The theories present their own fantasies as reality, and the phenomenological reality of art as fantasy.

Even works that were critical of the Freudian reduction of art to childhood traumas and hidden conflicts, continue with an infantilization of the artistic process. Jean-Paul Weber in his book, *The Psychology of Art*, said that within aesthetic transformations “adult realities . . . appear within one of the primitive optical perspectives of infantile vision” (1969, p. 146). Implicit, even within the most positive evocations of childhood, is the message that art is something distinct from the conscious mind of the adult.

The scientific evaluation of art reaches its most absurd levels in the various clinical and psychological handbooks for the interpretation of drawings of human figures, families, houses and trees. Within these narrow frameworks of interpretation, attention given to the eyes suggests paranoia; bold shading of the hands expresses masturbatory guilt; a knife drawn by a boy represents castration fear; bared teeth are signs of aggression; “X” configurations reveal a loss of control over sexual impulses. Handbooks of this kind are operational throughout the clinical world, in spite of Jung’s insistence that there cannot be rules for the interpretation of dreams and art. The forces of clinical realism and the belief that behavior can be reduced to categories of interpretation still retain considerable strength and influence.

Clinical realism as a mode of art interpretation is based upon this hierarchical distinction between art and analysis. Consequently art is reduced to the unconscious fantasies of the analytic and highly projective mind. It would be interesting to reverse the scenario from time to time and subject analytic clinical behavior to an evaluation by art, in both the comic and tragic forms.

Although the diagnostic analysis of art by psychological interpreters is

based upon a belief that they are operating within a highly objective context of clinical realism, the process typically projects the fantasies and theories of the interpreter in a way that turns into confabulation. Even, discreet and sophisticated analysts like Lawrence Kubie, fail to make the distinctions between their imaginative responses to art and attempts to describe the psyche of another person. I have consistently maintained that the imaginative response of the interpreter is the essence of the interpretative interplay. This subjective position contrasts to the presentation of a psychological diagnosis of a picture as an authoritative revelation of the psyche of another person. The interpretation of an artwork is a revelation of the interpreter's involvement in the process. Students and therapists struggling with their clinical responsibilities to make diagnostic assessments feel liberated by the simple advice to describe what they actually see in another person or in an image and to try to refrain from speculation based upon theories of interpretation. Descriptions of phenomena can be expanded through imaginative responses but it is important for therapists to distinguish between their observations and projections. Staying close to the organic experience of an image fits the clinical ideal better than interpretative confabulations presented as diagnostic facts.

In *Neurotic Distortion of the Creative Process* Kubie gives an interpretation of what he considered to be a poetic statement that a taxi driver made. The only information that the reader is given is the brief statement by the taxi driver. The interpretative response is clearly a confabulation, and a tender and imaginative one at that, which might serve a client well within the context of a therapeutic relationship where it is clear that Kubie is giving his personal reaction to a poetic statement. The "accuracy" of psychotherapeutic interpretations is connected to the therapist's empathy for the other person's life. In the following passage Kubie seems more involved with his personal response.

A soft-voiced taxi driver said to his fare, "It always moves me so to see a seeing-eye dog at work." He perceived and felt and spoke like a poet, and his words had qualities of reality, of a dream, of a song, and of a poem. Many meanings were latent in his simple words: e.g., the nostalgia of the adult for childhood and mother, and the consequent pervasive mythology of adult helplessness; the residue in adult years of the child's fantasy of a world in which children take over; the adult's fantasy of a world in which the wisdom of the child is all the wisdom that adult life requires (i.e., the essence of the Christ-Child myth, as

embodied in the old phrase, 'And a little child shall lead them'); the expansion of this myth to include the fantasy of being led and cared for by an animal, a variant of which is the Mowgli fable in its many forms. All of this rich lore is hidden in the sensitive and poetic response of the taxi driver to a simple scene (1971, pp. 96–97).

It seems necessary for Kubie, due to the influence of the psychoanalytic tradition within which he operates, to stress the element of "hidden" riches rather than realizing that they are not hidden at all. To use Kubie's own phrase, these things were "embodied" in the statement of the taxi driver, or perhaps they were only suggested or stimulated by his statement, and subsequently embodied in the imaginative response of Kubie. The psychological obsession with "hidden" meanings turns interpretation into dissection and excavation and takes the process away from an artistic interplay in the open air.

Interpretative confabulation becomes pathological if it turns to offensive labeling and the imposition of its standards of clinical realism onto other people and images without their consent. It frequently takes place within psychological clinics and even appears in art history where psychoanalysis has weakened itself by stepping outside the immediate phenomenological context where it has direct knowledge, in order to attempt diagnostic, interpretative studies of artists from the past. Freud's failed analysis of Leonardo is a leading example. The art critic Meyer Shapiro said that "Freud's theory provides no bridge from the infantile experience and the mechanisms of psychic development to the style of Leonardo's art" (1956, p. 166).

R. W. Pickford, in a discussion of Francis Reitman's diagnostic evaluation of Francisco Goya (1746–1828), offers a sad commentary on how far interpreters are willing to go with their labeling expeditions. Reitman is the author of a book called *Psychotic Art* which appeared in 1950.

Reitman suggests that Goya had two abnormal aspects to his personality: one was manic-depressive, and it would account for his excitement and depressions; the other was paranoid or schizoid, and it would account for his 'retirements', except in so far as they were due to depression, for his flights or escapes from fancied or partly real difficulties and conflicts, and for the fears of persecution which he met by hostility and boastfulness. It is difficult to say, sometimes, whether a case should be labelled "recurrent schizophrenia," or "manic-depressive insanity with schizo-

phrenic features.” Reitman leans to the schizoid diagnosis as more likely, since a manic type of personality would be able to manage his relationships with other people more smoothly when there were difficulties (1967, p. 228).

It is not surprising that artists distrust psychological and clinical interpretations of their work. This passage reveals clinical realism’s insensitivity to the abusive labeling that it generates while looking at art exclusively from its psychopathological perspective.

When I was beginning my work in the arts and psychotherapy I read an article called “An analysis of the art productions of a psychiatric patient who was preoccupied with his nose.” The psychiatrist interpreting the pictures apparently never worked with the young man who drew them. The young man created a series of pictures based on cowboy themes and the analyst saw a vulva in the butt of a revolver, a vaginal tunnel in the archways created by the legs of human figures and a horse, pubic hair in the grass that surrounds a stream, and a “huge penis” in the neck and head of a horse that extends between the rider’s legs. In a picture with three cowboys the analyst assumes that one is the son, and the others are his father and mother. There is no evidence that the young man referred to these figures as a family portrait, and even if he did insist that it was a picture of three cowboys that may have been in his favorite Western movie, or that he copied the picture from a magazine, it is likely that the psychiatrist would disregard his descriptions or consider them to be mechanisms of defense.

The patient himself would be fully aware of only the more superficial manifest content and would probably describe the pictures in only these terms (Birtchnell, 1973, p. 211).

The psychiatrist goes on to assume that the son is the figure on the horse and that the father is the man reaching for his gun.

This is further evidence for concluding that the patient has come to see his own nose as a penis. The rider then is provocatively exposing his penis in front of his father, who is about to shoot at it and castrate him. One wonders whether the figure on the right, representing the mother,

is reaching for her gun to shoot the father and save her son (*Ibid.*, p. 219).

The author began this paper by saying "The drawings and paintings represent a sort of psychic excretion." At least we can credit this essay in being straightforward in its image abuse. Interpretations of this kind offer an indication of how important it is to thoroughly revision the hermeneutics of art. Criticism of abusive practices will not be enough. It is necessary to demonstrate better ways of acting.

Recurring Themes

I have made frequent reference to recurring themes in human history, what might also be referred to as universals, archetypes, and classics. The permanence of these forms contrasts to, and calls forth, the multiplicities of interpretation. Art is constantly re-engaging and reinterpreting these classical forms, renewing and deepening their place within our lives. I call them the recurring forms of soul. The presence of the recurring forms in artworks furthers emotional depth because of their ability to arouse the psyche's sympathetic centers. We have these recurring forms within our souls, ready, and perhaps eager, to be excited by corresponding expressions within the external scenario of art. The classics in the arts reinterpret and renew the recurring forms: the embrace of Eros and Psyche, the madonna and child, demons and angels, scenes of war and violence, the self-portrait, pastoral animals, the animal nature of human beings, erotic imagery, flight, the hunt, the landscape, pools of water, commonplace objects, interiors, the tree, flowers, fruit, containers. The emotional depth of art results from placing these recurring forms of soul into a material context which is sympathetic to the inner vibrations of emotion. What we describe as quality, is the evocative power of the artwork, its ability to stir the soul and activate emotional sympathies.

Nietzsche described "the tradition of art" as presenting:

no new subjects and characters, but rather the old long-familiar ones, in ever enduring reanimation and reformation. . . . the artist's work becomes the image of what *endures eternally* (1984, p. 136).

My studio experience with art therapy groups throughout the world continuously supports the presence of the recurring forms. The more relaxed, open and aroused a group becomes, the more these familiar forms appear. I believe that there are limited image-making materials within an individual artform. The concept of invention does not fit the arts. We have become so influenced by mechanistic concepts that we fail to see that the fundamental processes of art are interpretative. The artist gives personal, and sometimes new, interpretations of the recurring forms of the soul. The depth of art is a result of the interplay between the individual style of the artist and the abiding forms. The highly individualized soul of the human being works together with the universal soul of the world. Art is the result of this interplay. It is both personal and impersonal. The images emerge, but they are also made.

We see repeated representations of the mother and child motif together with the athletic and heroic figure of man during the Italian Renaissance. These forms were not invented by the Renaissance but rather renewed and reinterpreted. The greatness of the Renaissance can be attributed to its fundamental focus on revival and rebirth. Art flourished because there was a complete material, religious and artistic focus on the reinterpretation of the recurring forms of art and the celebration of continuity. The great artists of all generations have submitted to the recurrence of the forms of soul. Paradoxically, it is through submission to, and immersion into, this impersonal scenario, that the artist finds the most sublime tools of evocation. The artist does not work alone, but in cooperation with the recurring forms, the muses, sources of inspiration that are both inside and outside the self.

The Italian Renaissance can be viewed as a form of cultural submission to the continuities of the past. When the present becomes humble and accepts that there is something greater than itself, we gain access to the fountainhead of soul. When an entire epoch, such as Florentine culture of the 15th and 16th centuries, submits itself to the greater soul of the world, the artistic results are magnified and multiplied in relation to this collective effort. Historical imagination allows us to engage the broad continuity of human experience and the soul of the world. When an epoch cuts itself off from the past, or considers itself superior to its

antecedents, there is a stagnation and a severe limiting of the interplay of imagination which wants to transcend the limits of time and space.

I am not advocating a limited and restrictive cultural conservatism but rather an acceptance of the recurring forms of soul in the tradition of Blake and Nietzsche. Concepts of modernism which lose this interplay with the past and the historical imagination, cut themselves off from the generative powers of the recurring forms. Supremacist ambitions turn against themselves and become artifacts of an era that is not interchangeable with larger human continuities and values. Classical imagination is the source of radical artistic transformation. We benefit from comparison to, and the emulation of, the eternal forms of human consciousness. I am not encouraging the mechanistic repetition of classical forms, but rather the contagion of imagination and the sublime. Access to the fountain-head of culture and soul will result in the emergence of radically divergent styles—from Phidias, to Botticelli, Charlotte Salomon, Ben Shahn and then back again to the aboriginal forms of shamanic art. African masks, Celtic illuminations and Native American ceramic designs are as much of a part of our classical heritage as ancient Greece. We err when we call the cultural revivals of Europe from the 15th through the 16th centuries, “The” Renaissance, because this classification has the effect of limiting the revival process to a specific historical period. Renaissance is an ongoing process.

What strikes me most about classicism is its dependence upon material form, in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and literature. The classics are not abstractions. They are tangible forms that live on through the generations. This relationship between classicism and sensibility results in the creation of art and the historical documentation of soul within human life. Classicism is a record of human dreaming and imagining within the material world. The spectrum of history makes it clear that if the experience of soul as experienced and expressed by individual human beings and cultures, is made manifest to following generations through the arts, then it is the process of art and the engagement of imagery which enables people today to make contact with the depths of the emotions. Early psychoanalysis was a psychology of dream images which provided access to the inner world. The discoveries of the psychoanalysts were a result of their ability to submit to the phenomena of the dream. When the theoretical systematization of their work became more important than fresh and unbiased wonder in the face of the dream, the discipline lost its depth and its ability to renew itself. I believe that the

psychotherapeutic use of the arts has the ability to renew the process of psychological depth. This will occur only when conceptualization engages sensibility.

Water, Sea and Depth

Water is a recurring image of psychological depth, especially when connected to darkness and the mysteries that can rise from the world “below.” In the ancient Chinese theory of the elements, water, the first element, is associated with depth and the number “1.” In addition to depth, water has other symbolic meanings which include: fertility, life, femininity, truth, purity, cleansing, healing, renewal, eternity, destruction, unity and the absence of parts, motion. This multiplicity of symbolic meanings affirms the impossibility of attempting a single psychological interpretation for an image. The most fundamental of our recurring images such as water, fire, trees, serpents and birds, will repeatedly show us that the great symbols are fountainheads of interpretations which flow out of us like a mountain stream. The interpretation of art is deepened by the historical, cross-cultural and archetypal study of images. A knowledge of meanings that recur throughout human experience helps us to see more, and to feel confident in dialoguing with images that might at first appear unfathomable. The best guides to archetypal meanings are trans-theoretical. They are phenomenological and more interested in the image and its varied history of interpretations, than they are in proving a theory of interpretation.

In Celtic mythology running water is a source of knowledge and inspiration. The Druids located themselves close to water and even today in Ireland there are survivals of a continuing faith in magical wells and water cures. Flowing waters and rivers are perceived as carrying away sickness. Irish pilgrims are among the most frequent visitors to the sacred waters of Lourdes in France. George Henderson described an Irish folk healing practice in Tíree:

water taken from the crests of nine waves, and in which nine stones had been boiled, was an infallible cure for jaundice, the shirt of the patient

after being dipped in the magic infusion, is put on wet (1911. pp. 334–335).

Physical contact with, and often submersion in, the water is necessary if the cure is to take place.

Like the Chinese, the Indian *Upanishads*, describe the first origins of the world in terms of water. Within esoteric traditions emanations are likened to water which gushes forth and spreads. Plutarch, in *Isis and Osiris*, wrote:

And (the more learned among the priests) think that Homer, like Thales, had learnt from the Egyptians to lay down that Water was the beginning and origin of all things, for that his Ocean is Osiris, and his Tethys Isis, as nursing and helping to breed up all things.

The Christian miracle of the turning of water into wine, signifies the transformation of the person's soul, "water," into the divine spirit, "wine" (Gaskell, 1960, p. 805).

The Herder Symbol Dictionary describes the "complex range of meanings" associated with water.

As an unformed, undifferentiated mass, it symbolizes the abundance of possibilities or the primal origin of all being, the *prima materia*. In this sense it appears in numerous creation myths. In Indian mythology, for example, the world EGG floats on it; Genesis speaks of the spirit of God, which at the beginning hovered over the face of the deep. In the mythologies of the most diverse peoples there is the symbolic act of an animal diving into the depths to retrieve a piece of earth from the waters. . . . Water that cannot be contained within any boundaries appears in various contexts as an eternity symbol (e.g., the water of eternal life) (1986, pp. 211–212).

Associations of depth with water are furthered by closely related images. The waterfall suggests the forceful and downward movement of soul. Deep secrets, hidden springs, renewal and the sources of artistic inspiration are connected to the fountain and the well. John Milton likened truth to a "streaming fountain" that flows "in *perpetual* progression" as contrasted to "the pool of conformity" and Heraclitus said "Truth lies at the bottom of the well."

The pearl, a symbol of gnosis and the understanding of the process of the soul, grows in the darkness at the bottom of the sea, hidden within a shell. Courage, skill, strength and risk are required to take it from the depths to the upper-world. Consistently, the great symbols tell us that soul and understanding are achieved through descent into darkness.

Dante Alighieri, approaching middle-age had to summon the courage to descend into the underworld before reaching Paradiso. He begins *The Divine Comedy* with a description of how he was confronted with darkness.

Midway the journey of this life I was 'ware
 That I had strayed into a dark forest,
 And the right path appeared not anywhere.
 Ah, tongue cannot describe how it oppressed,
 This wood, so harsh, dismal and wild, that fear
 At thought of it strikes now into my breast.
 So bitter it is, death is scarce bitterer.

Inferno, Canto I, 1–7

In the Ulysses episode of the *Inferno* Dante likens the search for gnosis to a journey on the “deep” and boundless sea. Longings for the pleasures of home were not equal to:

. . . the inward hunger that I had
 To master earth's experience, and to attain
 Knowledge of man's mind, both the good and the bad.

Inferno, Canto XXVI, 97–99.

Inspite of old age and the weariness of his loyal crew Ulysses pressed on toward the west and the previous limits of learning.

In the brief vigil that remains of light
 To feel in, stoop not to renounce the quest
 Of what may in the sun's path be essayed,
 The world that never mankind hath possessed.
 Ibid., 114–117.

He describes how the human soul was not meant to live a pastoral animal life, but to engage the vast and perilous space, the darkness beyond the lights and warmth of his civilization, the mad and poetic pursuit of the voyage for its own sake. Ulysses was able to see a glimpse of the distant, sacred mountain just before the ocean rose and consumed him. The dark elements of the sea, of depth, continuously assert primacy over the human will. The soul and the depths of the emotions do the same to the constructs of mind. The human soul is forever seeking union with the soul of the world. The destructive end of Ulysses and his crew affirms the brief lifespan of the individual life in relation to the eternity of the sea and its depths. In drowning Ulysses returns to the watery origin of life:

Till over us we heard the waters close.

Ibid., 143

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche gives a definition of the tragic myth as a “return to the primordial home” that resembles Dante’s drowning of Ulysses.

The myth leads the world of phenomena to its limits where it denies itself and seeks to flee back again into the womb of the true and only reality, where it then seems to commence its metaphysical swansong, like Isolde:

*In the rapture ocean’s
billowing roll,
in the fragrance waves’
ringing sound,
in the world breath’s
wafting whole —
to drown, to sink —
unconscious — highest joy!*

... his vast Dionysian
impulse then devours his entire world of phenomena, in order to let

us sense beyond it, and through its destruction, the highest artistic primal joy, in the bosom of the primordially One (1967, pp. 132–133).

In the depth psychology of D. H. Lawrence, it is darkness, rather than light, which is the primary objective of the soul. Lawrence goes further with the archaic theme of submersion into water and descends into the warmer and more passionate blood consciousness.

We have to sink back into the darkness and the elemental consciousness of the blood. And from this rise again (1986, p. 183).

As with Dante's description of Ulysses, and Nietzsche's Isolde, Lawrence believes that the primordial consciousness is reached through downward motion, sinking. This descent is not a form of resignation and defeat, but rather an engagement of the life source from which the person rises everyday, like the sun.

... Instead of flowing upwards and outwards towards mental consciousness and activity, it turns back, to flow downwards. Downwards toward the digestion processes, downwards further to the great sexual conjunctions, downwards to sleep.

This is the soul now retreating, back from the outer life of day, back to origins. And so, it stays its hour at the first great sensual stations, the solar plexus and the lumbar ganglion. But the tide ebbs on, down to the immense, almost inhuman passionate darkness of sex, the strange and moon-like intensity of the hypogastric plexus and the sacral ganglion, then deep, deeper, past the last great station of the darkest psyche, down to the earth's centre. Then we sleep (Ibid., pp. 183–184).

Lawrence's sea is one of blood, with its tides, flow, depths, darkness and sensitivity to the moon. He speaks of the "wave of mounting blood," the "sensual deeps," the soul's retreat "back into the sea of its own darkness," and the moon's ability to incite "the sea of individual blood" (Ibid., p. 184). He completes the union of the human being with the sea. The "lower self" in the human being and the earth are united in order to liberate the "deep sea" within, the strength of darkness and passion. The individual soul of the artist seeking the depths, desires relationship with

the dark soul of the world. We use imagery of "the depths" to express the life of "the soul."

The watery depths can be penetrated by the human being. They are more open and accessible than the inner layers of earth and the skies. Water gives us a form of sensible depth. It is a material substance that can be physically entered and this process corresponds to, and shapes, our inner imagery of depth. The penetration into the mysteries of life and the secrets of knowledge is given substance by the fantasy of penetrating to the bottom of the sea. Perceptions of depth are characterized by images of sinking and submitting to the sea, the vastness of life. The opening and depth of tears, of emotion, are similarly connected to the depths of water. Resistance to tears is a fear of the vast outpouring, the bottomless sea of feeling.

For Gaston Bachelard the "fundamental metaphor of *depth*" was "deep water."

And could an image of *full depth* ever be obtained without a meditation in the presence of deep water? The past life of the soul is itself a deep water (1983, p. 52).

Bachelard contributes to our understanding of art, dreams and imagery by revealing the material origins of consciousness, "the reveries that precede contemplation." He felt that: "Art is grafted nature." Imagination is formed by organic experience and a sensitivity to the material nature of imagery is necessary for a depth psychology. Bachelard's conclusions lead us back to the goal of creating a depth psychology of art with the material sensibility of aesthetic phenomena. If imagination and the depths of consciousness are based upon the perception of sensible and organic life experience, then it would appear that the arts are the instrumentalities of depth psychology. The experience of emotional depth, and the expression of this feeling state, are elements of an aesthetic and poetic process, that is far removed from the grids of measurement and logical analysis.

From the perspective of Gestalt Psychology, Rudolf Arnheim also advocates the sensibility of thought and the perceptual foundations of cognition. We think through the senses and Arnheim's psychology of visual thinking clarifies the way in which organic experiences are

transformed by the image-making processes of mind. He “distinguishes the mental grasp of an object from the physical nature of that object itself” (Arnheim, 1971, p. 107). Thought thus functions artistically in that its image-making process involves a transmutation of external, organic materials. The mind is not a mechanical mirror which replicates nature but rather a selective, and highly individualized organ of interpretative transformation. It functions metaphorically, changing the phenomena of nature into images which correspond to, but which do not replicate the stimulus. Cognition is a process of constant transformation; it involves an interplay between our perceptual faculties and the physical world. Arnheim correctly describes abstraction as a process in which qualities and features are separated from the physical image and given a life of their own. Even abstraction is a thoroughly sensible activity. It is an extension of the transformative mind. The origins and depths of thought are organic and immersed in the physical world.

Arnheim describes how prior to the Impressionists it was believed that the purpose of the artistic image was to give a “faithful likeness” to its object of contemplation.

Only with the Impressionists did aesthetic theory begin to accept the view that the pictorial image is a product of the mind rather than a deposit of the physical object. The realization that the image differs in principle from the physical object lays the groundwork for the doctrine of modern art (Ibid., p. 108).

The interplay between the transformative mind and external phenomena has furthered the revival of aboriginal and shamanic art forms. We are realizing that the earliest, and most “primitive” pictures and objects express a spontaneous intelligence and aesthetic sophistication which we desire to revive. Shamanic cultures lived within an ongoing interplay with the physical and spiritual worlds. Correspondence between inner and outer imagery, is the most fundamental process within every human effort to engage and articulate the deepest elements of experience. Scripture, poetry and depth psychology are all based upon metaphoric imagery and sensible signs for things that we cannot physically grasp.

Folk medicine in all cultures involves the application of principles of correspondence to healing. Sir George Frazer in his 1890 description of the roots of magic said:

Analysis shows that magic rests everywhere on two fundamental principles: first, that *like produces like*, effect resembling cause; second, that *things which have once been in contact continue ever afterwards to act on each other*. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity; the latter, that of Contact or Contagion. From the one the magician infers that he can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating it in advance; from the other, that whatever, he does to a material object will automatically affect the person with whom it was once in contact (1959, p. 7).

External rituals and objects are used to provoke corresponding inner transformations. The external forms of art activate sympathetic centers within the soul. As I have suggested in this discussion of water and depth, the vast and uncontrollable sea arouses a corresponding inner sensibility for the effusions of soul, and the dark, bottomless well of the emotions. Throughout history the psyche has been likened to the external elements with the varieties of nature serving to illuminate inner life and its ability to move swiftly from quiet contemplation to torrential upheaval.

The depth psychology of water and its correspondence to the human soul is given its most stirring and imaginative presentation in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851). Melville strives to experience his personal soul and the soul of the world in this epic of the sea. The underworld of the ocean is still unexplored today. We prefer flight, light and the discovery of the heavens to the penetration of the depths. The higher self continuously suppresses the majesty of the lower regions, the life below, and the immensities of its energy.

Moby Dick begins with a poetic and philosophical homage to water and "water-gazers":

Say, you are in the country; in some high land of lakes. Take almost any path you please, and ten to one it carries you down in a dale, and leaves you there by a pool in the stream. There is magic in it. Let the most absent-minded of men be plunged in his deepest reveries—stand that man on his legs, set his feet a-going, and he will infallibly lead you to water, if water there be in all that region. Should you ever be athirst in the great American desert, try this experiment, if your caravan happen to be supplied with a metaphysical professor. Yes, as every one knows, meditation and water are wedded forever.

But here is an artist. He desires to paint you the dreamiest, shadiest, quietest most enchanting bit of romantic landscape in all the valley of

the Saco. What is the chief element he employs? There stand his trees, each with a hollow trunk, as if a hermit and a crucifix were within; and here sleeps his meadow, and there sleep his cattle; and up from yonder cottage goes a sleepy smoke. Deep into distant woodlands winds a mazy way, reaching to overlapping spurs of mountains bathed in their hill-side blue. But though the picture lies thus tranced, and though this pine-tree shakes down its sighs like leaves upon this shepherd's head, yet all were vain, unless the shepherd's eye were fixed upon the magic stream before him. Go visit the Prairies in June, when for scores on scores of miles you wade knee-deep among Tiger-lilies—what is the one charm wanting?—Water—there is not a drop of water there! Were Niagara but a cataract of sand, would you travel your thousand miles to see it? Why did the poor poet of Tennessee, upon suddenly receiving two handfuls of silver, deliberate whether to buy him a coat, which he sadly needed, or invest his money in a pedestrian trip to Rockaway Beach? Why is almost every robust healthy boy with a robust healthy soul in him, at some time or other crazy to go to sea? Why upon your first voyage as a passenger, did you yourself feel such a mystical vibration, when first told that you and your ship were now out of sight of land? Why did the old Persians hold the sea holy? Why did the Greeks give it a separate deity, and own brother of Jove? Surely all this is not without meaning. And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image, we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all (1961, pp. 22–23).

Moby Dick articulates the depths of the human psyche because it establishes an elemental correspondence with our imagistic sources of depth in the sea. The “ungraspable phantom of life” presents itself through the imagery of water. Depth cannot exist without the water which enables us to experience the sensation of the deep. “And still deeper the meaning” is the taking of the *plunge*, going under, and following what Melville described as Ishmael's “everlasting itch for things remote” (Ibid., p. 26).

Ishmael's travels are within the same archetypal continuity that contains the journeys of Ulysses. The spectacle of the great, white whale takes the place of the mountain rising from the sea in the *Inferno*. Ahab and Ulysses set out on the same sea, beyond previous boundaries, in search of revelations. They venture into the darkness in response to the “yearning of the soul towards the soul of a stronger, greater individual,

and the passionate blood-belief in the fulfilment of this yearning" (Lawrence, 1986, p. 186). Both are consumed, drowned, in the world soul, in the recurring depths . . . "Till over us we heard the waters close." This is the religious climax of both *Moby Dick* and the *Inferno*, the unlikely union with God, a believable and physical image of the human will being enveloped by the "all mighty," where Nietzsche's "world of phenomena" is taken "to its limits where it denies itself".

Moby Dick can be read as an ecstatic celebration of the depths of soul.

. . . Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally intolerable truth; that all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore?

But as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God—so, better is it to perish in that howling infinite, than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety! (Melville, 1961, p. 116)

Ahab pursues and searches for soul, on the sea just as Ulysses does in the *Inferno*. In keeping with the psychoanalytic tradition's use of water to symbolize the unconscious, Melville uses the ocean as an image of soul, "that deep, blue, bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature; and every strange, half-seen, gliding, beautiful thing that eludes him . . ." (Ibid., p. 162). Ahab, is the embodiment of human tragedy, what Nietzsche described as the desire to go beyond the limits of phenomena, only to be consumed by it.

Ahab leaned over the side, and watched how his shadow in the water sank and sank to his gaze, the more and the more that he strove to pierce the profundity (Ibid., p. 506).

In sympathy with the eternities of tragedy Ahab chooses to "live in the game, and die it!" (Ibid., p. 472). He is the tragic embodiment of human striving. Depth is furthered through recurrence, and the unconscious repetitions of classic scenarios. The mind does not always see the larger pattern, the repetitions of soul, but the emotions grasp them immediately.

Tragic recurrence is the undying rhythm of depth, the pulse and constant motion of the waves. It arouses and summons our emotional sympathies like a drumbeat.

The white whale is an image of the elusive soul, beyond the grasp of human description, yet always provoking attempts to reach out and touch the untouchable. Psychology can benefit from the presence of the white whale as the personification of forces that cannot be contained within human reason.

—all this to explain, would be to dive deeper than Ishmael can go (Ibid., p. 188).

Therefore, in his other moods, symbolize whatever grand or gracious thing he will by whiteness, no man can deny that in its profoundest idealized significance it calls up a peculiar apparition of the soul (Ibid., p. 193).

Fire and Water

In *Moby Dick* “the ungraspable phantom” of the soul as embodied by the depths of the sea is contrasted to the “clear spirit of clear fire” (Ibid., p. 476). Fire is the element of spirit, the Holy Ghost. It reaches upward as contrasted to the downward pull of the sea. Soul is as distinct from spirit, as water is to fire. The former is “heavy” and dark while the latter is “light” and illuminating. In the mythic realm fire comes from the heavens as contrasted to water’s connections to earth. They have commonly been perceived as representing male and female, sun and moon. The continuity of these interpretations suggests that depth and soul are more feminine whereas fire and height are masculine. The man searching for soul desires the feminine, penetration and submersion, drowning in sensibility, the pearl of the moon beyond his reach. Ahab articulates the mystery when he says:

Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm? (Ibid., p. 508)

Soul pulls us toward her, drawing us down from lofty thoughts and the clarity of fire and spirit and into the caves and depths of submission to the magnetic attraction of a life beyond and within.

Fire and water are forever connected within the imagery of depth. The *Inferno* below, is a world of fire, surrounded by water. Acheron, the mythic river of death, flows into Hades and over this body of water Charon, the ferryman, transports the souls of the dead in his boat. Throughout the world, both fire and water are considered to be symbols of purification, destruction, renewal, energy and transformation. Fire and the sun, are the images of the higher self, God. In *The Banquet* Dante Alighieri said:

There is no visible thing in all the world more worthy to serve as a type of God than the Sun, which illuminates with visible light itself first, and then all the celestial and elemental bodies.

Fire is expressive of both the higher and the lower self, height and depth, and its energy moves between all planes of existence. It is the image of sexuality, friction, frenzy and the warmth of the blood. The creation of a moral hierarchy between the higher and lower realms, and the preference for ascent, contributes to the separation of soul from the body. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, William Blake envisions a divine energy, a flame-life, emanating from the human body.

Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age (1946, p. 250).

In order to clean "the doors of perception" Blake uses the fires of the underworld.

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid (*Ibid.*, pp. 257-258).

As I suggested earlier, D. H. Lawrence's imagery of an energetic and spontaneous sea of blood within the human being integrates the vital, and life generating tension between water and fire. In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* he presents his cosmology of the two energies:

Light and dark, these great wonders, are relative to us alone. These are two vast poles of the cosmic energy and of material existence. These are the vast poles of cosmic sympathy, which we call the sun, and the other white pole of cosmic volition, which we call the moon. To the sun belong the great forces of heat and radiant energy, to the moon belong the great forces of magnetism and electricity, radium energy, and so on (1986, p. 156).

Fire is the image of ecstasy, creative transformation and power. It is confident, decisive and sacramental. In his soliloquy on the "clear spirit" of fire Ahab cried out:

Leap! leap up, and lick the sky! I leap with thee; I burn with thee; would fain be welded with thee; defyingly I worship thee! (Melville, 1961, p. 477).

Fire is the embodiment of love and desire, the eternal flame of passionate longing. Melville's epic story about the depths of the sea, and the darkness of the soul, reaches an emotional peak through the invocation of fire. Yet the flames are also connected to anger, burning resentment and pain, Medea's "fire that diest not."

Sympathetic Understanding

The interpretative process involves the person in first establishing a sympathetic relationship to the object of contemplation. There is an opening of the interpreter's consciousness through which the observed phenomenon is absorbed into the sympathetic elements of the soul where it is transformed by the emotions and then expressed in the form

of the interpretation. Soul, as the transformative force, is engaged only when the relationship between the object of contemplation and the emotional sensibilities of the interpreter, meet without the interference of external directives that limit the relationship between interpreter and phenomena. The formula response does not allow us to open completely to the experience and interpret the object imaginatively, and as though every interpretation is a fresh beginning and discovery. If we interpret images according to fixed rules, it is the rules that we carry away with us afterwards. The system of interpretation overwhelms the artwork and limits its sensory impact.

Deep interpretations reveal a sympathetic understanding as contrasted to the projection of private pre-occupations that have little organic relationship to the observed phenomena. Psychological interpretations of art which operate according to a standard system of diagnosis and labeling are similarly without sympathy. The interpreting consciousness of the diagnostician is outside the dynamic interplay. What we are given is a system of interpretation which unconsciously strives to dis-engage itself from life. The perception of therapy as art, and as an interpretative process which is itself an artistic interplay between subjects and objects, revolutionizes our concept of human understanding. We realize that sympathy, and the ability to open to, and transform, the ongoing phenomenological experience, is the true experience of human depth. As soon as we separate ourselves from this engagement, and try to label it according to a system of classifications, we lose the deep and turbulent waters, the flame, the dark woods and the feelings that they evoke in us. Depth is sympathetic and not analytic.

Deepening occurs when sympathetic attentiveness follows a religious purpose, which is nothing more than a desire to establish a correspondence with the soul of another person. Opening to the soul of another, and through this to the personal soul, is a threatening experience for many people. Our projection of religion into the heavens, into fantasies of future lives, is a manifestation of this fear and an avoidance of the challenging, redemptive and healing sympathy with another soul. Traditional psychoanalysis, with its objectifying distance, also avoids the crucible of depth.

Sympathetic understanding involves a compassionate correspondence between the feelings of the interpreter and the observed phenomena, which may be an image, object, nature or another person. As Arnheim shows us in *Visual Thinking*, the image created by the artist will not have

an exact likeness to the observed phenomena. The interpretation is shaped by what Lawrence saw as the individuality of personality into a "vital presence" in which "the soul sees its own true correspondent." He advocated educational methods for children which cultivate "inward seeing" from the sympathetic centres of the soul.

The child is *not* a little camera. He is a small vital organism which has direct dynamic *rappor*t with the objects of the outer universe. He perceives from his breast and his abdomen, with deep-sunken realism, the elemental nature of the creature. So that to this day a Noah's Ark tree is more real than a Corot tree or a Constable tree: and a flat Noah's Ark cow has a deeper vital reality than even a Cuyp cow (1986, p. 90).

Interpretation is a process of "inward seeing" that establishes a sympathetic relationship between the interpreter and the object of contemplation from which new life forms are created which are *suggested* by the stimulus. The process is dynamic and never final, just as we can never establish a single, complete and all-encompassing image of a single phenomena. One portrait may come closer than another as Melville said, but there will never be an absolute interpretation. The perception of "reality," is of course an interpretation, a sympathetic response which acknowledges the constant transformation of the material context.

Sympathetic interpretation expresses a morality of ongoing sensitivity and responsiveness, what Simone Weil saw as "true attention" to the other. According to Shelley the moral person imagines vigorously, takes the place of others, internalizes their "pains and pleasures," and "vibrates with the vibrations" and nerves of another. He described the process as love.

...that profound and complicated sentiment, which we call Love, which is rather the universal thirst for a communion not merely of the senses, but of our whole nature, intellectual, imaginative and sensitive ... (1980, p. 106).

The quality of an interpretation can be determined by its sympathetic understanding. Correctness, in the process of interpretation, is not only connected to empathy, but also to the persuasiveness of the interpreter. I

believe, as Nietzsche says in *The Will to Power*, that “facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations” (1968, p. 481). If even facts are to be considered interpretations then it is the intelligence, style and sensitivity of the interpreter that will determine the extent to which others listen. Sooner or later every great interpreter of life realizes the subjective and projective nature of the interpretations that others accept as truths. People who follow the interpretations of others, are often confused because this cuts them off from the clarity and re-generating vitality of their own spontaneous reactions to experience.

Accuracy

After listening to this treatise on the subjectivity of interpretation the critic wants to know if I can distinguish between good and bad interpretations.

I have said that accuracy is connected to empathy and a sympathetic feeling for the image and the life situation of the other person. This suggests that the interpreter is able to ask other people questions that they need to ask themselves. I discussed how interpretations can become projective confabulations that lose contact with the other person, and the art object. I have also given examples of what I consider to be bad interpretations of art that are often abusive of images and the people who make them. I cited Shelley who suggested that accuracy is connected to powers of imagination, and the ability to “vibrate” to “another’s nerves.” There are no absolute standards of accuracy. The good interpretation is useful to the other person and sometimes it contributes to a sense of certainty about steps that must be taken. The interpretation may illuminate patterns and themes in a person’s life that were previously unknown. At other times it simply helps us to see what exists before us. Interpretations may be stimulating, challenging, painful, stressful or unpleasant and not always complimentary. The value of an interpretation may not be immediately apparent. Fear and irritation may produce denial and avoidance. This makes the assessment of accuracy difficult. In addition to fluctuations in our openness to the content of an interpretation, the standard of accuracy is subject to change. Interpretations that resonate today might be less relevant tomorrow.

In a conversation with James Hillman I asked him how he defines interpretative accuracy. He said:

Accuracy is sticking with the image. It has to do with being close to what is there. We go back to the thing that we are working on. For example, the bathroom door is open. I go to this image and give it aid rather than interpreting it with allegory. The boxes of interpretation protect you from a direct engagement with the other person, the situation and the image. You protect yourself from the aesthetic response. Accuracy is not a matter of right and wrong interpretations, but the different perspectives that can be brought to bear on the dream or the painting. We tend to be locked into a particular perspective. Sometimes the figures that appear just want to be recognized, to be present. In old Greek religion it was wrong to neglect or forget the gods, to think that you are the only one around. The truth of a sentence is measured by its effect. You have to be careful about laying your personal trip on the dream but you cannot avoid becoming involved in its imaginal context. It catches you (1988).

We discussed how the image has a purpose which precedes our interpretations which occur after-the-fact. Accuracy may involve the awakening of an aesthetic sensibility that enables us to respond directly to the image, with feeling rather than analysis. The aesthetic judgment is based on whether or not the response “works” and fits the context. It cannot be proven through a formula.

In the realm of the emotions accuracy may not be possible. We do not have standards that are capable of measurement. Accuracy suggests the absence of error, and a precision that transcends a particular person’s point of view. The interpretation of art is closer to spontaneous instincts and emotional sensitivities than it is to mathematical measurement. It is easier to assess whether or not an artwork is capable of stimulating deep interpretative responses than it is to determine which interpretations are most accurate. As I have repeatedly suggested, there will be many interpretations to an evocative work of art. Each may express different qualities. The sensibility and energetic qualities of form, texture, color, gesture and composition are often more significant than the stories we tell about the picture. Accuracy cannot be determined by a single standard. Different interpretations may articulate the contradictions and multiplicities that exist within each of us, and within the artwork. Even the universal

and archetypal symbols have many meanings. For example, the spider, is a symbol of creation, fertility, symmetry, and the weaving of life. It also embodies the anti-thetical qualities of destruction, evil and misfortune. The interpretative process attempts to convey this multiplicity of meanings.

The accurate interpretation offers insights that might increase our desire to go further, and deeper, or it may suggest that movement is an avoidance, an expression of an inability to stay with a difficult situation. Accuracy may both increase or limit possibilities. From an energetic perspective, helpful interpretations may liberate impacted energy or they may gather together scattered and previously unrelated fragments. Accuracy has as much to do with the openness of the person to whom the interpretation is directed as it does with the insight and sensitivity of the interpreter. The most profound, empathetic and skillful observations will mean nothing to the person who cannot make use of them. There are also people who can find psychic illumination in what might be considered bad interpretations. The history of psychological interpretation has not given adequate attention to the ability of the person to open to the interpretation. The issue of quality has been viewed almost exclusively from the perspective of the interpreter. The perception of art interpretation as an interplay between people and images establishes a kinetic and multifaceted context which offers an alternative to static, reductionistic and one-dimensional interpretations of art.

The most significant interpretations are those that continue to act on us after the initial contact. They persist in their provocations of imagination while continuing to evoke the sensibility of the original image.

IV

RE-IMAGINING THE ARTIST AS A THERAPIST

... prayer consists of attention ... The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say to him: "What are you going through?"...
Simone Weil

The art therapist is an artist who attends to others, to images and to the soul. Attention to the self is an integral part of the discipline but it does not dominate the artist's social mission. The opportunity to serve others furthers the artist's relationship with the self since it is through other people that we see and experience ourselves most completely. Since the social ideology of the art therapist involves an expansion of artistic values, it becomes necessary to redefine the concept of genius.

Genius, What Is Native to the Person

In addition to the place of genius in the qualitative determinations that artists make as to whether or not they have the "talent" and skills needed to go forward and risk a life of art, there is a more archaic dimension of genius that is related to the calling of the artist. It is time to return to the older, and essential meaning of genius as a guardian deity and that which gives specific character to a place, person or group. The concept of genius, in its original sense deepens our understanding of what soul is. The two are closely related.

Genius is that which is native and unique to the individual artist. We are accustomed to thinking of genius exclusively in terms of superiority,

and people who are the ultimate achievers within our society. This conceptualization is an interesting projection of a society that strives for hierarchy and quantifiable accomplishments.

The many heroes and heroines that we create through media communications are also projections of the invisible person's need for recognition. We tend to live through them rather than through ourselves. We hide behind their accomplishments and let them take the risks and speak for us. Our lives of "quiet desperation" are given outlets through the media figures who offer freedom through imaginative identification and projection. Yet I believe that it is possible for public figures to serve as inspirational characters rather than as replacements for creativity within daily life.

The creation of individual cults of genius can be viewed as a manifestation of the society's correspondence to the individual psyche. Just as the individual person feels the inner stirrings of genius, calling for manifestation within the external world, there is a corresponding process taking place within the larger social context. The great individual artists of our history contribute to our collective sense of soul, and the manifestation of the deity that lives within the whole of society. The significance of the role of the individual "genius" within society, should reaffirm rather than repress the manifestation of genius, and soul, within the lives of individual people.

The practice of art therapy is contrary to the conventional exclusivity of genius and it therefore offers a departure from art's material history which has set individuals apart from the masses as "superior" examples of the workings of soul. As therapists we do not consider ourselves to be zealots of a new superiority, and a more accurate form of genius. We are simply different, and we offer something distinct from other elements within the artistic community. The work of the artist as a therapist is not opposed to the historic aspiration toward "master-works" but it does believe that both art and genius can be expanded to serve broader participation. Some might associate this dimension of art with the "romantic" tradition because of its idealism. I admire the work of many of those who are labelled as romantic, but is interesting to note that few of the artists, listed under this category, placed themselves there. The classification was typically made by "authorities" and category-makers who subsequently interpreted their work. The universality of genius can be viewed as a pre-eminently practical and empirical concept, based upon the observation of human differences and individual attributes.

Those of us who work with large numbers of people in educational and therapeutic settings see that each person has a unique character, or soul, that can be transformed into significant artistic expression. Whether or not this happens, is generally determined by the person's responsiveness and commitment to the creative urge.

Jean Paul Richter described how the belief that genius was restricted to a "single faculty" resulted from its confusion with virtuosity. The virtuoso typically lives a life which is dominated by the perfection of a particular skill. There is a resulting loss that accompanies this distinction as we see from the testimony of those who have dedicated their lives to the unfolding of a single gift. Richter perceives genius as a poetic and imaginative process which involves a free interplay between all of the person's faculties.

In genius all faculties are in bloom at once, and imagination is not the flower, but the flower-goddess, who arranges the flower calyxes with their mingling pollens for new hybrids, as if she were the faculty of faculties (1973, p. 35).

Richter presents the realization of a person's full potential as the instinctive and full integration of all of the faculties working together in a complementary and balanced state of ongoing motion.

What did our great Herder with his acumen, profundity, versatility and breadth of vision, lack in order to become a higher poet? Only the ultimate aspect of similarity to Plato; his steering tail-feathers (*pennae rectrices*) should have been in more just proportion to his flight feathers (*remiges*) (Ibid., p. 37).

The restriction of genius to "gifted" individuals results in the inability of the society's soul, or genius, to fully manifest itself. Most art therapists are committed to the collective well-being of their community. Our work is defined, and distinguished from other forms of art, by its orientation to human service. In helping others to find what is native to themselves, the therapist focuses on the personal genius, or soul, and brings it back to the life of the ordinary person. This is a unconscious re-enactment of the eternal role of the shaman in returning the abducted soul of the person

in need. Shamanic cultures also think in terms of proper balance and alignment with the energies of nature and strive toward the correct proportion described by Richter. These are aesthetic judgments and refinements, directed toward the fine-tuning and perfection of the soul, in accordance with its indigeneous resources.

The integration of all of the arts in therapy (*gesamtkunstwerk*) fits Richter's definition of genius as a condition where "all faculties are in bloom at once." If we are to accept Richter's concept, then the fragmentation and separation of the arts together with extreme specialization in our academic and professional traditions are anti-genius. Our educational systems have been committed to virtuosity. This emphasis on the mastery of a single technique is an expression of a larger social context which values specialization. But the individual psyche has deeper and older memories and instinctual longings for the use of its many faculties. The tendency toward extreme specialization as contrasted to the use of all of the person's faculties, suggests a crisis of genius and imagination that is manifested in many of our contemporary psychopathologies. Yet it seems that society is functioning imaginatively. Within a highly specialized culture, the full-spectrum life of the individual is sacrificed to the collective's progressive differentiation needs.

Even the concepts of a heroic and superior genius define this attribute as involving the ability to place familiar and traditional things into new relationships. Art is in need of this revisioning. The ideology of the art therapist as a person who helps others to discover and express what is native to, and characteristic of themselves, might be offering us a concept of art which fits our emerging culture.

Primary Artists and Therapists or Composites?

Both art and therapy are expanded through the art therapy process. Artists committed to life and the use of the self as a creative instrument are attracted to the discipline of art therapy but they soon discover the restraints placed upon their vision by the tight boundaries of professions. Although the institutionalization of the separate media traditions helps to maintain the arts in society, it also works against the full integration of the artistic and psychotherapeutic processes into a new form. The separa-

tion of the arts from one another is a major obstacle to furthering an artistic ideology based upon the fusion of art and life. I have recommended that the separate creative arts therapy professions envision themselves as gathering together in a pantheon which includes all of the disciplines while acknowledging their differences (1987). This would actually be a conservative step based upon the successful inclusion model of the medical profession.

Today in the mental health field the scientific tradition of therapy, and the traditions of the specific art media are being connected, rather than transformed through complete merger. "Primacy" is attached to the continuation of the separate traditions. The primary artist is the one who operates exclusively within the world of art. The primary therapist is the person who comes completely from the older therapeutic tradition which has been primary from the start. The "connection" of art and therapy inevitably results in a "secondary" or "adjunctive" role because this new composite professional does not have a claim, or birthright, to either the primary tradition of art or therapy.

It is the issue of "primacy" that brings us to the essential issue of identity. The art therapist is in a difficult position, primary in neither art or therapy. The "composite" is a structure that is made of distinctly different components, each of which maintains its individual identity within the combined form. Although I am committed to diversity and the varied elements that go together, and sometimes against one another, to form an individual person, artwork or profession, I believe that the individual person or thing has an organic form or soul which is native to itself. In the creation of strong life-forms the coming together of different elements creates a transformative energy which makes a new "whole which is greater than the sum of its parts." The structures of the formative elements are themselves changed through the transformation process. The new form begins a life history of its own, committed to the realization of what is native to itself alone. Imagine the separate media traditions of the arts and the tradition of psychotherapy as two parents conceiving of a child. If the child continues to live as a composite of the parents, it denies its individual identity. Composite materials suggest artificiality and the absence of the organic transformation process that produces a life-form that can not only live on its own, but is also capable of producing future generations within its native strain. Plywood is a composite board that lacks the visual appeal and fragrance of pure oak, walnut or soft pine. Nature is constantly creating new combinations which grow

organically within themselves, as contrasted to the composite which depends upon external manipulation.

As art therapists we can create a new primacy shaped out of the material of ourselves, our interests and history, together with our ambitions and visions. A new form, or container, can be created to embody what is indigenous to ourselves and our work at this particular time.

It might be asked, why bother with the creation of new professional forms? Why not simply let the diverse elements take care of themselves? One reply might suggest that the art therapist is an organic response to the needs of our epoch. The profession is a new form that has been generated by both art and therapy in response to their creative impulses. There is also the principle of convergence and the coming together and spontaneous creation of new forms as a result of the meeting. The convergence of art and therapy may be a formative event that will forever alter the participants. As events, convergences bring together varied resources that approach one another from different directions. The power of the convergence results from the fusion of these different elements into a new commitment. As I have said so many times before, power is focus. The strength and depth of art therapy will come from a dedication to the point of convergence rather than attempting to maintain concentration on the separate elements as they approach one another, meet and then go off in their varied directions. There will quickly be a point at which it will not be possible to follow the course of the individual elements. The significance and lifespan of the convergence depends upon the attention that is given to it. It is predictable that art therapy will change over time as a result of future convergences. These transformations will be stimulated and influenced by participating elements which offer strong strains of themselves for a new fusion.

If this primacy of the therapist's identity is to be achieved a new ideology must be created, which redefines and transforms conventional concepts of both art and therapy. Art has to be rejoined with the total life process, and the use of varied media. Therapy must leave behind the restrictive boundaries of scientism. Imagination is to be given the freedom to revision both art and therapy. A collective, spontaneous and committed "will to form" must emerge and fashion a new way of perceiving what we do. Different standards of performance and modes of evaluation are to be introduced. As a therapist who paints I have to reconsider the purpose of my expression. To whom is it directed? Why were the pictures produced? What purpose do they serve other than themselves?

What was the physical context of their production? What do other people see in them? We cannot avoid the need for a supportive community, because otherwise the work is directed only at ourselves. The fact is that this community of art therapists exists and we have to decide what we want to do with it. How can we work with it to further our common goals, and our instinctual strivings after a use of art that has not yet fully manifested itself in the world? Art therapists who paint are often restricted by their internalization and acceptance of the conventions of commercial galleries in presenting artworks to other people. This way of showing their art may not be the best way to further what is native to the art therapist and the work itself. Does the system that we accept for the distribution and presentation of art fit our needs? Is it possible for us to function completely within this system?

Art educators are sometimes stuck in similar problems since many of them desire to further their personal art expression while also spending the “majority” of their work time training others. Yet the arts educator is typically training students within the context of the prevailing system for the presentation of art. The art therapist’s situation is distinctly different because the objective of the work does not fit with the primary mission of the society’s conventional art institutions. The principal difference lies in the involvement that art therapists have in the lives of the people that they work with. There are also differences in the way in which their psyches are involved in the artistic process.

The personal involvements of the art therapist are not “against” the object traditions of the arts. We are not opposed to the ability of the object to stand on its own and be perceived and appreciated without becoming involved in the psyche of the maker. The object and the artist are distinct from one another. They do have lives of their own. There is an important place for the consideration of artworks without reference to the personal history or concerns of the artist. In addition to supporting this process in the history of art, we actually have a place for it within the work that we do. However, it is also clear that our profession involves both the lives of people and the existence of the artworks that emerge through them. In addition to working with art objects, therapists must refine the instrumentality of the self as a fundamental element of the therapeutic art.

If we strive toward the objective of recognizing art therapists as “primary therapists” then it would seem that we are primarily identifying ourselves as “therapists.” Are we unconsciously accepting the subordination

of art to a psychotherapeutic professional identification? The psychologist is a primary therapist, as well as the psychiatrist. They operate within their different traditions while also being perceived as primary in the realm of psychotherapy. This can also happen to the art therapist, but first there has to be a sense of primacy within our professional identification. The identity of the psychotherapist is broad and it contains many of the professions that currently exist within our society. It also seems that the art therapist is involved more with the day to day work of therapy as it is generally recognized by the culture, rather than art as perceived by the public. Our identity comes from the infusion of art into therapy, rather than by bringing therapy to art. Therapy has served as the principal container for the new form. We are hired by therapeutic organizations and we establish private practices.

Therapy is the place where people in our culture have been doing deep work on their souls. In the formation of art therapy, art has followed the lead of therapy. There are also the economic factors of therapy serving as the revenue generating activity. If we look through the history of art we see a similar pattern of art and artists traveling as nomads between institutions which offer them support. Art has followed religion, architecture, commerce, education and now therapy. It would seem that art and artists seek out means of support and material survival within the society. Art follows money as well as soul. Art also leads society. It is often political and selfless, sacrificing material comfort for the expression of its message. Although therapy has been the principal element in the formation of the art therapist, it can also be said that by doing this, therapy has given a new purpose to art. As the history of the transformation takes shape, the dominance between the formative elements recedes and there is an interplay between the two which draws on the totality of their respective resources and histories while also attracting other elements to the crucible.

It is interesting to see that the "eureka" sensation that is experienced when discovering that therapy has profound artistic qualities, is not limited to the emerging profession of art therapy. Erving Polster's book, *Every Person's Life Is Worth a Novel* (1987), is an expression of how the psychotherapeutic discipline is beginning to liken itself to art. Citing Flaubert in his title, Polster bases his method on the belief that the arts illuminate the commonplace, "the ordinary". He refers to Sartre's statement that banal events take on human significance and interest when people begin to talk about them. The telling of the story of our experi-

ence raises it from obscurity and worthlessness. Polster perceives storytelling as “an organizing agent” which furthers concentration on significant details and themes. Through the telling of the story a commitment is made to the things that I am focusing on. It gives value and purpose to experience. Polster compares the art of the therapist to the novelist.

Unlike in the novel, where each ingredient is already finely selected, in therapy many of the words, sensations, movements, and expectations will be superfluous. Yet, using the same creative selection process as the novelist, the therapist accentuates key experiences and provides leverage for the emerging dramas (Polster, 1987, p. 10).

Freud, the medical psychoanalyst who desired to be a writer, unconsciously realized his ambition. His “will to literature” was fulfilled through the storytelling dimension of analysis. The magnitude of his effect upon the world can be explained in terms of his opening the depths of the imagination, art and dreams to the lives of ordinary people. Freud’s achievements have had little lasting impact upon the medical profession. The mystery and depth of his work was furthered by the paradoxical nature of his art. Like an intriguing character from a novel, or dream, he appeared in the guise of the medical man but his practice moved in different realms. There was a juxtaposition of character, purpose and method which aroused the emotions and unconsciously furthered his purpose by indicating that things really were not as they appeared. As in both art and dreams, characters can simultaneously take on contradictory roles. The paradox stimulates the imagination and deepens emotional involvement.

It might not have been possible for Freud to have the same degree of influence by working directly with the connections between literature and psychotherapy. The analysis of the psyche by a medical clinician was an important part of its appeal. This was an unusual combination which aroused the imagination. The medical doctor was perceived as a person who gives definitive and clear diagnoses and recommendations based upon concrete principles of cause and effect. The fantasy of applying this certainty to the psyche must have been irresistible. However, we have discovered that medical procedures lose their precision when applied to the emotions. The adaptation of medical ideology to the therapeutic treatment of the psyche was a magical activity based upon the principle

of contagion. There was a belief that the effectiveness of medical science in treating physical ailments could be transferred to the psyche.

Polster shows how the storytelling process of psychotherapy can be approached within the context of the art itself, rather than being explained by a clinical method. He gives considerable attention to how the storyteller and the novelist make "selections" from "all that could be written." In therapy the particulars of a story are carefully observed and considered in relation to their impact on the totality of the person's life. Therapists are not only listeners, or readers, who are taken into the person's story, but as Polster states, they also

maintain those critical faculties necessary for recognizing some of the qualities of good story line, as an editor might. Three of the qualities he looks for are coherence, directedness, and bearability, each of which will be a factor in effecting change (Ibid., p. 31).

Working therapeutically within the discipline of the arts might not have the magical effects of medical psychoanalysis and it will not cause a comparable sensation within society, but the method is likely to continue. The artistic mode of therapy will last because it is inseparable from the story and the image.

Creation of the Self

The history of psychotherapy has been characterized by a continuity, of essential methods and values. These consistent therapeutic principles include the primacy of dialogue as the essential mode of engagement; the client's storytelling role and the therapist's position as a compassionate listener; the interplay between therapists and clients as a microcosm of the larger life process; the freedom to include dream experience and other personal material; and the belief that telling personal stories, expressing feelings and having them heard, or experienced by another person, will produce therapeutic results, healing, and a renewed sense of purpose and direction in life.

Therapy has been in demand, and it has served a useful purpose,

because of its ability to offer these services. Its value has largely been determined by its compassionate understanding and its ability to interpret the mythologies and pathologies of our era. It has also been a source of creative and imaginative renewal and a place where people have been encouraged to revision their lives.

In the history of western art there are two distinct and usually separate continuities, one dealing with the creation and preservation of objects of art and the other focusing on the life of the person as a work of art. Both traditions can be considered classical since they have ancient origins, and they have survived throughout the millennia. Therapy has been a vehicle for continuing the tradition of the art of self-formation. The fine arts have been dominated by the object tradition. Because therapy has been a place, outside organized religion, where there has been a compassionate engagement of soul and the depths of a person's life, it is natural that it would ultimately relate to the classical tradition of making an artwork of one's life. Therefore, the idea of the self being a primary mode of creative transformation in therapy has ancient origins. Art therapy is unique in its ability to incorporate both the art object and self-formation traditions.

Both Rank (1968) and Foucault (1986) document how the art of living and the creation of the self pervade ancient Hellenic culture. The teacher-student relationship was focused on perfecting the self.

In this sense the Greek was creative before he arrived at creating works of art, or, indeed, without ever shaping anything but himself and his pupil (Rank, 1968, p. 54).

Rank suggests that the great art objects created by Greek civilization were "auxiliary" to the education and formation of people who were the most significant creations of the culture. He spoke of how "every great art" serves a specific "cultured task." We see this service function in the artworks of indigenous societies, in the gothic art of the Middle Ages, in the Renaissance, in the political writings of Dickens and Tolstoy, and in the contemporary work of therapists. History seems to indicate that the health and vitality of art is closely associated to its service to something outside of its immediate boundaries and cooperation with other cultural tasks.

The tradition of the artistic formation of the self can be expanded to acknowledge art's history in serving and creating culture. Rank believed that perfection of the self in ancient Greece served the nation. This leads to the realization that within the classical tradition, focus on the self serves the community and not just the self. Foucault described how the teachings of Socrates emphasize the importance of "exercising the soul" through the perfection of "the art of the self."

And he associates this requirement of practice with the need to attend to oneself. This *epimeleia heautou*, care of the self, which was a precondition that had to be met before one was qualified to attend to the affairs of others or lead them, included not only the need to know (to know the things one does not know, to know that one is ignorant, to know one's own nature), but to attend effectively to the self, and to exercise and transform oneself (1986, p. 73).

Life is perceived as continuous training. Psychotherapy is created to serve as a place where the soul is exercised and where the person undergoes training. The psychotherapist's personal commitment to the improvement of the self is extended to others within the therapeutic relationship. When therapy operates within the rules of a behavior science, it is the theory or the system of operation that provides the basis for the work. This contrasts to the perception of therapy as a contagious art of self-transformation. The therapist is a teacher who demonstrates a commitment to the discipline. In this respect the therapist's influence and reason for being in the role is based on a commitment to the ongoing practice of the art.

The 20th century renaissance of the art of self-formation began in psychoanalysis as practiced by a medical doctor whose soul was attracted to both art and technical science. Psychoanalysis not only revived the philosophical focus on the art of perfecting the self, but it also operated within the Socratic method of dialogue and storytelling. Artists were immediately drawn to the work. Freud used the credibility and social influence of the medical profession to resurrect inquiry into the depths of the self. Yet he also confused the process of discovery by *subordinating the art*, to the creation of a definitive science of behavior. Within the classical tradition the practice of the art was both the end and the means; it was not a procedure to be used as source of data for rational solutions.

Paradox was accepted by the early philosophers. Twentieth century psychology has a desire for final resolutions within the context of an absolute science of behavior. The classical tradition maintained the humility of teachers who were typically the people who were most involved with their ongoing training and who were most aware of what they did not know.

The identity of the therapist is often confused today because we do not understand the tradition from which it emerges. If we begin the history of psychotherapy with medicine, those of us who are not part of that profession feel alienated from the primary source. It is important to see that the medical origins of psychoanalysis were a coincidence of history, and a timely convergence of formative elements within the beginning of the twentieth century. The artistic soul has carried on the transformative work of psychoanalysis and depth psychology. Medicine did not respond to the opportunity to revive its history as a profession which integrates both art and science. This integration peaked during the Renaissance in the work of Paracelsus and has since then progressively reversed itself through increasing specialization.

We are also limited by our culture's almost exclusive identification of art with the object making tradition. Many art therapists are committed to both traditions. We consider therapy to be an art of self-formation but we also respect the object making dimensions of the arts. Pictures, rhythms, voice expressions, stories, body movements and other art forms expand the therapeutic process and provide the self-formation aspects of therapy with organic expressions of soul. The art therapist's integration of both traditions, self-formation and the making of objects, deserves recognition within the history of western art. I will show, at a later point, how this is a return to shamanic experience.

I believe that if art therapy is going to have a larger impact upon society, our primary identification will have to be with the art of self-formation. The art therapist will be an agent of creation, inspiring others to shape, transform and recreate their lives. The art objects emerging from this process are companions, helpers and records of involvement. The chief executive officer of an international corporation who was involved in serious artistic studies made the following statement to me:

I can hire technicians to solve problems, but the real art involves work on myself. I need to improve myself, my ability to motivate, lead

and create something from nothing. This is the most important thing.

Shamanic Origins

Art as a manifestation of soul, reflects its changing imagery throughout history. For example, the collective and monotheistic organization of Gothic society is expressed in its art. Although the art of the Renaissance celebrated one God, the social context had become more complex and varied and there was a return to the polytheistic imagery of Greece and Rome and the study of the individual person. The uniformity of Mayan art was a projection of a tightly regimented and controlled society. Hierarchy, planning, repetition and the complete submission of parts to the whole, in terms of both style and structure, account for the aesthetic harmony and wondrous achievements of both Gothic and Mayan architecture. The group combined all of its resources and created artworks far beyond the reach of a single individual. As civilization becomes more complex, varied and democratic, there is a corresponding variety in artistic expression. The multiplicity of imagery and styles reflects the polymorphous soul of the society. Uniformity and planning are sacrificed to the prevailing beliefs in variety and individual freedom. The state itself, as an organism, becomes polytheistic in spite of the monotheistic beliefs of its individual communities.

As the state, or society, becomes increasing complex and polymorphous there appears to be a simultaneous and counter-drive toward singularity. In *Educating the Creative Arts Therapist: A Profile of the Profession* (1986) I document the progressive specialization of knowledge and the professions. The arts and their traditions have been rigorously specialized and separated from one another. As a consequence, the practice of art becomes isolated from the mainstream of life.

The formulation of the role of the art therapist is a response to the conflict that artists feel about their desire to experience a personal relationship to art while also working with the community. The art therapist is typically a person who concludes that a solitary life within a studio is not enough. There must also be a way to directly and authentically engage others in the experience of art. Psychotherapists without

personal backgrounds in the arts have become involved in art therapy because they want to expand their therapeutic practice through the arts and revitalize their personal creativity.

Art therapy is consistent with its shamanic origins in its commitment to the art of living. This does not suggest a rejection of the object and its place within our lives, but it is a response to an imbalance that exists within our epoch. The shaman does not make “art” as we know it today, but this person does perform similar actions with objects, costuming, dance, music and language. The material object is a vital part of the shamanic enactment but it is used as a tool, a helper, and vehicle for the restoration of balance and healing within the community and the individual psyche. Shamanism as well as the idea of art therapy are reversals of the dominant, product oriented consciousness of our epoch.

Shamanic practices are recognized for both their individuality and universality. Styles and techniques differ from person to person but there are recurring forms that continue to manifest themselves between cultures and historical epochs. Contemporary fascination with the shaman can be attributed to a desire for what is native to ourselves and a longing for a revival of the most archaic elements of the psyche. The histories of art, religion and healing all lead back to an integrated presence in the person of the shaman. It seems that through shamanism we return to the primal and relatively unchanging elements of soul. In the section of *The Arts and Psychotherapy* (1981) dealing with “The Enduring Shaman,” I have given a detailed description of how the shaman’s enactments and ceremonial use of objects directly correspond to the actual things that are done by the art therapist today. There are explicit parallels in the use of rhythm as a mode of altering consciousness through trance. Drums establish immediate and direct access to the soul through what D. H. Lawrence referred to as the “blood rhythm”. He imagined the soul as pulsating blood which closely parallels the shamanic concept of “boiling energy” (Katz, 1982) where the person enters into a self-less state in which healing takes place. I have also experienced how the shamanic tradition of free vocal expression manifests itself today in our work. Many of the deepest and most primal experiences that I have had in therapy have been connected with the liberation of the voice. The spontaneous integration of the voice and drumming over a sustained period of time within a carefully constructed environment inhabited by images and sacred objects, is the surest path to the full engagement of the shamanic consciousness.

The shaman is for me an archetype of the indigenous healer and my experimentation seems to indicate that this figure is native to all people. Drumming, voice, trance, masks, costuming, sacred art objects, paintings, the enactment of dreams, and other experiences closely associated with the work of today's art therapist summon the shaman within. The continuities of shamanic enactment are part of our instinctive human heritage. Their archaic recurrence is one of the oldest symbolic continuities in the human psyche. Of course, these shamanic skills have to be carefully cultivated but we all have access to them by traveling into ourselves and the environments that we live in. As Eliade suggests, shamans are "practitioners of the sacred." When we apply this sacred and healing focus to the work that we do within the arts and psychotherapy, the shamanic dimension is evoked.

Through the enactments of the shaman the internal imagery of the community is externalized. The shaman's performance is highly individualized in terms of style, but it serves a collective purpose. The art therapist's mission is closer to that of the shaman than it is to that of the conventional artist within contemporary society. Both the therapist and the shaman use their individuality to serve others, directly. Their objective is neither the glorification of their individual performance and creativity, nor the presentation of themselves as heroic, or god-like figures. The self-worth of the therapist and the shaman is determined by the ability to help others. Their constant focus is the perfection of the self.

The return to self-formation as an artistic focus is a response to the cultural complexity and alienation that have revived interest in shamanism. Rank believed that the concept of creating the self through art originates in primitive body painting (1968, p. 30). He explored the possibility that art began in the ornamentation of the body and subsequently expanded to the decoration of objects. Body art is both collective and individual since its patterns designate personal uniqueness and membership in a particular community. We see the same ornamentation of the body taking place today within contemporary popular culture. Body ornamentation flourishes within the rock and roll music community, thus reinforcing its archetypal ties to shamanic experience. The ornamentation of the body is highly personal and it is generally temporary. I interpret this recurrence of shamanic art forms as an expression of our need to continuously return to the fundamental healing functions of art. Making an artwork of the body is the physical embodiment of the corresponding

inner process of self-perfection. The most striking forms of this ornamentation can be compared to bizarre and provocative dreams which appear in order to get our attention.

I am not suggesting a widespread cultural revival in body ornamentation. My purpose is to show how this phenomena relates to indigenous cultures where the shaman often does unusual things in order to arouse the community's attention. Many of the divergent people within our culture unconsciously serve shamanic functions by provoking the imagination and drawing attention to the recurring art of self-transformation.

Characteristics of the Artist

Since popular interpretations of the artist's psyche often suggest qualities that are far removed from the work of the therapist, the identification of therapy with artists is sometimes confusing. Our creative assets can even become serious liabilities within systems that define both the artist and the therapist in ways that do not relate to our purpose. It might also appear that my identification of the art therapist with the shaman will further undermine the credibility within the conventional workplace. I would like to address some of the misconceptions about the artist's psyche that have become commonly accepted within our society.

Artists Separate Themselves From the "Real" World:

Within the Freudian system the artist was the epitome of the person who leaves the world of reason and creates within the instinctual realm of fantasy. This is a simplistic distinction between reason and instinct which has nevertheless had a formative influence on the shaping of the artist's identity in contemporary culture. As I said earlier, the Freudian method's emphasis on curing neurosis by replacing fantasy with reason (Levine, 1988) has actually intimidated artist's into believing that they should in fact stay separate from "reality" and continue to create within instinctual fantasy. This conception of the artist does not enhance the identity of the art therapist. Although the origins of our work in the

twentieth century can be traced to Freud's opening the doors of the imaginal life of ordinary people, we must reject his definition of the artist.

Art therapists focus the creative act on the organic aspects of daily living. Rather than separating themselves from the "real" world because of their sensitivities and imaginative gifts, they immerse themselves in it, and participate in the creation of the world that is simultaneously creating them.

Art has also contributed to its separation from practical affairs. To a certain extent Freud's theories reflected avant-garde tendencies within the art community of his era. Rank whose grasp of the artist's psyche was far more sophisticated than that of Freud, spoke of how the "modern" artist was motivated by "a fear of life and experience". He believed that the absence of a collective ideology of art alienates the artist. Without a supportive community, the artist is alone and is not "one with life."

Modern art, on the other hand, even in its most vivid dynamic expression, stands *opposed* to life. It is in the position, so to say, of having taken refuge in art-form rather than, like primitive art, having found in it the expression of life (Rank, 1968, p. 76).

I do not agree that the artists of Rank's time were all fearful and opposed to life. It is possible that many were, and it is also likely that many did use art as a sanctuary, separate from external events. This dimension of art does suggest a sympathy with Freud's concept of the artist's separation from "reality" which may also have characterized the way in which many artists during the early twentieth century perceived themselves.

Rank's studies of the artist's psychology are pre-eminent but his occasional generalizations can be misleading. For example, his statement that "Modern art . . . stands opposed to life" is one-sided. The refuge of the artist, in both physical and imaginative terms, is part of life too. No matter how alienated the artist is from society, that person's expression continues as an effort to engage life. Art may often be fiercely oppositional through its political or personal manifestations, and it may also express profound fear and distrust. Negative, destructive and

vulnerable expressions still affirm art's involvement in life.

Wassily Kandinsky's book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912) advocated the detachment of art from the material objects of nature, and thus indirectly supported the concepts of Freud. He believed that the revolution of "non-objective art" was attributed to its ability to create images which have "nothing to do *externally* with reality." Kandinsky's concept of art supported "an abstract impression" of "dematerialized" objects (1970, p. 34).

He defines soul as immaterial and inner emotion. The stimulation of soul by art is described accurately:

Being connected with the body, the soul is affected through the medium of the senses—the felt. Emotions are aroused and stirred by what is sensed (Ibid., p. 23).

Kandinsky then contradicts himself when he states that the soul strives for "objectless vibration." In order to justify his ideology of abstract and spiritual transcendence in art, Kandinsky becomes involved in one side of an intellectual dualism, and overlooks the material and sensory elements which are needed to arouse and stir the soul. In rebelling against the scientific positivism of his era which acknowledges only what can be *weighed and measured* and considers everything else *nonsense*, he seems to become equally onesided in his support for a transcendent spiritual revolution.

Depth in art and emotion require attachment to, rather than detachment from, material things. It is no wonder that the tradition of painting eventually ended, temporarily, as innovating artists searched for ways to go "further" than non-objective art. Painting is an object making art, and an ideology which attempts to detach it from the material realm, detaches painting from its context. The ultimate regeneration of the painting tradition came by restoring its connections to nature. Kandinsky himself described how artists search for the "inner" through the "external" and when speaking about the work of Cezanne he articulated how painting expresses the soul of an object.

Cezanne made a living thing out of a teacup, or rather, in a teacup he realized the existence of something alive. He raised still life to the point where it ceased to be inanimate.

He painted things as he painted human beings, because he was endowed with the gift of divining the internal life in everything (Ibid., p. 36).

Modernism, as expressed by Kandinsky and others can be viewed as trying to justify a form of organic expression which presents forms, colors, textures, lines and other material phenomena as objects of contemplation, without reference to other objects in nature. I strongly support this autonomy of the painting. I also believe that the object does arouse and express the soul, and it suggests the existence of a spiritual life beyond itself. However, we do not have to deny the art material in order to affirm the immaterial. One-sided commitment to the "immaterial" does not advance the artist's place in the practical spheres of public life.

Art is a Substitute for Sexuality:

The belief that the creative act is a substitute for sexuality suggests that the artist is a vigorously sexual person. By stating that art is not a substitute for sexual expression, I do not wish to separate art from sexuality or to weaken their cooperation. Art sometimes expresses sexual themes and energies and at other times it does not. Rank said that it may even manifest an "anti-sexual tendency." He shattered the Freudian fantasy of the "sex-urge" being the creative source of a person's and a society's artistic culture.

The reduction of all forms of artistic expression to sexual or repressed sexual motivations is based on the belief that sexuality is the principal source of human motivation. If we adapt this theory to the work of therapists, professional identity becomes even more confused. If artists are substituting their creative work for sexual expression, is the art of therapy a substitution for the therapist's sexual needs?

The mission of the therapist is clarified by a rejection, and not a repression, of the belief that art is universally a substitution for sex. At times this substitution is consciously and unconsciously initiated in both art and therapy. In other situations art and sexuality cooperate with one

another. Art may also oppose sexuality. Reference to Greece supports the distinction between sexuality and other human motivations. In ancient Greece sexuality was perceived as one of the many arts of civilized life. Self improvement included sexual expression, philosophical study, athletics, music, poetry, etc. The identification of sexuality with the “art of living” assumes that the impulse will be cultivated in accordance with the ethical standards of the community. Greek society respected the multiple needs and expressions of the psyche and disciplined their interaction through the art of living. The theory that all artistic expression can be reduced to sexual impulses is an example of one-dimensional thinking which is driven to unify the varieties of human action into a single source or cause. When the primary motivation is considered to be sexuality, this reduction reveals a consciousness that is itself reduced to sexual preoccupation.

In the beginning of the twentieth century psychosexual theories of art did serve the purpose of bringing sexual themes, images and feelings into consideration as primary human impulses. The single vision of psychosexual theory was itself a reversal of the radical repression of sexuality within society at the time. Individuals and society’s that repress sexuality increase their pre-occupation with it, since the sexual impulse does not go away. Society’s that do allow for the free expression of sexuality, offer indisputable evidence that human beings are motivated by other desires and goals.

Psychosexual theories did not completely further the acceptance of sexual impulse. By assuming that sexuality and sexual conflict motivate all behaviors, they exaggerated its influence in much the same way that previous theories of sexual repression did. Sexuality was tied to conflict, and rather than exhibit it directly in life, “sublimation” was considered more socially acceptable. The primary sexual impulse maintained its negative, feared and conflictual character. Psychosexual theory is an expression of an inability to differentiate between what is sexual and what is not. The result was a continuation of the tradition of sexual repression and “de-sexualization” in a new form.

Psychoanalytic de-sexualization takes place in many ways. When images, desires and actions are seen as being motivated by “hidden” sexual conflict, sexuality stays repressed, and furthermore it is accompanied in its hiding place by conflict. Repression is actually intensified by the belief that hidden feelings are manifesting themselves indirectly, in

unconscious actions. Every act is potentially a revelation of psychopathology. The person becomes more conscious of hiding and making sure that unconscious indicators are eliminated through the restriction of spontaneous expression.

The analysis of sexual feelings with the mechanisms of clinical dissection takes them away from a passionate and sensuous context and exposes them to a de-sensitizing environment. Reductive analysis replaces emotion. Images of nature are not experienced directly in terms of their sensuousness, but are perceived as a substitute for sexuality. Pictures that have nothing to do with sexuality are reduced to some form of connection, once again diluting what is specifically sensuous. These procedures indicate an inability to deal directly with sexuality. When a person does engage sexual imagery in art, there is a clinical fascination with the imagery, but the expression is typically seen as exhibitionistic and suggesting an absence of "ego-control."

One of the most indigenous characteristics of the human psyche is the celebration of sexuality and its imagery. Early religions used sexual imagery to encourage fertility in the human community, the animal world and agriculture. In contemporary western society, each of us decides when it is appropriate to celebrate our sexuality and when it is not. I marvel at the facades of classical Indian temples that are covered with erotic art. They took the sexual imagination to its limits. Here in the West where we increase the appeal of sexuality through taboo, it is difficult for people to imagine that these Indian temples were created by a devoutly religious culture that did not separate the human passions from the worship of God. The studio of the art therapist is open to the natural expression of sexual feelings and imagery, accepting them for what they are, and helping people to integrate them into the total context of their lives.

Artists Are Different from Other People:

In a society which values the repression of sexuality, even in its psycho-sexual theories, then it follows that those who openly exhibit sexual imagery in art and freely engage in other forms of self-expression, will be considered to be "different" from the average person. The purpose of art is the expression and cultivation of sensibility rather than its

suppression. We often see that artists who act out human passions and achieve social recognition are then unconsciously deified as manifestations of what most people desire to do, but cannot, because of the restraints of their up-bringing, work, social environment or personal self-image. An objective of the art therapist is to make self expression and the accompanying personal discovery accessible to the ordinary person. The presence and attentiveness of the therapist guarantees that the person's art will not be neglected.

Survival of the Artist:

*Many rivers to cross and it's only my will that keep's me alive. Jimmy Cliff,
"White Cliffs of Dover"*

The deification of artists is connected to their ability to survive and prosper within environments of constant risk and personal exposure which demand self-confidence and a belief in a personal vision or voice. Survival is the most essential challenge faced by the art therapist. Deification is the reversal of the more universal neglect, or lack of attention, that artists experience.

Artists face the ongoing problem, and the challenge, of justifying themselves, unless they achieve "deification" and then the process is radically reversed with interpretation industries being established to promote and explain the expression of the artist-deity. Self-justification is required of artists because they must be adopted by patrons, the public, buyers, universities, colleagues or students in order to have their work validated. There are of course those exceptional, and heroic, artists who persevere in their belief in themselves and their work, in spite of complete neglect. Without going into the complicated history leading up to this reality of self-justification, we can accept it as a fact in the life of the twentieth century artist that is intensified for new artist types such as the art therapist. The need to justify, as troublesome as it may be in terms of the pressures that it places upon survival and acceptance, can also be viewed as the greatest philosophical asset of the art therapist. Rather than being limited by stereotypic professional identification, we are forced to shape our existence within a context where everything is

placed into question. Our creativity is directly, and unequivocally focused on the creation of ourselves. The experience that we undergo, becomes our greatest asset in therapy, where we offer others the opportunity to enter the process of self-creation.

For Rank, the necessity of the artist's self-justification, generates the creation of a guiding ideology from which the art object receives significance. After describing how the classical artist is validated from the artwork itself, he looks at the problems attached to the justification of art according to the self. He believed that innovation and new art forms result from the individual artist's desire "to express his personal self more completely" in ways that are not possible within "the old traditional material". Rank saw the function of the classical artist as perfecting the "collective" materials of art as contrasted to the individualistic urge to express the self's transformative powers. The classics serve an important function in maintaining the tradition of artworks standing on their own. Within Rank's terminology they can be viewed as records of how the collective consciousness strives to perfect itself. I do not see an opposition between the classical and the personal. Again we can avoid one-sided identification by encouraging an interplay between them.

Rank anticipated the highly individualized expression, and audience limitations, that are taking place in the studio of the art therapist.

... as the artist-type becomes more and more individualized, he appears on the one hand to need a more individual ideology—the genius concept—for his art, while on the other his work is more subjective and more personal, until finally he requires for the justification of his production an individual "public" also: a single person for whom ostensibly he creates (1968, p. 51).

This radical movement toward the restriction of, and focusing of, the artist's audience does not have to be seen as problematic. It is a reaction to the madness of the contemporary "art world" in which individual artists frantically struggle to rise from oblivion and become part of the classical tradition. This distortion of the creative process does threaten the future, and the soul, of art. The personalization that takes place within the art therapy studio can be perceived as one of the many

healthy adaptations that art has made to correct itself and restore vitality. The focus on the individual's creation of the self for an audience of one, end's in itself. It is a manifestation of what Nietzsche described as "the magic of the extreme". It complements the radical deification of the individual artist whose work has an audience of millions. Mass public appeal does not always generate more satisfaction than the audience of one. The personalization of the art therapist in no way threatens the classical tradition which continues as the collective's self-formation. It is possible that our work might ultimately effect the collective image of art and become part of the classical tradition. There may be a need to do something about the extraordinary separation between artists of large and small audiences, at least through the recognition of how the art therapist has responded to the artistic problems of our age in providing an intimate "public" for art as well reviving its healing functions.

Art Depends Upon Psychology to Understand Itself

The problems and misunderstandings that have generated the psychological cliches discussed here, can be attributed to the fact that many of the most influential ideologies about the purpose of art and the psyche of the artist, have been formulated by people who were analyzing art from the outside, with foreign concepts and language. We know from history how one culture, looking at another, purely from its personal perspective and bias, projects its values on the people being studied. In order for psychology to understand art, it must live with the natives, speak their language and become part of their culture.

Psychology has shown a great interest in looking at art but little of the reverse is taking place. The relationship has been one-sided. The arts, and particularly literature offer the finest psychological portraits of cultures, but there have been few efforts where art has matched the energy that psychology places into the analysis of artists, by initiating artistic inquiries into the psyches of psychologists.

As a result of the models offered by Rudolf Arnheim and others, there is an increase in the interdisciplinary cooperation between psychology and art within a context where each specialization attempts to more sympathetic to the other. The work of the art therapist offers yet another

alternative. We are not an interdisciplinary profession, but rather a new form that has been created from the overlapping interests of psychology, psychotherapy and art. If art therapists are to have future generative capabilities, theory must be created which is native to the role while at the same time expressing an ongoing receptivity to the many traditions from which we have emerged. We can only speak forcefully and with authority from positions in which we are expert, and this necessitates an understanding of what is unique to us. Rather than committing ourselves to the further narrowing of professional identity and practice through the creation of a new theoretical specialization, we can thoroughly perfect our distinct position so that it becomes appealing to, and a source of transformation for, other professions.

Art must continuously interpret and renew itself, shaping its destiny and image. One of the many psychological misunderstandings of our era is the common belief that artist's cannot interpret their personal work. We have left the inquiry into the deepest psychological elements of creative expression to the psychological "professionals." Art must speak for itself psychologically. The existence of the art therapist is one step in this direction.

V

SELF INQUIRY

There is no fine art without self-consciousness. . . . Oscar Wilde

To put my raw, undigested self into a book, to lose perspective, compromise myself—no, I couldn't do it, I found the whole idea terrifying. 'Screw up your courage,' Sartre told me, and kept pressing the point. . . . Simone de Beauvoir

My position in previous books, and other published writings, has been that of an outsider, looking and engaging artworks made by other people. Although there are inevitable parallels to earlier works and my ongoing interest in psychological and artistic depth, the form and organic material of this study are expressions of a new direction. I continue to base my inquiry into the psychology of art on my experience as an art therapist. However this book does not deal with the engagement of the psychotherapeutic relationship between client and therapist. It is necessary to move from my more familiar position outside, to the inside of artistic expression. In order to write a depth psychology of art, as an artist, I see no other alternative but to directly engage my personal experience of art. This will distinguish the book from traditional studies of the psychology of art and art appreciation. Although I might say that my intent is to deepen my practice of art psychotherapy and maybe even suggest new possibilities for research and advancement within the profession as a whole, my “deeper” motivation seems to be the *necessity* that I feel to take this step. I am following an instinct of what I need to do for myself, and for my profession.

I have received support for my experimentation with self inquiry in psychological research from a statement by Theodor Reik in his book *Listening With The Third Ear: The Inner Experience of the Psychoanalyst*

(1972). Reik believed that a psychoanalyst's wisdom is based upon personal experience and he concluded that the practice of psychoanalysis requires constant self-inquiry. It is the "exercise of the soul" (Plato) on which psychotherapeutic work is based. This principle was familiar to me. I had established and served as the Dean of a psychotherapeutic training program that valued experiential learning in the training of psychotherapists. Our experience with training students in the United States and other countries repeatedly demonstrated how the person, is a major instrumentality in psychotherapy. A commitment to inner reflection does not have to provoke a dualistic argument. Self-inquiry does not take the place of attending to others but as suggested by Reik, it may be essential to it.

We have discovered that Freud's renown psychoanalytic studies were heavily focused on the analysis of his own dreams. Reik said that dream research after Freud lost its depth because psychoanalysts were reluctant to research their private lives. As I said in *Fundamentals of Art Therapy* (1987), "Professional distance, impartiality, and taboos against self-disclosure by the therapist are forms of avoidance that sacrifice depth for safety." I had never considered myself a follower of Freud in any aspect of my work until I read this statement by Reik which made me realize that I have to go further in researching my personal artistic expressions.

The use of the arts in psychotherapy came into existence in a psychological era when the person of the therapist was neutralized under the guise of clinical objectivity. The art therapy literature is so heavily focused on the analysis of artworks by clients that it may feel odd, or inappropriate, for us to present our personal artworks in our professional studies. Don Jones, Helen Landgarten, Bob Ault and Paolo Knill have done considerable reflection on the relationship between their personal art and psychotherapy. Steve Ross has started a national organization, The American Association of Artist-Therapists, based on the philosophy that therapy is an art practiced by artists who work with their personal creative resources. Arthur Robbin's latest book is called *The Artist as Therapist* (1987). The inclusion of the therapist's art into the profession is on the rise. We have to experiment and find ways to make the integration work.

The critic asks: *Why should therapists become involved in an analysis of personal artistic expressions? Isn't the role of a therapist, one of investigating the lives of other people, and helping them?*

Yes, this other-directedness is essential to therapy. It is also part of an

individual's inquiry into personal artworks. Yet the effectiveness of therapists depends upon the nature of their personal relationship to art. As a profession we have not given enough attention to this in our training programs and our research. We have been almost exclusively concerned with the investigation of other people, and to a more limited extent, ourselves. I believe that sustained and focused studies of our personal artistic expression will engage the autonomous life of the art object, as well as the self. These studies will look more directly at the process of creative expression. There is a correspondence to what Reik said about psychoanalysts researching their dreams in order to deepen their appreciation of the process of dreaming. The focus of the analyst's research is sometimes exclusively the dream, and not necessarily the self. In therapy and psychology we have to give more attention to the independence of the image and how it interacts with the artist. As in any relationship there are many revealing points of connection and separation.

Between the two—artist and art—there stands Life, now dividing, now uniting, now checking, now promoting (Rank, 1968, p. 59).

As we explore the artworks of clients there is the added dimension of professional responsibility to the other person. Art therapy and art history case studies involve a three-way interaction between the art object, the artist and the person making the interpretations. In art therapy case studies the art object is generally secondary to the artist, or client. The situation is usually reversed in art history. Of course there are exceptions with regard to emphasis, but the three-way interaction is always there. Since the interpreter is not always the person who has made the art object, there is not a primary relationship to the phenomenon being studied. We also know that interpretation is going to be a highly projective or subjective process with interpreters telling their stories about what they experience.

When therapists research their artistic expression, there is a two-way interaction between the artwork and the self. This directness presents both opportunities and difficulties. The three-way interaction provides distance and perspective resulting from the interpreter's position, outside the artwork. However, I believe experienced therapists involved in the study of their art, can take on the role of the outside interpreter when

necessary. We are so accustomed to performing these functions with others that it is possible to apply the discipline to ourselves. We therefore have the advantage of primary and direct experience with the artistic process as well as the skills required to step outside of ourselves for the purpose of observation, questioning and critical judgment. This may be a contribution that the arts and psychotherapy can make to the tradition of art.

We are reaching a point in the history of the arts and psychotherapy where we can influence the broader context of art. We have a unique experience base combining psychology, healing, personal artistic experimentation and involvement with people from all age groups and different cultures in the making of art. We are not without an understanding of the academic study of art history and the psychology of art, but we differ from these disciplines in combining our knowledge with clinical practice and experimentation. Changes in culture result from placing essential processes into new relationships. In addition to changing attitudes that artists have about their work we can also influence the discipline of art history by helping scholars to further their understanding of the psychology of the artist.

Most artists have not been actively involved in the psychological investigation of their work. It has not been a prerequisite for their craft. However, we do place these expectations on art therapists. It seems impossible then for therapists who make art, to avoid dealing with psychological reflection. As Rank said, we are a new artist-type. Whether or not we are new, or very old artist-healers, is not as important as the fact that we are expanding ideas about the functions of art. Artists who practice therapy and use the arts in this work have consistently experienced a separation between their dual identities. Helen Landgarten has said that she has had two careers, one as an artist and another as an art therapist. She perceives the two as separate (McNiff, 1987). The perception of therapy as an art practiced by artists helps to integrate the identity of the art therapist. Art ideas are a vital part of the art-life tradition which places few limits on the artistic context. However, the art-life idea does not completely integrate the art therapist's private expression in a personal studio with the practice of therapy with other people. The only way to do this is to apply our therapeutic and psychological consciousness to personal expression and to value this process, as suggested by Reik, as an essential part of the therapist's craft. Our professional training, and our ongoing practice of the arts in psycho-

therapy, can in this respect be constructed upon the foundation of our personal experience with art. The same applies to our emerging research tradition where the therapist's personal studio work and psychological reflections on self expression will generate new ideas and a deeper understanding of the therapeutic and transformative qualities of art.

This shift in professional emphasis is an expansion of the arts in psychotherapy which will not take away our present assets. The closeting, or separation, of the therapist's identity as an artist will no longer be necessary. Many of us will feel liberated by a change of this kind while others will be threatened. As I said in *Fundamentals of Art Therapy*, there is room in the profession for all types. We can encourage therapists to work with images and artworks even if they have limited backgrounds in the arts. Images, and dreams, are a part of every person's life and they are the forms through which the soul communicates. Closer ties with artists will result if art therapists begin to make useful and inspirational creative statements. Artists will enter the profession more readily because of these new challenges and they will not be obliged to give up one career in order to have the other.

The stereotype of the artist who is afraid, or reluctant, to inquire into the psychological process of creation for fear of knowing too much and losing, or altering, the conflictual chemistry that motivates expression, may be a thing of the past. I have found that the process of psychological interpretation deepens and furthers the artist's motivation and ability to create. The mystery and sanctity of the artistic process will never be reduced to diagnostic judgments and labels. To the extent to which practices of this kind have characterized art therapy in the past, this may be attributed to the influence of conventional medical thinking and the propensity of therapists to operate within a single, and often psychopathological, theoretical framework. I have discovered that when therapists become more involved with the interpretation of their personal artworks, there is a significant, and sometimes radical, decrease in the practice of labeling, reductionistic diagnosis and prescriptive thinking. Rather than feeling the need to explain the meaning of an image as an automatic professional reaction, the therapist allows the art to work on the imagination in new ways that further concentration and empathy. There is an appreciation for the fecundity of interpretative possibilities within the image. And most importantly, there is more respect for the artwork and its connection to the psyche. These reasons alone indicate

that it may be a necessity for therapists to study their personal artistic expression on an ongoing basis.

For two decades I have asked people questions about their art. It is time to reverse roles. My experience in being the subject of the dialogue differs little from talking with other people about their art. This discovery takes the mystique, fear and reluctance to show the self away from the issue of art therapists working publicly with their personal expression. There is an imbalance when we speak only about the work of our clients and students in public. Too much emphasis is placed upon the authority of the therapist. The hesitation to show our personal artwork is an expression of a fear that we will lose our professional position and authority in the process.

Reik felt that the presentation of the personal expressions of therapists gives therapy more credibility. By focusing on our creative expression, we will enhance our identification with the artworks that people produce in therapy. We will see that the pictures and stories, the images and the feelings, are not exclusively the possessions of individuals. The "ego" is diminished while the art and the story are amplified. When presenting my pictures and the accompanying stories, I show things that may relate to the lives of other people. This human continuity is an essential element of healing and it is fundamental to the nature of art. I feel close to the pictures and stories yet at the same time distant.

What do I hope to achieve? I want to increase the involvement of my profession in art. Experience on both sides of the interpretative process will deepen our understanding. I want to show how I take this process seriously and involve myself. How can I expect others to do it if I do not? Maybe it is the fear and excitement connected to self-revelation. It is also likely that I am drawn to this inner expedition because it has not been done before.

As with *Fundamentals of Art Therapy* I have used dialogue as a mode of inquiry. The other voice helps me to see myself and the art object. It offers perspective, questions, stimulation, a flow of expression, and engagement. The dialogue keeps us close to the images and minimizes tendencies toward autobiography.

I have a pattern of making art when I'm away from home. Throughout the 1980's I've spent as much as two months a year in Europe and Israel, leading art therapy training groups. I run them as studios where I often make art together with the group members. We live in a community environment for three to five days and because I'm away from my family and work schedule at home, I'm active in my own art during the free time. I apparently need the stimulation of the group studio to get myself moving artistically. I also seem to need the distance from home, the journey that stimulates my senses, the foreign settings that make me more aware of place.

When I'm traveling I also leave my job as the dean of a graduate program. I can live the life of an artist when I'm away. I'm perceived as an artist by the people who I work with. While I run an art therapy training studio we live in a world of images in which it is natural for me to become directly involved. My involvement as an artist has a contagious effect. It seems to be a positive stimulus, an example of commitment to the artistic process. Rather than taking me away from the group, it takes me into it.

So my pattern is one of going away to go into myself. I go away to get close. It can be exhausting and right now as I begin to change many things in my life, I question whether I can find this closeness and artistic intimacy closer to home. I had to get away from office work. I was always amazed when people who first met me within the European studios, found me to be such a different person in my Cambridge office. Our animal nature sniffs out the tension in the air. I know they liked me better in the studio. They were polite and almost playful in giving me the message. Perhaps this was the beginning of the change.

Are you more vulnerable in your painting?

Yes, in terms of public presentation. I had exhibitions during the 1970's but I decided be more private with the painting process after that and I began to explore a form of art making that corresponded to my work as an art therapist.

Has the art therapy studio influenced the art that you do?

Yes. It has effected my style and the content of the pictures. I work quickly and spontaneously in the foreign studios, because time has to be used when it is available and when I'm aroused to make art. The pattern suggests that it is not possible for me to go casually in and out of the studio environment. There has to be a total involvement, not in terms of my whole life but a totality of a day committed to the studio. When this condition exists, the art comes effortlessly, as though it's a necessity of daily living, an instinct; just like talking to someone, taking a walk, eating or sleeping. It has a natural rhythm.

My pictures have stories that go with them. It's as though they are illustrations to the story of my inner life, a personal mythology. I identify with the art of Charlotte Salomon and her theme of "leben? oder theater?" life or theater? However, I didn't set out to make pictures as illustrations of my life. The stories have come after-the-fact, when I look at them as an entirety, and in relation to myself. While making the pictures I was trying to get in touch with my feelings. I learned how to do this by working in art therapy. If I deal only with aesthetic themes that have no apparent relationship to my feelings, there's little reaction from the people in the art therapy studio. My art therapy colleagues have taught me how to put emotion and personal statement back into art. This does not mean that form, color and aesthetic sensibility are discarded. To the contrary, an effective use of aesthetic sensibility deepens the emotional response. The art therapy studios have shown me how to take content and symbols seriously. I don't always succeed, perhaps I fail much of the time, but I feel fortunate to be able to watch others succeed in arousing my emotions through their art and stories and this motivates me to do the same thing.

You are inspired by the studio?

It's the primary stimulant of my art. The external motivation activates the inner. If we want to encourage people to make art, then the best thing to do is expose them to a dynamic studio, and help them to feel comfortable and confident within it.

It would seem difficult not to make art yourself when surrounded by artists working in a studio.

My travel seems to have two themes: leaving the office and going to a studio of art therapy. I used to think that it was odd that I've created the studio in other countries and not at home. Only now have I begun to see how the travel was a metaphor for my need to change certain patterns in my life. There have been many people who've benefited from the studios and perhaps now it is time for me to benefit too. I don't appear to be capable of committing myself to a solitary studio. There has to be a purpose beyond myself. But, I also have to learn how to take the studio home.

January-February 1987

FINLAND AND AMSTERDAM

Fig. 1



I created these pictures in Finland and Holland just over a year ago. This first one was a fast painting with little self-consciousness. The figure wasn't visualized in advance but emerged as a result of my style. He looks vulnerable because of his posture and lack of clothing. The ball has no color. The casual looking animals to his side are watching him and they're far more relaxed. They look like a combination of dogs and anteaters. The image of the door has appeared constantly over the course of the past year. It's like a recurring dream that keeps coming in order to get my attention and to deliver a message. The door is closed but there is a sense of openness in the picture because of the bright blue sky in the upper left. The spiral above the animals becomes an important part of

this series. It is one of the archetypal symbols of Finnish culture and it appears in this image as a result of my immersion in the local environment. At the bottom of the picture I wrote:

empty, pale ball in an empty room . . . maybe he is holding onto his ball, protecting it, and not throwing it . . . this guy does not know where to turn, if there will be a response if he throws the ball.

The background looks like it could be the walls of a room but the blue sky suggests an outside courtyard. I have an aesthetic attraction to obliqueness and a desire to create movement responses through visual distortion.

This image was my first picture on the first night of a training group. The Finnish groups typically begin with some resistance but ultimately work with considerable openness and depth. We were working through an interpreter and this contributes to a vulnerable beginning. The door is closed. The ball is blank and the man does not seem sure about what he has to offer. I felt the resistance in the group and in myself. The animals may be the Finnish group members, the natives, looking at the foreigner holding the ball of consciousness and they don't know what to make of it all. Yet the flag is there, at the point of passage and I knew where I had to go.

From all of the writing at the bottom of the picture it looks like you had many things to say about the picture at the time.

Yes. It's an expression of my anxiety at the beginning of a group. I have a strong desire to work and to be of use. I've learned that there's a Zen art to moderating this energy. I present myself slowly and show people on either a direct or subliminal level that they'll be able to come forward and fill the space of the group.

Why did you place the Finnish flag over the door?

It's part of my signature and it documents where the pictures were made. The flags are recurring images in the art that I've been producing

in different countries. I'm drawn to the colors and cross configurations of the Finnish (blue and white), Swedish (blue and yellow) and Swiss (red and white) flags. They're aesthetically appealing. The placement of the flag over the door originates in an earlier series of drawings and paintings dealing with "exits." I have continued with the image of the door and replace the exit sign with a flag. The image of the exit is reversed in that the flags over the door suggest movement *into* the country where I'm working. My earlier "exit" drawings and paintings were made while I was on the executive boards of associations. These assignments together with my job as a dean resulted in too much time spent in meetings. I made art during the meetings in order to transform the conflict. Art became my exit from irritation. During this period I was lecturing about how art therapy is a mode of transforming conflicts and the things that disturb us. I looked at my personal life and found that this was not always the case, so I put art therapy to work by drawing pictures during the meetings. Rather than distracting me, the process of creating art helped me to become more "present." I continued to listen while becoming more deeply involved with visual imagery and gesture. I actually began to look forward to the meetings. The other people seemed intrigued. No one ever complained. They saw how making art calmed and quieted me down. Perhaps they were pleased to see me stop wiggling in my chair.

I called the series "art alchemies" because the process enabled me to do something with my agitation. I had to aesthetically penetrate office and boardroom life in order to continue. I exhibited selections from the paintings at the annual conference of the American Art Therapy Association and in two local galleries. Many of the pictures had exit signs over doors. This must have been an unconscious message that I'm just beginning to see. I wanted to get out. Yet I must take into consideration that fire regulations probably require the presence of these signs in public places and my drawings did respond to the immediate environment. However, I think that even my drawings of private offices had clearly marked exits. The meetings I was involved with rarely went anywhere. I longed to free myself from the confinement of offices and meetings, yet at that time in my life I knew that I would miss them if I left completely. There was an imbalance that had to be corrected.

The doorways first appeared as a symbol of passage. They continue to serve this function in my art today. Although I'm not as dissatisfied with where I am, I realize that I must keep opening to the passages of life.

Fig. 2



The animal makes a strong presence here. The course was given in the Finnish countryside and I try to convey this sense of place. It was January so the man is bundled up in his boots, mittens and a fur hat. The temperatures were extremely cold and I had just bought myself one of those hats for protection. It felt exotic and I became preoccupied with it. In this picture the man is small in comparison to the cow. I introduce the spiral shapes in its nose, and the three spirals on the bird, as symbols of Finland. This image is an expression of a need to get things moving. The flag is over the doorway.

The picture is full of action. The strokes are bold and the animals leap out, yet the landscape recedes into the background and there are many distortions. The spirals increase the frenzy of the drawing.

The ball is red now. Feeling is coming into it. I wrote on the side of the picture: "My art is energized by the intensives." We have called the training groups intensives because of the density of time. The pictures can be viewed as an energetic response to the group, the landscape and the local symbols.

Fig. 3



The feeling really opens up in this picture. I call it "The Beast." The naked man in Fig. 1 expresses tension. The man is now relaxed and clothed. He seems comfortable with himself. The flaps of his hat are down and he's holding the ball out to the animal. In the first picture he was clutching onto it. In the second picture he held it closer to his body and in this one he is clearly offering it to the bull. The animal has grown larger in each picture. The image of the naked man in Fig. 1 is related to drawings that I did in groups years earlier of emaciated male figures accompanied by full-bodied women. Perhaps I was wearing myself out in my desire for success in the work or I may have been in a pattern that was wearing me out. In my art the woman can be perceived as a symbol of my work. She is also an expression of the soul. My fate in life, until this time, has been to work with women in training groups. Men have always been a minority. The emaciated man was also pursued by vicious dogs. Those pictures were concerned with my fascination and fear with the destructive and aggressive energies of groups. If I look back at my work over an

extended period of time, I see myself beginning with a naive and loving fascination with men, women, animals and nature; then I descend into an extended period involving the interplay between sensuousness and aggression. Now I feel as though I'm going into myself, and into the soul, in a more relaxed way, after having been initiated by many rituals of psychological death and destruction. Nevertheless, this series shows that the insecure man is always with me.

Do you think that the emaciated men and robust women express a conflict between male and female energies within yourself?

It seems that they do. I have to be careful about attributing the sources of tension exclusively to external factors. The images may have been telling me that my male energy was trying too hard and thus wearing itself out. We'll see more on this theme of inner struggle between the male and female in later images.

Getting back to the painting, the horns and the nose spirals are gold and the body is a rich Finnish blue. The bull represents the training group and the picture expresses my relationship to them. Although I also identify with the energy of the bull, the man offering the ball is closer to the role that I was playing at the time.

Why does the bull appear?

He often comes into my pictures. I see him as primal energy. He arouses shamanic sensibility and serves as a guide, protector and companion. I'm intrigued by the contradiction in this picture between the bull's massive head and his wispy body. The forcefulness is in his head, in consciousness, and not the body.

Fig. 4

In this next image the man is totally relaxed. It was created on Sunday, the last day of the group. Our work had gone well and my sense of contentment is expressed here. There's a sharp contrast to Fig. 1 and the insecurities of beginning. The ball has turned to a bright, Finnish blue. I was unconscious of this while making the picture. This does amaze me. The picture suggests my feeling of holding Finland in my hand. Or maybe it is more accurate to reverse this interpretation since I felt at the time that my Finnish colleagues were holding me. The primal energy of the animal is less threatening and it's now in the background. It's more like a goat or a shorn sheep with bull's horns.

The man looks like a shepherd. The winter hat now seems like something that a man from the Middle East might wear.
The bare feet suggest warmth.

He goes from the bulls to living with the more pastoral animals. This is what happens during the course of a group. I don't want to suggest that there's a positive "development" from the bull to the sheep. The images embody changes that are significant without the attachment of value judgments concerned with progression or regression.

The horns of the sheep still look threatening.
They could be hooks.

Perhaps the man needs to be hooked *in* by the animal. The door in this picture, and the series as a whole, seems to be part of my aesthetic response. The oblique movement of the walls and the doorway vary the space. I find that they make the picture more interesting to look at. Although the door is closed the atmosphere behind the animal is open. The converging walls on the right arouse feelings of being in a protective enclosure.

Does the structure of the room represent a need for boundaries?
The pictures are explosive but they are also contained.

Although I have needs for containment and order, I don't identify with the boundaries in these pictures. I'm always trying to go beneath them to a deeper world. I use the walls for visual contrast. I'm also working inside buildings when I make the drawings, so again I may be responding to the environment. However, instead of making a ceiling over the walls I generally introduce the sky. I put the figure in first and then the oblique lines. The walls activate visual movement while also simplifying the space by clarifying the figure and ground relationships.

Fig. 5

I've selected two pictures from a series that I did in Holland five days after completing the work in Finland. This one was made in response to a dream in which I was driving a car. I was stopped by a woman police officer. She searched the trunk of my car. The naked man, the red brick buildings, the canal and bridge weren't in the dream. The background environment in the picture is a conscious response to Amsterdam. You can see how I faintly insert the oblique walls and doorway above the woman's shoulder in the upper right hand corner of the picture. This time I revive my former use of the exit sign, suggesting that I want to get away from the situation that I'm in. If I reverse the meaning of the doorway, the exit might be an avoidance. Perhaps the picture suggests that I'll benefit from going into this confrontation with the female authority figure. This corresponds to what was going on in my life at the time. Vincent Ferrini was trying to help me with the conflict. He said:

The real war is between the man and the woman, and it will end when each is both.

The themes emerging unconsciously from my art validated his position.

I portray the man without clothes in order to express his vulnerability and diffidence. I identify strongly with the man, but I'm also attracted to the woman. The Finnish spirals are on her breasts and one is attached to her cap as an insignia. She has the boots of the man in Finland. The woman is clearly in control here. I was thinking about the Jungian concept of the man's female soul and I wrote "the anima in charge" on the side of the picture. I'm comfortable with this woman and I like the picture. I don't see her as threatening in spite of her Fascistic appearance. The informal green uniform with the open collar looks like something that an Israeli soldier wears.

The proportions of her heavy breasts and hands as contrasted to the meek boots are unsettling. The man seems stunned by her.

What I said about the woman inside of me taking control seems like a cliché. I think this picture is more concerned with the political issues I was struggling with in my life, at the time that it was made. I was in the process of being stunned by female authority figures. What angered me was the way the women in charge declared that their power politics were more enlightened than those of the men they replaced. This was the basis of my discontent, not the fact that women were in charge. The shadow side of institutional politics characterizes both genders. The woman wears the same boots as the man in the previous pictures. The Finnish man also has the same short legs.

To the extent to which the emerging woman projects everything that is negative in the world onto the man, she undermines her progress and fragments her soul. The woman abuses the man inside of her in the same way that the man who represses women represses his feminine sensibility.

It's also possible that this picture is connected to my feelings about beginning a training group in Holland.

Your first pictures in a training group consistently present the naked man who's confronted by something.

I hadn't realized that before. You can see that in this picture the woman takes the place of the bull in the previous series. I have to look at the possibility that this image is concerned with allowing my "anima" to be more visible.

How would you respond to someone saying that this picture may be manifestations of your relationship to your mother? You often present strong women together with the naked, vulnerable man.

As I've said so often, every picture has multiple interpretative possibilities. I could use all of these pictures to work on my relationship to my mother. Any image of a man and a woman can be a starting point. We could explore what fits and what does not. My mother has been a positive formative influence in my relationships to women. But this image does not relate to her at all. The only possibility would be to look at this as her opposite. This image connects more to the women that I now work with and it expresses a dimension within the feminine soul.

Fig. 6

I enjoy this picture. It expresses my identification with nature and the animal world. When the man looks at the animal he sees himself. The ram is curious. All three faces have a sincere appearance that complements the spontaneity and playfulness of the drawing. The mirror seems like a symbol of my reflective sensibility, my commitment to soul and imagination, the imagination of the child.

I see the man showing his mask to the animal. The image doesn't give references to the place where you are working.

That's because it's more concerned with the inner landscape. Life is a succession of roles that we play. Who's who? Underneath the mask there's



a world of soul and energy that connects all life, the male and the female, animals and humans. Yet everything maintains its specificity.

It Looks Like the Man is Giving Something to the Animal.

They're coming together. The gesture here is the same as the gesture of the man holding the ball out to the animal in Fig. 3. The ball becomes a mirror, or a mask as you suggest. The relationship becomes more intimate.

FOUR PORTRAITS**Fig. 7**

I call this picture "Le Cœur." I include it here to show the connection to the bull in Fig. 3. I made the picture at a time in my life when I was overcome by the experience of love from the heart. The primitive and tribal appearance of the woman expresses a correspondence with the

world of animals. This image anticipates the coming of the animal in Fig. 3. The two are intimately related. The theme of love as presented in “Le Coeur” suggests that the man in Fig. 3 is reaching out to the animal with his heart. The red ball symbolizes the energy of the heart and compassionate love.

Were you conscious of this symbolic use of red when making Fig. 3?

No, it’s something that I see in the image now.

Fig. 8



This is a portrait that I did of my grandfather. It's a large painting on canvas based upon a photo that was taken in Dublin when he joined the English army at 17 to fight in World War I. His arm was torn open by shrapnel somewhere in France and as a child I was always fascinated by the scars. Today he is 90 and living in a nursing home. I put the picture at the foot of his bed so he can look at it. He never says anything about himself so I wanted to say something about him that the nurses, doctors and other people who visit him can see and use as a stimulus for conversation about his life. He and my grandmother always displayed my childhood paintings in prominent places in their house. He likes this one. It's the best piece of art therapy that I've ever done. In this context I define art therapy as doing something for someone else, and myself, through art. The picture embodies my sense of romantic love. The soldier has a youthful face. For me the positive symbolism of the uniform expresses total commitment to something beyond the self. It's like a flower that blooms briefly. The soldier's youth and life can be taken away instantly. All of this ties in with the fact that my grandfather's life is coming to an end. I'm engaging his image as a youthful soldier and his appearance as an old man.

Fig. 9

The image of the soldier leads to my father who was a marine officer in World War II. My father is youthful, in uniform and accompanied by a flashy car and genteel house. When I was a child my parents had new late 40's cars. They were often in the background of the family snap-shots. The presence of an attractive house is a theme that runs throughout my entire life. The house is a major part of my persona. I've inherited my parents' commitment to creating a secure place for the family and my father's involvement with books and papers.

Fig. 10

The life of soul leads me time and again to the woman, the mirror and self-reflection. The mirror is expressive of my relationship to domestic environments, objects and furnishings. I'm always working on the home environment. This accounts for my need to travel to an art studio in another place.

May-June 1987

SWITZERLAND AND SWEDEN

Fig. 11



For years I've been leading spring training groups in Switzerland and Sweden. During my 1987 trip I was eager to make art. There was considerable free time and loneliness, both of which fuel my expression.

This picture is descriptive of a dream that occurred during my first days in Switzerland. Although I always feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work with people in Europe, I was not looking forward to being away from home for three weeks. The dream was connected to my shift of locus. My wife was walking along an urban street in the United States. A car full of young men, hoodlum types, pulled up to her. In her typical polite way she looked toward them and they abducted her. They were trying to pull her into the car as it drove away. The picture shows her

hanging onto the car, or being held by the men. My wife is often wearing pants but as I look at the picture now the figure looks more like a man than a woman. The body-type is similar to that of the men in the car. I don't recall being disturbed by the dream. I was startled by it.

I was eager to draw the dream. I thought to myself: "We all want her." Are all of these men me? Do they represent the strong desire I had for the presence of my wife? Rather than one of me, there is a car-load of me, trying to pull her inside. Or perhaps all of the men in the car may have a need for feminine sensibility.

In my work with the art and dreams of other people, the car is emerging as one of the new archetypes of the psyche together with the train and the airplane. They are now a part of the soul together with the horse and the bird. We are creating a new world of shamanic images within contemporary culture. I'm intrigued with the purpose of the car in this dream. It's an expression of transportation and movement. As contrasted to the train, it's something that I can drive and control. It can go in many directions. It's more of an extension of the body, as the horse must have been in previous generations. In my dreams and in those of the people I work with, the car is emerging as a symbol of autonomy. My drawing of the car reminds me of pictures that I made as a boy. This model has fins from the late 1950's.

I also wrote that the dream might involve my letting go of America in order to be present in Switzerland. This ties in with my ongoing theme of the door, and unconscious passage rites. If we look at the figure as a man being abducted by other men, it raises a different range of possibilities. When I'm doing these training groups in other countries, I have often said that it takes longer for the soul to arrive than the body. Maybe my soul is being abducted in the dream and taken into the car which is bringing it to me.

The car is an expression of control for the driver and the loss of control for the person who is being abducted. The crowd of men inside suggest a sense of confusion about taking control and driving.

The dream may express anxiety about leaving your wife alone?

Before I left on this trip I was in conflict with my wife about life changes. I was preparing for a sabbatical and I wanted her to be with me. This would involve her leaving a job.

Could the dream be saying that you are attempting to take control and drive in a new direction?

Yes. I was in conflict with my wife about how the changes might affect her. She was not sure if she wanted to go along with it all. She was reluctant to go for the ride. I scribbled “get away” under the car in this picture. Perhaps my wife and I both needed to get away from the life decision conflict that we were involved with for awhile. Decisions had to be made and they could not help but affect our relationship.

She may find herself being pulled into a car she does not want to enter.

You’re right. I overlooked this interpretation which does feel accurate. However, the other interpretations continue to stay relevant.

Fig. 12

In this artwork the woman warrior pokes a man with her spear. The background is bright red. The woman’s physical appearance resembles that of the female police officer in Fig. 5. In this picture conflict breaks out. It was a conscious attempt on my part to deal with the emotional war between the sexes and job conflicts. A womens’ ideology and not a cooperative male-female spirit was taking over the workplace. There was a group benefiting from strict allegiance to the ideology while myself and other friends, both men and women, in senior positions felt isolated from the new mainstream.

Although I oppose the discrimination that has existed and continues to exist against women, I’m also involved with a psychological inquiry into questions of what is male and what is female. I have been asking myself for years, what is masculine in art and what is feminine? Is pink feminine? Is dark brown masculine? I don’t think so. Pastels aren’t more feminine than masculine. The same applies to delicate and soft pictures. These judgments are sexual stereotypes. The same applies to suggestions that soft and delicate men are effeminate. It’s a simplistic, historical cliché to declare that Michelangelo’s muscular figures are representa-



tions of the masculine, macho consciousness. The same applies to the opinion that Mary Cassatt's gentle pictures of mothers and children are the epitome of feminine sensibility. I don't think they are. I like Botticelli much more than Michelangelo. Is Mary Cassatt more feminine than Botticelli? I don't think so. Botticelli had an extraordinary feeling for feminine consciousness and appearance. What about Renoir? It was a group of male Frenchmen that began the movement toward Impressionism. In the history of art an individual male or female artist is generally more influenced by the stylistic patterns of an epoch than gender. Are the rugged and tough gestures of German Expressionism and Abstract Expressionism more masculine than feminine? I don't think so. We have to get beyond the interpretative cliché of pink being more feminine and an expression of the male anima. What about an erect, pink phallus? Pierce-

ing forms are not more masculine than feminine. Circular enclosures are not more feminine than masculine. The male body has cavities too. The internal anatomical functions of the male and female are characterized by more similarities than differences. The musculature of the Amazon warrior may exceed that of many men.

When I made this image I was feeling like a victim. In retrospect it was good for my relationship with the psyche. I felt the insanity of being identified with the male oppression which I personally despised.

In this picture the strong woman takes the place of St. Michael the Archangel and the man replaces the serpent. I consciously made this juxtaposition. She's crushing his head with her heel as Michael did to the serpent. I don't like what Michael stands for. He's the repressor of the passions and the underworld; his reality is considered to be superior to their's. In this picture she is getting ready to jab him in the buttocks with her spear. I like the picture and don't feel angry when I look at it now. It says more to me about feelings between the sexes and the place of aggression in love and sexuality. In the realm of sexuality the rise of the woman's aggression, leadership and control has always been attractive to me.

I'm intrigued by the pool of water under the man's head. I put it in automatically in response to an aesthetic decision to vary the red background and to diversify the dimensions of the space and color. It seems to be the genesis of the pool of renewal and the water of transformation that will emerge in later pictures. It looks like she might even be pushing him into the water and thus assisting him in his transformation. He needed to go, in spite of the difficulties. She might be abducting him into the depths, reversing the Persephone and Hades relationship.

Fig. 13

In Fig. 12 I didn't think that the woman was big enough so I did another version. She's huge here and the man looks more miserable. I called the picture "Defenders of the new order," but on an unconscious level I enjoyed making the woman's figure and when the picture was completed I took pleasure in looking at it. She is a golden yellow and he blends more with the soft greens and purples of the background. There



were a number of committed feminists in the training group that I was leading in Switzerland and they together with all of the other participants were attracted to this big woman, and I was too. I intended her to be an oppressor but as I drew her, I began to like her massiveness. This was a classic art therapy transformation in which I became fascinated with what was disturbing me. I had done a series of huge, over-weight men two years earlier but did not include women. The men and women in the training group started to do large female figures, even bigger than this one. It was a contagious response.

Making the figure so big introduces an element of humor. What could be perceived as violence becomes ridiculous. The man looks as though he will not recover. I don't see how he will be able to get up after this.

Maybe this is part of the transformation process. He'll never be the same again. This picture was done at the peak of a transition period in my life. I had just decided to make a big change. I see her now as destroying the old role that I was in. My first reactions to this crushing were negative. But I also know that I would not have changed without the irritation. The big woman may be the activator of the man's transformation. She's

destroying his old role, making it impossible for him to return to it. I try not to hang onto negative feelings. They can rule my life. I've found that it takes far more energy to hold a grudge than it does to do something to improve things. The competitive side of me knows that if I give negative energy to an adversary, that person will continue to control me.

Is she the destroyer, or is it something inside you?

It's both. I don't want to project too much onto the big woman. On an unconscious level I respond to her aggression because I need her to help me make the change. Ultimately, my role change within the institution was done with the full support of the women in charge who assisted me in creating what ultimately might be an even better position. Once I gave in and stopped fighting the inevitable transformation I was nurtured by it. The series can be perceived as a revolution within myself which allowed the woman to come forward. The female energy rose up within my psyche. She is both a conqueror and transformer. The man will come back, but for the time being she put him in his place.

**It seems that we become confused about what is male and female.
This picture looks like a struggle between genders.**

It's a struggle between opposing forces. The difficulties I had with the process in my daily life were significant. But it was followed by the psychic transformations expressed in these pictures.

How do you define feminine and masculine?

I think of the distinctive qualities of women and men and I think that both exist within the psyche which also includes the child, the animal, nature and many other things.

Fig. 14

During a break in the training group Paolo Knill took me to the library in the ancient monastery of St. Gallen. The city is named after the monk who brought Christianity to Switzerland. The library was full of hand written, illuminated manuscripts. One of the pictures showed a group of medieval soldiers in a cart being pulled by a donkey. I decided to put my Amazons in the cart. Again we see the male and the female together. This time they're riding on a horse. I wasn't consciously exploring the interplay between masculine and feminine qualities in these pictures. I'm seeing the relationship now as we look at them. I called this picture "Riders and Warriors."

I may have put the man in the forward position to avoid a sexual reference. I don't see this as a sexual picture. It was intended to express the simple experience of a man and a woman riding together on one horse. A Freudian might see the horse's neck and head as a large phallus.

Someone else might see the man as being more involved with consciousness whereas the woman is riding on the lower region of the animal. I see the woman's position as more attractive. She can get off easily. The man's position is more secure, especially if the horse begins to move fast. But this horse does not look like it will get out of control. They are moving toward the Swiss flag and this corresponds to how I felt myself moving into the Swiss soul. The Amazons are receding in this picture. They aren't as dominant as the women in the two previous images. They're contained by what looks like a slower moving cart. The spears are behind them, indicating that they're putting aside their aggression, or perhaps I'm putting aside my aggression toward them.

The man and woman have an equal presence. The animals are present too and this is important to me. They cannot move without the animal. It's under them.

The picture looks like an illustration to a story. The man, or the prince, appears to be going off with one of the women.

Or one of the women is going off with the abducted man.

Does this picture express feelings toward the women in your training groups?

Good observation. The re-alignment of the male-female interplay in my life is taking place on the political and psychic levels that we discussed. There's also the sexual adjustment. I did this picture when I was forty. I'm enjoying the role of caretaker and helper that I fill in training groups. I have always felt grateful that so many women have come to do this deep work with me. I take the role of protector and guide seriously. The aggressive Amazons might also be an expression of my sensitivity to what can happen if the group gets out of control. This relates directly to the fear that I experience in starting a new group. I'm always living with the understanding of how easily destruction can come about. The spears correspond to my fear of the group not going well. This particular training group was a large one where many things could potentially go wrong.

Do the men in the groups present different themes in their art than the women?

The differences of experience are of course there but I've seen many more similarities between the deep emotions of men and women. Men in our society have been oriented toward engineering, carpentry and precision. The artworks of men beginning to draw tend to be more angular and less sensuous. As soon as the men and women are exposed to the techniques, process and traditions of art it becomes almost impossible to distinguish gender differences.

Fig. 15



The man is off the horse and he's standing with the Amazons. There's a Nordic-looking boat in the background that's prepared to go. I may have been unconsciously preparing for my trip to Sweden where I would be leading another training group. There's a sharp contrast between the tiny man holding musical instruments, a flute and mandolin, and the larger women with their spears. The man gives the impression that he

wants to play. He doesn't want to get involved with political dominance games with women. He's happy to let them have the authority. He just wants to be respected for what he is, and this includes his vulnerability and his smallness.

His boat looks secure. The bow is fashioned in an animal's head. The sharp teeth of the dog are there together with the woman's breasts. The warriors are saying: "Who's this man? What's he doing here?" They don't look threatened or threatening. I like his smallness and the atmosphere of the picture. He's a foreigner who's going into the territory of the warriors. He wants to be accepted and to visit with them.

I don't see any aggression in the picture. The man's color is fresh and pink and the women are more established and brown. He looks tender and they don't.

He's a baby pink, a new male, and they're bronzed from life outdoors. Earlier pictures that I have done reveal the animal origins of aggression and how it comes when someone feels threatened. This man has no weapons and he can't be a seductive character.

Fig. 16

In this picture the woman becomes a goddess. She's wearing a sheer dress and a crown. Her hair is long and flowing and her lips, nose and eyes are more distinguished. She's still rugged looking and dark and the spear is there. The purple bison at the water's edge are gentle and sensitive. The man is in his boat, sailing away. It looks like he had a successful visit. His music was accepted and now it's time to go. It's sunset. The land and sea are growing darker. The group in Switzerland was ending when I made this picture and I was feeling good about the work. I was preparing myself for the trip north. So my actual visit had worked out well, just like the experience of the man in the pictures. I see a similarity between the boat's sail and the tip of the spear and this makes me think that the spear is a symbol of transformation and passage. It's an instrument of change.



Were there conflicts in the Switzerland group?

Why do you ask?

The series of pictures suggests conflict and its resolution and I was wondering whether this corresponds to what was happening in the group.

I don't think there were unusual conflicts. There were 24 people which presented problems and tension with regard to giving attention to everybody. There are always the conflicts of beginning and opening to the process. Other than the size of the group, the conflicts were typical. In my art I was consciously working on a conflict that I brought with me from the United States. The process of dealing with the problem then appears to have adapted itself to the dynamics of the group. I progress from angry to romantic feelings about the Amazons. This woman is stately and introspective. The man is a traveler. He's the one who comes and goes and the women in these pictures belong to the land.

Fig. 17



After the Amazon pictures I wanted to do something different. The village of Wienacht where we run our Swiss training groups is high in the mountains overlooking the Bodensee, also called the Lake of Constance. From the window of my room I could see the entire lake with views of Switzerland, West Germany and Austria. I tried many times to draw the panorama but I could never get it. The space was too vast. In this picture I make an imaginary picture of a lake that's permeated with feelings of nostalgia. The small boat that the man leaves in, is flying the Swiss flag. He feels that he's taking Switzerland with him; it has become part of him. The female figure is accompanied by the Appenzell cows, that are part of the soul of the land. I had D. H. Lawrence's book, *Ten Paintings*, with me. I was touched by his fascination with trees and forests and I liked the way

he included them in his paintings. The trees in *Wienacht* are tall and straight, rising from the steep slopes. This picture gives me the feeling of twilight with a full moon, vespers on the Bodensee. I wanted to work with darker colors. Lawrence's obsession with the gods of darkness was influencing me.

Fig. 18



I've never done a picture like this before. I went further into the darkness. I've been a painter of light, illumination, bright colors, and now I'm interested in the shadows. This woman is a night spirit. She leads gently and does not need spears and force. She evokes darker possibilities, a beauty that's unfamiliar to me.

These last two pictures are starting something new in terms of the image of the woman.

The Amazons were helpful in working a problem through. I realized that it was time to leave them and return to my feeling for nature.

This series apparently tells a story.

The suggestion of a story sequence, fits with the fact that I was working on a related series of problems concerned with my relationships to women. I began by missing my wife. I then engaged political struggles and these last two pictures open to the feminine sensibility in nature. The pictures evoke the ancient female connections to the night and the moon. The man has left her but she's complete. She dances in the night.

Fig. 19

The pictures that we're looking at now were done in Sweden with little more than a day of traveling time between them and the Switzerland series. These are only a limited selection from all the pictures that I did at night and in afternoon breaks during the week of the Swedish training group. There's a distinct shift from the previous series. After working in a more controlled and precise style for a period of time I feel the need to express myself quickly and more spontaneously. This is the process part of therapeutic transformation through art. The stress and conflict was first concretized and followed by the expressive ventilation of energy. I maintained a continuity with the Switzerland series by working with darkness. I became involved with variations of black.

In this picture the boat has lost the Viking prow that it had in Switzerland. The Swiss flag has been replaced by the Swedish flag. The training group was meeting in a small village in the coastal archipelago of western Sweden. It's a rugged coast with strong winds and waters. The natural setting was more turbulent than Switzerland and the atmospheric change is reflected in this picture. It looks like a flying horse accompanying the boat. The sailor holding the tiller is leaning forward

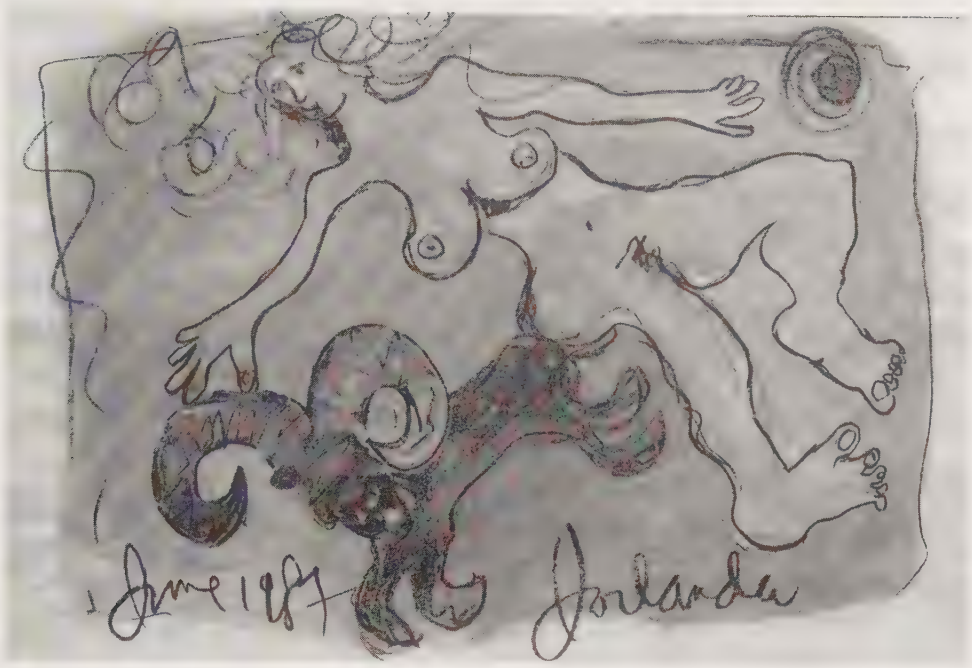


and looks as if he's contending with stormy seas. The out-stretched head of the horse gives a sense of liberation. It seems to be enjoying the feeling of the wind.

Where did the horse come from?

He wasn't with me in Switzerland. He looks part horse and part dog. I think he's bringing my aggressive and spontaneous energy. The picture involves a return to movement in the water and air with the assistance of animal energy.

Fig. 20



Every picture I make has elements of self-portraiture in it. This image of the woman and the black ram is again an effort to make something spontaneously and freely. I drew the human figure floating in space and let the animal come in. My concerns were aesthetic. The human figure and animal relate to one another as though there are parts of a non-representation painting. Color contrast is as important as the placement of figures.

I see qualities of dancing and flying.

This corresponds to the freeing of energy that I felt in the series. Dance is deeply ingrained in my psyche. The previous Switzerland images were more grounded. The dance began in the picture of the woman in the forest (Fig. 18). Spontaneous expression in the visual arts is close to the dance.

There are strong sexual evocations between the woman and the ram. The same applies to the relationship between the dancing woman and the trees in Fig. 18. These sexual qualities are in all of my pictures, especially those that I do while traveling and living within the monastery-like environment of my training group. There's evidence here that art can be a substitute for sexual activity. This is also confirmed by the fact that I paint so much while working within my groups and while I am away from home. During one of my recent training groups in Europe we shared the facilities of a workshop center with a group dealing with tantric sexuality. While they continued their explicit sexual meditations into the night, many of my people stayed up into the early morning to paint. One group chose sex and another one chose art. The presence of the tantric group made this clear to me. The implication that one activity is an unconscious substitution for another denies the element of choice and it demeans what I chose to do. We can apply the same standard to tantric sexuality and say that it's a substitute for art. Again, there is an element of truth to this because all of these activities are inter-connected.

I object to reductive thinking that follows a single line of logic in declaring that art is exclusively a substitution for sexuality. This is one of its many attributes. The connections to my religious instincts are just as essential, even though this series of works that I produced in Sweden is clearly sexual. I am in agreement with D. H. Lawrence in perceiving sexuality as one of many channels to a fundamental religious purpose. My inclusion of animals is part of this religiosity. They establish links with ancient traditions.

Fig. 21

This picture was made in response to a dream where a young woman was sitting on a windowsill high above the ground. She was tying her shoes. They were dancing shoes. A second young woman was on another windowsill practicing her dance movements. I became frightened and feared that she would fall. The male figures to the left with the hands reaching out are expressions of my fear. They want to protect the two women. One of the arms is extending up from the cartoon-like character



in the bottom left. This tiny and odd-looking man represents the futility of trying to control the life of the psyche or the life of the dream. The characters have to be left alone. If they fall, they may fall into delightful things, or perhaps they just need to fall. They may fall into the dance that we just discussed. Perhaps the dream is an expression of my resistance to the dance. The small man contributes to the feelings of depth and height.

The hand in the center has six fingers.

I'm very much involved with the hand here. It's large and it seems to have a consciousness of its own. This is the beginning of the hand motif that we'll see in later pictures.

The people look as though they're on stage.

You're right. There's a theatrical feeling. The male-female theme is really taking shape here. The woman is putting on her dancing shoes

and coming forward. She shows herself and takes risks. The man's hand is protective but it may also be trying to hold her back and move her into the darkness.

Is the hand trying to catch her?

They don't seem to be playing. The men's faces are stressful. I imagine them hollering: "Watch out! Be careful!" They're concerned. The hands are similar to mine.

Your observation of the extra finger is helpful. If I look at the hands as pure forms, they begin to look phallic, especially the one in the middle reaching up toward the female figures who are also standing in front of cave-like openings which are archetypal symbols of woman's sexuality. The male may be seen as reaching toward the female. There are many more interpretative possibilities. The power of sexual themes can sometimes block access to other interpretations.

For a minute I thought you were contradicting what you just said about not reducing everything to a sexual theme.

Sexual sensibility is one of many qualities and not the only one. We don't improve the situation by combating one-dimensional sexual reductionism with the insistence that images are without sexual qualities.

Fig. 22

Here's the boat again. The man is now concentrating on his hand.

I see the hand as the symbol of the artist. Your identity as a painter comes out in these training groups.

The boat is carrying me into art. This fellow looks like an introspective and serious artist. He's more like me than the bald figures we have

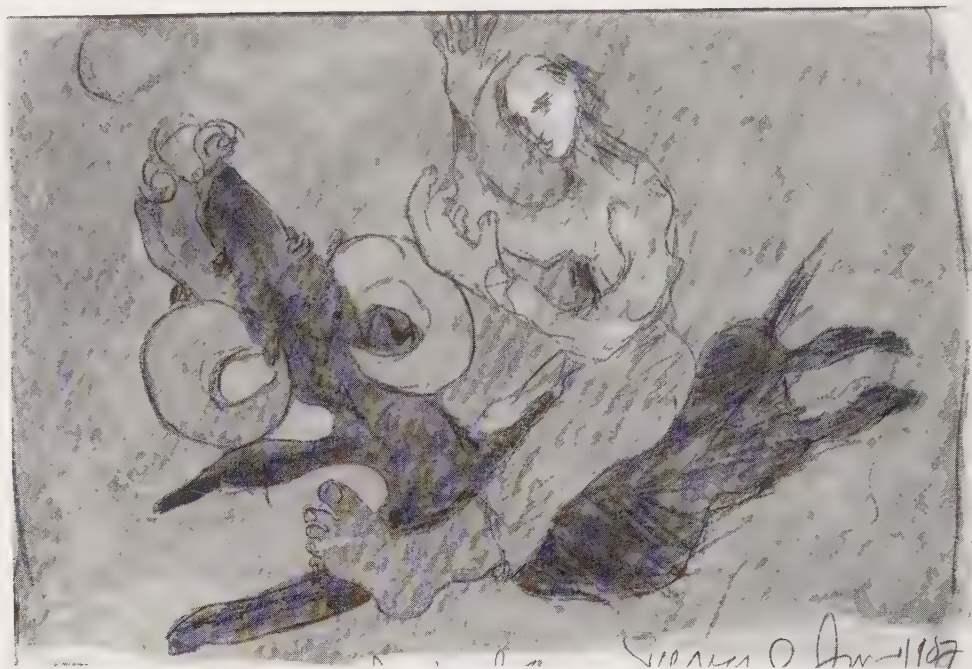


seen. The picture could be an illustration of Melville's question, "Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who, that lifts this arm?"

I was looking at my hand and simply decided to draw it. I was also contemplating the philosophical implications of the active hand of the artist. As a result of our talk about the hand and the phallus, I see the man contemplating his male sexuality.

Fig. 23

The sexual theme is furthered by this image. The man is not only looking at his hand, but he's riding a wild creature. Perhaps he's receiving some help from the creature which is a combination of a horse and the black ram we saw earlier. The riding of the animal is an expression of the artist being carried by the energy of art. The animal's physical vitality is greater than the man's. Animals are still an integral part of life in the European countryside. There were many cows and bulls in the region where the group was taking place in Sweden. The man in this



picture is still involved with the hand. Maybe he's admiring its mysterious abilities.

Although I'm intrigued by the sexual implications of the image, I felt more involved with the eroticism of nature when making it. In the Swedish countryside I enjoy watching the cows, bulls and other animals. I want to express a sacred relationship between human and animal life. It's something that we have lost in many parts of the United States.

I have an aesthetic attraction to the bald head with a little hair on the sides. I believe that my fascination with the bald man originates from a series of self-portraits done by a man that I worked with at Danvers State Hospital. I started working as an art therapist when I was 23. I came to Danvers after being trained in the latest trends of the New York City art world. After four years in the state hospital I'd been re-trained by the native expressions of untrained artists. As their teacher-therapist I helped them to let their natural abilities emerge. The asylum environment was separated from the biasing influence of contemporary art. There was one man in particular who had a profound influence on me. His name was Christopher. He was in his fifties and he had spent his entire adult life in the hospital. For years my wife has been asking me where the bald

man comes from and I have only been able to say that I like the way he looks. For the first time I'm realizing the connection to Christopher and the fact that his imagery has been deeply and unconsciously lodged in my psyche for all these years. I organized a show of his work at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Boston Globe art critic chose it as one of the best small exhibitions of the year.

When he began to work with me at the hospital Christopher sat off to the side in the art clinic and did hundred's of repetitious geometric designs on paper. One day he made a copy of his "Bugler" tobacco pouch. I saw something special in his style and felt that it was an improvement on the original. He began to copy portrait's in art history books and again I preferred his to the originals. We began to work in earnest and for years he did portraits of people in the art therapy studio. I'm realizing that my efforts to bring him along as an artist were inseparable from the corresponding changes that were going to take place in my own work.

In addition to the bald head, my male figures often have moustaches. Again I've always thought that I just like the way the moustache looks. I have had one, on and off, for the past twenty years. I thought that the men with moustaches in my pictures were elements of self-portraiture. Right now the aesthetic link to Christopher seems stronger. He wore a moustache which was expressed prominently in his self-portraits.

This man riding the wild animal could be an unconscious portrayal of the hopes that I had for Christopher in the 1970's. He was the embodiment of the desires I felt at that time to liberate the entire asylum community. The liberation motif has been the dominant psychological theme in my work. I wanted to help him to live more spontaneously and independently. Over the years I realized that he preferred the enclosure and predictability of his environment and he may have experienced the personal freedom that I was envisioning for him by staying in the hospital. He was able to spend years painting every day and didn't have to concern himself with other problems. It was difficult for me to accept that he would probably never paint again if I left the hospital. His art was a part of our relationship. He did it to please me. I learned from Christopher that it's not my place in life to change other people. That's their responsibility. If they come to me for help, I do the best I can to support them.

He was one of the most important influences in my learning how to

express myself naturally. He had more to do with my liberation than I had to do with his. This picture can be viewed as an unconscious expression of how his hand helped to form mine and how he enabled me to the ride with the expressive vitality of art. The process of self-portraiture isn't just concerned with my physical appearance. It also expresses the contents of the soul.

James Hillman says that: "The images are soul-portraits by means of which eros is drawn into the psychic field and can be witnessed as a psychic event." Following Jung, Hillman stresses the autonomous life of the image. I make the animals and figures in my pictures. They are "related" to me. But like my children, I am an instrumentality through which they emerge. The picture is a portrait of the soul as it passes through me. This concept explains the social and religious commitment I have had to art. My life has been an effort to involve other people, and myself, in the manifestation of soul through art.

And it may be possible, as you have suggested, that this story that you tell about Christopher had little to do with the unconscious formation of this picture.

Yes. The interpretations that I give with you now are dramatizations of the pictures and my life. They take place after the image has been created.

Fig. 24

The bed is now entering the series. Gaskell gives two symbolic accounts of the bed. In one it represents "a phase of thought." To support this interpretation he cites Swedenborg's notion that the bed is an expression of "doctrine" based upon the implied correspondence that the bed's role as a resting place for the body relates to the mind resting in doctrine. The second interpretation of the bed offered by Gaskell refers to the "couch of Zeus" which symbolizes "the quiescent or unmanifest condition of the Self" (1960, p. 97). Both of these possibilities fit the three pictures of the bed in this series.



In addition to the sexual implications of this picture and the image of the bed, there are other symbolic possibilities. Here the bed suggests rest and stillness as contrasted to the motion in the previous image.

The image shows a naked woman sitting on the bed with an owl perched at the headboard. The black animal has clearly emerged as a cow and there's a man wearing a broad-rimmed hat and dressed in black who's going through the archway with his back to her. The severity of his appearance suggests that he's Hassidic or Amish. The doorway is the same shape as the dream windows in Fig. 21. Contrary to its appearance, this picture does not refer to a dream. I was scribbling away and the images emerged without intent or planning. My feeling now is that the picture shows an interplay between the human and animal worlds, with the latter being stronger here.

In keeping with Gaskell the bed strikes me as a symbol of the manifestations of the dream life and my commitment to the idea of art being a

waking dream. I was living in a hotel room that was largely filled by a bed. This image has more to do with submission to the psychic life than with explicit sexuality. The orthodox and severe man is walking away and into the black space. The bed seems to be a mode of shamanic travel. This interpretation is reinforced by its proximity to the door. Perhaps the woman and the animals are assisting him in the walk into darkness. I see connections between the naked woman on the bed and the person who lies down on the analytic couch in order to reveal the free associations of the inner life. The passionate activities of the bed link the human being to the animal world.

When I looked up the word "beadstead" in the dictionary to determine its proper usage, there was an illustration next to the word in which an eagle was carved into the beadstead and this coincides with my use of the owl in this picture. The owl sees at night and this supports my desire to look into the darkness. I have a positive, shamanic feeling about the owl as a protector. In Greek mythology the owl is an attribute of Athena, goddess of wisdom, invention and the arts. The cow is more dominant here. I see it as a manifestation of nurturing as well as other archetypal roles of protector and guide for the souls. The bed is one of our major organic connections to the night.

Everything looks like it's being drawn toward the left side of the picture.

Yes. Everything but the man. My pictures intentionally create a spiral of motion and obliqueness. This interests me more than a "square" room. In art therapy I have often said that the best way to interpret a picture is to look at those that precede and follow it. I try to allow the pictures to interpret themselves through their natural process of emergence, rather than push a story or fixed explanation onto them. The pictures that follow help me to understand this one.

Fig. 25

This picture is more grounded and still. I don't see this as an improvement on the previous image, just as a change. The woman is now relaxed and reclining on the bed and the cow is smaller, lighter in color and standing peacefully next to the bed. The cow and the owl are more protective and less active. They look as though they are her companions. The man who was in the doorway has been replaced by what seems to be a naked woman. She's gazing into the distance at a city that she's connected to by a river, or winding road. The bald figure who was riding the black ram is now on a bull. They are rejoicing energetically and openly in the sky. I interpret this as another interplay between the complementary elements of the animal and the human being, the active figures and

passive ones, male and female, light and darkness. The picture is expressive of rest, taking a break while also accepting the fundamental passions. The doorway as a place of passage is conspicuously present here.

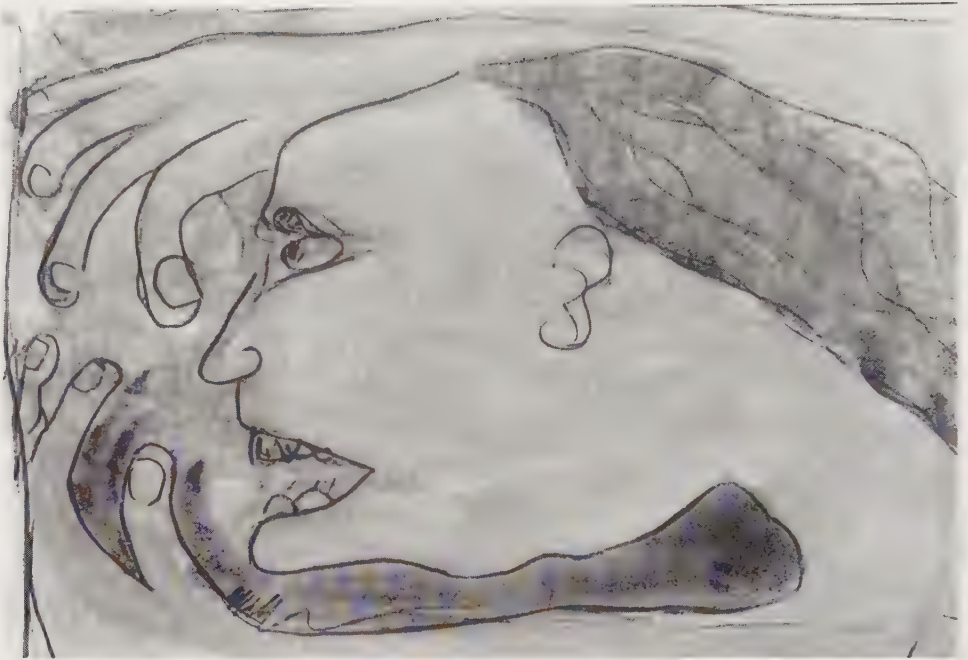
Fig. 26



This painting is more sexual. It says something about me being away from home for more than two weeks, and my longing. I enjoy looking at it. The woman is reaching over to stroke the cow who has become even smaller. It may be a calf. The surface of the bed tilts toward the cow, which seems to express sensuousness in these last three pictures. The cow's face looks as if it's a mirror-image of the woman's. The picture says something about the woman and the animal inside the man.

Fig. 27

In this image I focus on the practical place of the animal, and more specifically the cow, in human life. I went to a country grocery store that day in Sweden and saw a milk carton that had a drawing of boy milking a cow on it. I liked the image and there were the obvious connections to the art I was making at the time. I went back to the studio with the desire to do something with it. The picture eased me away from the sexual themes and into the eros of nature. The origins of the picture were that simple. I took the image home with me from the store.

Fig. 28

Aggression emerged from a spontaneous gesture in this drawing. Perhaps it came to complement the tranquility of the previous image. I call this one 'Wooooooo'! It's a spook picture expressing the aggressive side of human nature. My art is concerned with acknowledging aggression as a life supporting energy, in the world and in myself, so that it has a place to exist. This contrasts to the blind and unconscious projection of aggression and inner violence onto the world.

Does this picture express cruelty?

I don't think so. For me cruelty is intentional and calculated in the light of day. This image is an outburst of feeling. It startles me.

Was there aggression in the training group when you made this picture?

Yes. It was a large group and they were just beginning their training. Time was a problem. In the beginning everyone wants to present themselves and their pictures with some depth. They want to be seen. When there are practical obstacles to satisfying the need, this desire turns to aggression, often directed at the leader. I didn't like the situation either. I prefer more time and smaller groups. Ideally the training group is composed of 12 people and we meet in the mornings and afternoons for a period of days. This allows for adequate studio time, and a relaxed group process in which we present and interpret artworks, help one another, and set aside an hour or two each day for the discussion of ideas and practical problems. When these elements don't exist, there are needs that will inevitably be frustrated and aggression is aroused. If I'm open to the process of the group, aggression is aroused in me too. Perhaps this picture emerged as an embodiment and ventilation of my anger. The images always seem to relate to how I'm feeling at the moment. The most fundamental principle of my teaching involves the acknowledgment, engagement and transformation of conflict when it manifests itself within a training group. If we can do this, the problem becomes an opportunity and a demonstration of how the therapeutic process works. Rather than being destroyed by the situation we're presented with a learning experience that catches us totally by surprise. But it's exhausting and always frightening for me, no matter how much experience I've had with it. I don't recommend it as an intentional course of action. I do whatever I can to avoid serious conflict in my planning but inevitably it will occur, no matter what I do, and I have to be ready to engage it. Extreme aggression can be provoked in a meditation group where a person might feel manipulated into feeling relaxed.

In past pictures I have expressed aggression through animals; vicious dogs with large and sharp teeth chasing vulnerable human figures. I've encountered dogs like this in my life and they've become personal symbols for extreme aggression.

Although I can learn about aggression from the animals, I don't want to project it completely onto them. The history of satanic imagery has done this. The devil is presented as an inhuman figure, or as a combination of human and animal traits. The god Pan becomes the devil. This happens because we deny and repress the presence of Pan in our lives.

Pan embodies my intimate relationship with all forms of nature. Rather than acknowledging the violence within ourselves we have unloaded it on other forms of life. Although the content of this picture may be considered aggressive, the lines undulate and flow. The texture is smooth and painted delicately. I then felt the desire to let the process and movement of painting express aggression. I wanted to do a quick series of aggression pictures.

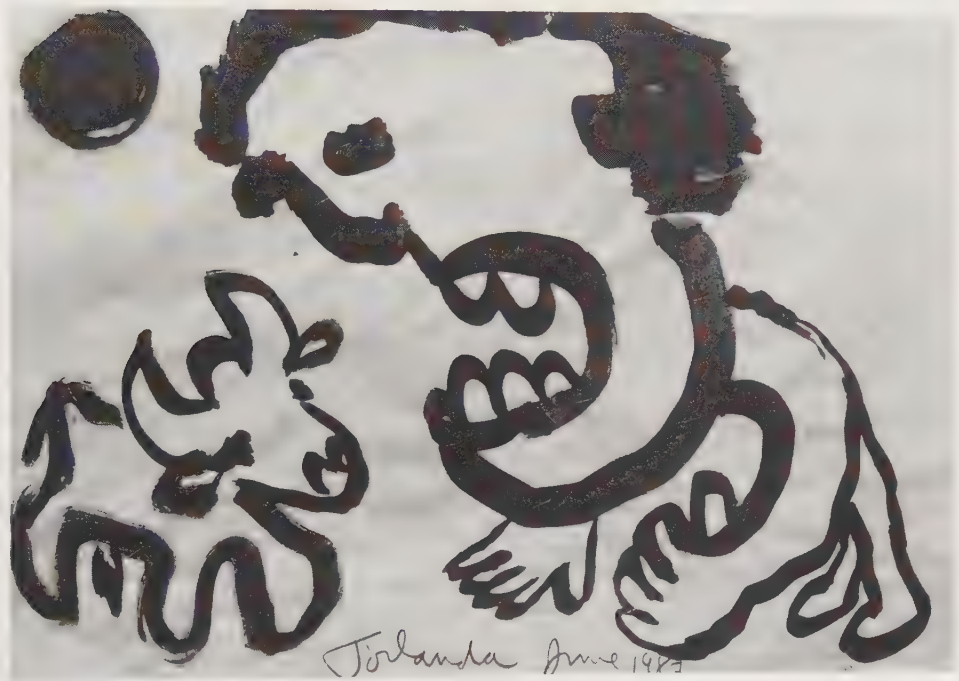
Fig. 29



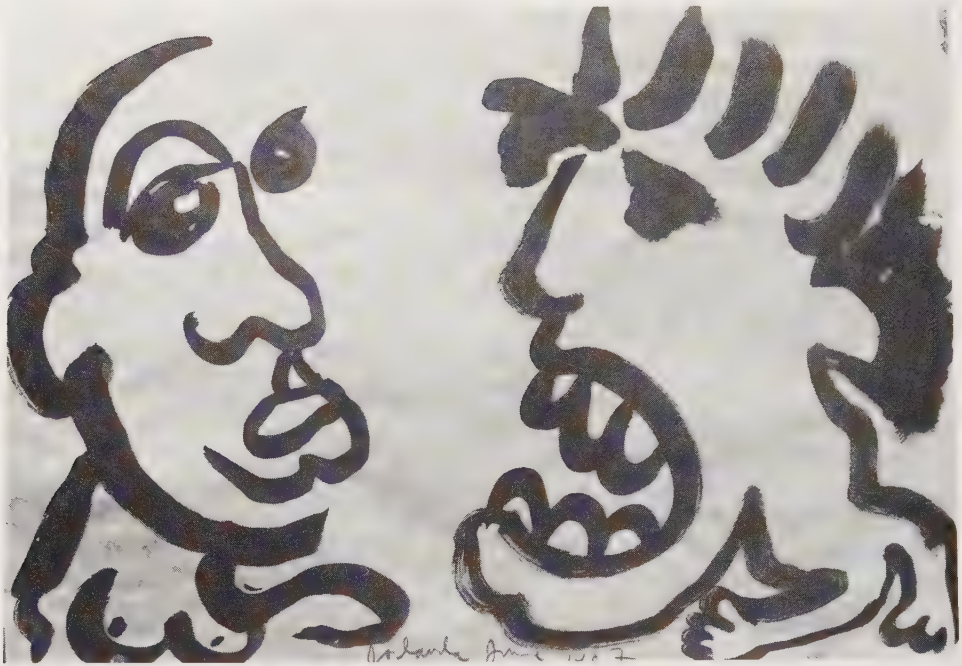
I expressed the aggression with my hand and body in a matter of seconds. The teeth were barely visible in the previous picture. I let them rip here. Let's call this one "Jaws." Our fascination and fear of the shark is connected to the aggression that exists, or is suppressed, within our human mouths. I wrote "group process" at the bottom of the picture.

The man's hands don't look fierce or aggressive.
They seem helpless or harmless. They look as if they
are trying to keep something away.

Fig. 30



An aggressive figure is trying to arouse the gentle animal who doesn't seem affected. The aggressor looks like a steel-toothed character from a James Bond movie. The animal suggests that the aggression belongs to the human world.

Fig. 31

This looks like an aggressive man together with a sensuous African woman. This image together with the previous one may be important parts of my self-portrait. I see the mouth as the primary image of aggression and the locus of rage within the body. In addition to devouring and screaming, the mouth is a source of tenderness, nurturance and sensuousness. The soul makes itself present through the mouth in the form of sound and breath. As a result of this primacy, the mouth and jaw can also be vehicles of repression. They become tight and locked.

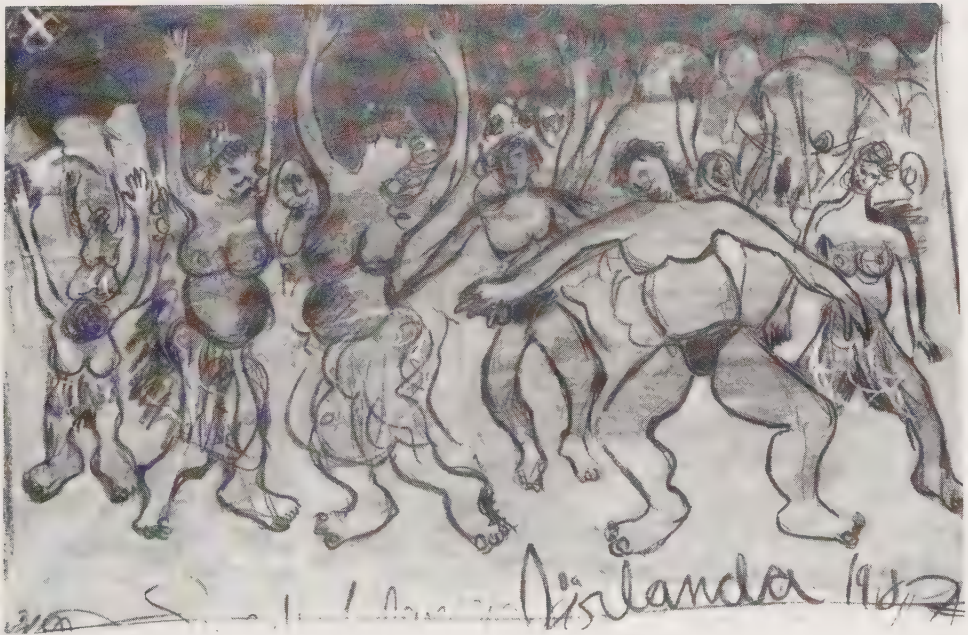
The aggressive figures with open mouths look like the men off to the side of Fig. 21. There is the same tension and feeling in the mouth. This character lives inside me together with the pastoral animal and the woman. I'm realizing how dangerous it is to forget about rage. We can become too complacent about the things that human beings do to one another.

These pictures may also present the rage that the man never expressed during the previous Amazon series. He kept it under control there in

order to survive. These images might be a delayed response to being jabbed with the spears. But he does let it go at the right time. The scream itself needs to be liberated. It is coming out here, having been triggered by a new and safe situation, after-the-fact. It was a quiet rage, a silent scream. If I don't have a place for moral outrage in my life, I lose contact with the oppressed artist in other parts of the world as well as the revolutionary history of art as a form of political transformation.

There's also a rage against my oppression of myself. I have a short fuse. I react instinctively, forcefully and quickly within my intimate relationships and this can be overwhelming for others. I have to be careful not to treat them as if they're parts of myself, capable of flowing with the intensities of my emotions.

Fig. 32



Drums are an important part of my training groups. In this picture the tribe comes together to dance out the aggression. Over the years my Swedish groups have had long shamanic dances at night. I'm always involved with the drumming and the process of sustaining the dance.

It looks like an African or Polynesian community.

I wanted to show the continuity between the dance in my Swedish group and tribal society. I was also trying to do something with the aggression I was feeling. I'm seeing the connection between this image and the face of the African woman in the previous picture for the first time right now. The dance is an ancient and direct way of dealing with turbulent energy. Indigenous dance movements are extremely aggressive and exhausting.

This picture actualizes the suggestions toward dance that exist in earlier pictures in this series. No one is flying here.

They're all grounded.

I have often felt that there's nothing more important than the group dance, the human community of dance.

I see you working with primal emotions in these pictures. Rather than responding intellectually you present the animal, nakedness, dancing, flying, screaming, and Eros. The pictures are charged with feeling rather than intellect.

You're confronting me with the question of what my art is trying to do. On an unconscious level it's helping me to live in the primal world. The exclusive life of intellect doesn't provide access. The drum is a symbol of this process. I use the drum in my art therapy studios to summon the images and emotions. The rhythm of the drum supports the group, the images and the emergence of the psyche. The drum, the voice and the dance are the most primal of human expressions and as my work turned toward depth, it's natural that they appeared. I learned how to integrate

them through my studies of shamanism and the indigenous healing traditions that exist inside every one of us.

Now, as I compare the pictures that I did in Sweden to those that were done in Switzerland, I see how restricting my use of color and art materials sometimes helps to liberate expression. There are fewer choices to make so I can be faster and more spontaneous. But as soon as I exhaust my interest in a particular limitation I have to return again to the varieties of materials.

There may have been more of an urgency in the Swedish pictures. Your time was limited and you were coming to the end of the studio and therefore the style changed. It becomes less contained. But it seems the entire series focuses on the presentation of a myth and the telling of a story.

Psychology and myth are close. They offer stories, dramatizations and insights which document life in the personal and collective dimensions. Telling the story will always be more important than the subsequent explanations. Mythology is more than the collective dream. It's the story of the individual that's being told, retold and transformed every day.

December 1987

SWITZERLAND AND FLORENCE

Fig. 33



I returned to the mountain village of Wienacht, Switzerland to lead a training group and then traveled to Italy. Here's the door again. The image is inseparable from the training group context in which it emerges. In this first picture the doorway is the beginning. It's closed and the figure has his hand on the doornob. It's interesting that I drew a round doornob because you do not see them in Switzerland where doors are opened and closed with levers which don't appear until the fourth

picture in this series. The closed door and the doornob are unconscious expressions. I'm thinking about them now for the first time. The presence of the doornob suggests the presence of my past life as I begin to enter the new context. The closed door is an expression of the psychological reality of myself and the group. Our inner lives had yet to be opened. The figure is standing close to it. His wings are ready to go. He's naked because he wants to be open. His animals are there to support him. The Appenzell cow, the Swiss mountain landscape and the dark tree on his right side are expressions of the environmental powers that are indigenous to the place where we were working. I began to draw trees after looking at D. H. Lawrence's art. He opened my eyes to the religiosity of the trees, forests and darkness that I live with each day. The energetic horse on the left came spontaneously through my hand. I see it as the shaman's horse and the mode of transportation into sacred realms in search of lost souls. I'm interested in the darkness that surrounds the horse and the Swiss flag above it. Perhaps this is an image of my readiness for descent into the Swiss soul, my Schweizer seele. This fellow looks well prepared, yet humble, tranquil and vulnerable.

It looks like the door is a means of passage from the darkness to the pasture.

My pictures tend to contradict time and space. I didn't intend the passage that you see. Who knows what is behind the door? In training groups there are always surprises. The door leads into the group, into the experience that we'll have together and into myself. We go into an altered state of community consciousness in these training groups. A different life begins. The door and the figure are bright yellow. They're illuminated. This suggests that there's a desire to see, to engage the treasures of the psyche. I like the way it contrasts with the darkness and thus accentuates the existence of both. There's a triangle over the door. I don't think that I have done this before. I put it there to adorn the passage. It reminds me of the Greco-Roman triangles that rest on top of stone pillars. Smaller versions of this triangle are commonly placed over the front doors of old New England houses. I wanted to go in the main door, confidently. The triangle is also a symbol of God. The angel desires to serve a purpose other than himself.

This is the first time I've seen one of your figures with wings.

When I began the course, I was highly motivated. The doorway also expresses a new life for me. I was in Switzerland after three months of sabbatical in which I didn't teach, and during which I was involved in changing the course of my life as a whole. I chose to leave academic administration in order to go more deeply and completely into the life of the artist. Your mention of the wings is helpful. I was eager to work with this group and I wanted the group to succeed. The animals look like shamanic helpers, giving me the transportive energy of the horse and the nurturing calmness of the cow, the darkness and the light, the male and the female, the intimate space and the open environment.

Fig. 34



In the second picture of the series, the door is open and the man with the wings has gone through. He's holding up a red circular object between his hands. This is the same form that appeared in the first series of pictures that I showed from Finland. It was an unconscious color choice that I realized afterwards was an expression of the blue of the Finnish flag. Now it's red, in keeping with the Swiss colors. Again, I made this connection afterwards. The beginnings of the red shape can be seen in the red sun, or moon, in the previous picture where it's in the distance. In this picture he has it in his hands. I go back and forth in perceiving the form as a sacred orb and as a playful ball. Only now do I realize the significance of this interplay between playfulness and the sacred. I don't care for the austere seriousness that characterizes institutional religion. The shamanic trickster is healthier, more human, and appealing to me.

The playful and sacred qualities of the circular form relate to my desire for a full engagement of the group. The ball is a symbol of my desire for a free interplay with them. My psyche is unconsciously saying, "Let's play ball . . . Let's pass it around." In the first picture of this series he has the circular shape of the doornob in his hand. In this picture it takes on color and an independent life. It's elevated and respected. The circle and the orb are symbols of unity and the earth. I'm seeing these interpretative possibilities for the first time as I talk with you. When making the image I just had an impulse to raise the figure's arms and put the circular form in his hands.

The picture is drawn with considerable energy and commitment. My desire to work and to perform effectively is expressed in the attentiveness to detail, the bold colors and the consistent pressure of the crayons and pencils. The dolphin-like fish that appears on the right suggests a desire for depth, an immersion in the dark blue. The winged figure is in the heat of the red and the fish is in the cool blue.

There's a striking contrast between the firey heat and the blue, sensuous dolphin.

The dolphin may have come to encourage the figure to stay, and not fly away. Flight can be a resistance to the depths of the group. This becomes clear in the next picture. The dolphin appears to help him to dive into what is before him. The proximity of the flag suggests that he

must go into the the Swiss soul. Perhaps he's diving after a large, red pearl.

Your doorway looks like a book that has been opened.

It does. The opening of the door corresponds to the opening of a book. They are both beginnings.

Fig. 35



It surprised me to find the fish in the man's lap. The dolphin turned into a blue, baby whale. This series of pictures offers an example of how the spontaneous emergence of the images can be stronger than conscious

attempts on my part to bring forth a specific result. At this point the work was going well. It was a six day studio training group, and I was feeling that I had the immensities in my lap. There's always a tremendous sense of relief when this positive rhythm begins to sustain itself and when I am submissive to, yet keenly aware of, the forces of nature that exist within the group. I can relax and enjoy the work when a clear and intelligent relationship is established between group process and the powers of the emotions. There's so much that can go wrong. The training group leader can easily become an Ahab who is pitted against energies that are beyond his control, and he's destroyed by the whale and the powers of its thrashing tail. As a group leader I'm the keeper of the ship that we travel in. We're open to the destructive and painful encounters with the underworld but we must also know that the sanctuary of the ship will be waiting for us when we need it.

The whale looks like it's being nurtured in your arms.

I like to think that I'm capable of that. The doorway is in the background here. Passage doesn't seem to be as important as engagement with the other. When I made this picture I had just finished writing the previous chapter on interpretation where I talked about the whale in *Moby Dick*. It was on my mind as a symbol of depth and the soul. I like the fact that the man appears to be without clothes. He's there naturally with the animal. I don't feel sexual about this picture and I didn't have strong sexual feelings while I was running the training group. When I'm engaged with a group, and especially when we are openly dealing with sexual themes and images, I feel that my primary energy source is the heart. Some people might see the whale as a large blue phallus that I'm holding and embracing. That's an interesting possibility and something that I would be open to exploring with them but here I'm concerned with helping others create and give birth to their art and ideas.

The whale seems to enjoy being held. It's comfortable out of the water.

Perhaps this picture has less to do with me holding the depths of the group and more to do with the group holding me. I now identify with

the whale who is out of the water. I'm the man from the Massachusetts coast who has been thinking about whales and who has come into the mountains of Switzerland.

**I have the fantasy that the whale leaped into his lap.
Is he comfortable with the whale there?**

Yes. Sometimes the work is that easy. It just leaps into my lap. When the big things emerge from the depths it's important to be ready for them and to hold them.

Why do you draw so many parallels to the training groups?

Because the pictures emerged from that environment. The situation can be likened to the need to be aware of the context of the dream, the events during the day from which it emerged. I've learned from my years as a group leader that there's considerable risk and fear involved. When I'm involved in a training group it becomes the most important thing in my life at that moment. I have to dedicate myself to it completely.

Are you more committed to some groups than to others?

I try to follow the example of my parents who let every child in the family know that they were loved without distinctions and comparisons. None of us ever had the impression that we were more or less important than the others. Generally I have succeeded in doing this. But there are times when I need the group more than at other times. This was the case in Switzerland when I made these drawings. I was beginning a new life. I wanted to get off to a good start. I've had a long and good marriage with my work and I wanted it to continue. It would have been difficult for me if that particular group was a failure because it was literally a doorway to a new life of teaching. It would have been like a figure skater missing the first jump in one of the most important performances of his life.

Were you aware of these feelings at the time?

Yes. I'm always aware of the possible difficulties, the gods of destruction. I take them seriously and I respect them.

Getting back to the picture, I like the man's openness and his comfort with the whale, his ability to just sit there with it. He lives a crazy and enchanting life when he works with images that's so different from an office existence. I'm beginning to see this as a picture of my Swiss colleague Paolo Knill. As I've said before, he has taught me how to sit with people openly and quietly. I didn't know how to do it until he came along.

Your questions suggest that my concerns with the group may be an avoidance of things that are going on inside myself. The pictures are always expressing my sensibility and an ongoing desire to live closer to nature. It's interesting how the figure has grown in size. He's filling up the space, as contrasted to the more diminutive characters in the preceding images. This seems to be a pattern in my training group pictures. I start out small and the group enlarges me. They bring me into the empty space that I feel within myself. They fill the space. I'm committed to starting groups empty, striving not to be too large. Group members go through a natural process of making leaders very big at the beginning and this soon gives way to their desire to assert themselves and establish autonomy. I respect this process, and try to avoid unnecessary carnage.

Does the man possess female qualities?

As I continue to look at this picture I feel a relationship to the madonna and child motif. The baby blue whale makes me think of my relationship to my mother. I apparently had bright, blue eyes as a child and my mother often dressed me in blue. The color is prominent in my paintings. My mother with her eight children was the archetype of the nurturing woman. She was extraordinary in her commitment but she was equally committed in letting that role go when the children were grown. I was the first child and at one point I had her completely to myself. I don't know to what extent I regretted losing that exclusivity because I liked the way the other children kept coming. I view the fact that I was alone with her for the beginning of my life, as a gift, and a time that must have had a large impact on the shaping of who I am. There's no

sense of primal loss connected to having to share her with the other children. To the contrary, their arrival furthered my autonomy and expanded my sense of life. The other formative women were my grandmother and my first mother-in-law and they were part of this blue pattern. I identified deeply with these women and learned many things from them. I think that this life long admiration of the woman has enabled me to get close to the woman inside myself. The male energy has always been externalized more. But I would never be involved in this work if it were not for the unambiguous presence of the woman. I could not do it without her.

Fig. 36



The male and female theme explicitly emerges in this picture. When I made this one I didn't have the benefit of the many interpretations that we have given to the previous images. Again, this picture emerged without a conscious intent. I drew the man and then felt that the picture

needed a woman. The figures appear to be floating in space. He's holding the red orb and the doorway is small and beneath him. The shape between them looks like an egg. It resembles the jeweled orb, surmounted by a cross, that medieval Christian sovereigns carried. It's also similar to the female symbol where a small cross is attached to the outer edge of a larger circle. I intended to draw it as a pool of water rather than as a sphere. It was late fall and the time of year that I would usually be in Israel. My unconscious seasonal clock was expressing its connection to the past. The tree suggests an attraction for the landscape of the Middle East and the open space there.

The shape between them does look like an egg.

Maybe it's the world egg, or the egg of new life. My wife was with me and we were discussing her desire to have another child, my fourth. The appeal of the cross in the Swiss and Scandinavian flag may relate to my destiny with the number four. The cross also represents the four directions and the tree of life. The cross-shaped tree between the two figures suggests the meeting of male and female energies. The man carries the red orb, close to his genitals. He's serving the purpose of the woman and doing his part in the cooperative creation. The red orb in this picture and the previous one might represent infusion by the man which results in the creation of something that grows outside of himself. It looks like something is happening between them. They're coming together to make a new world. They appear to be comfortable with one another. The doorway is always there because the passages are ongoing. The figures are surrounded by a deep blue. This series of pictures is concerned with the emergence of blue and water. The three previous pictures were done with crayons and in this one I work with the flow of paint.

The red orb which you described as a symbol of your working with the group can be seen here as something that comes between the man and the woman and gets in the way.

That's an interesting observation. I'm so apt to view situations positively that it's helpful for me to proceed via negativa. Rather than going forward with something to give, he may not be able to let the red orb go.

Although I said yes to my wife's desire for a child, I was hanging onto my reluctance and my fear that I'll not be able to take care of everybody. The red orb can be viewed as my insecurity. He's very much involved with it and this may suggest that he's excessively engaged with himself.

Is he presenting Eve with an apple?

You're observant. After what we've just said, I'm not sure that he's offering the apple. He may want to keep it for himself. In spite of the possibility that he's holding onto something, I imagine that the thing between them is an important part of their relationship. It seems to be growing.

Fig. 37



The pool of water is expanding and the man is facing it alone. The previous Wienacht picture pleased my aesthetic sensibility so I wanted to continue with the use of tempera paint together with the color relationships and figures. The floating quality of the man, or what might be seen as his precarious balance, are expressions of letting go and not taking myself too seriously. I had this feeling while making the picture. The figure emerged from a casual scribbling motion. I liked the man in the Fig. 36 and I wanted to make him again. In the previous picture his hands and arms are in front of the body in what might be perceived as a protected position. In this picture they are held back in a posture similar to that of the woman in Fig. 36. He's opening the front of his body. He leans toward the water. Perhaps he's preparing to dive. He looks stiff and startled. The palm trees on the top together with the moon were conscious expressions of nostalgia for the Middle East. The doornob has been replaced by the European lever here and in Fig. 36. This suggests that my soul, which usually travels slower than my body, has arrived in Switzerland.

It looks as if someone has just given him a push toward the water.

I needed a push into the waters of transformation. The fish came to the man and perhaps now he's going to reciprocate. The pool of water, which begins in the previous picture, continues through this Switzerland and Italy series. The water emerges unconsciously as a symbol of change, life and renewal. In this picture, the proximity of the doorway to the water reinforces its transformative function. He doesn't look ready for the plunge but he's taking it seriously. The Swiss flag is more prominent here than in the two previous pictures.

The doorway looks like a vortex.

Everything does converge toward it. My psyche isn't being subtle about the theme of passage. The Israeli palm trees and the Swiss flag are sliding toward the doorway. He looks like he's being pulled toward it. But he must deal with the water rites first.

I'm now seeing the pattern of oblique lines in your pictures.

The converging lines of the walls and doorway of this image are a continuation of the forms that we saw in the background of Fig's. 34 and 35 of this series and in Fig's 1, 2 and 4 that I made nearly one year earlier in Finland.

Fig. 38



In this last picture of the Switzerland series, a woman in a red dress and red shoes appears with closed eyes and a more wistful face. As I said before the male and female figures are interchangeable in my pictures. I identify with both. I sketched the composition quickly in Switzerland and finished it in Florence. The Florentine trees at the edge of the water were added in Italy. I'm intrigued by southern Mediterranean cypress trees. Their imaginative attraction began long before I went to Europe

for the first time. In antiquity they were sacred trees which like other long living conifers symbolized immortality. Early Greek mythology associates the cypress with death, Pluto and the underworld, because it doesn't grow back after being cut down. The pool takes on more life here. The symbolic combination of life in the water and death in the cypress trees is provocative to me. The presence of the three fish furthers the water's symbolic representation of life and fertility. We're no longer dealing with big dolphins and whales but small fish. In this picture I intentionally used the door with the Swiss flag over it to say goodbye to Switzerland. The fact that I've moved extensively from one place to another during the 1980's accounts for the constant presence of the doorway. Switzerland was behind me.

**She could be bowing to the water and watching over the fish.
There's a striking difference between her reaction to the water and
that of the man in the previous picture.**

Yes. She's more comfortable with it all. Perhaps she's closer to nature. In this picture the water and the cypress trees are more dominant than the figure. She submits to them. There's more tension in the previous picture.

Do you attach significance to the number of fish and trees?

I haven't thought about that until now. There are eight trees and three fish. If I respond to the numbers on a personal basis, I see myself as one of eight children and the father of three children. The more universal symbolism of numbers is interesting to me. The Herder Lexikon of symbols describes how within the Christian tradition the number 8 refers to the "eight days of creation" and thus symbolizes creative regeneration and resurrection. That interpretation together with the proximity of the trees to the water and the universal associations of the tree with life, support the stories that I tell about renewal. We can take whatever we want from the many symbolic possibilities. Our interpretations and the making of the picture are like throwing the I-Ching. Chance and coincidence are as much a part of the process as intent. I may have an unconscious disposition toward the number eight. The best way to test

this possibility is to look at numerical patterns in a series of pictures. There are seven cypress trees in the two pictures that immediately follow this one and five trees in the last picture of the series. It would seem from this that I'm more concerned with the presentation of a group of trees that fit into an aesthetic relationship to the other objects and figures in the picture.

The emergence of a painting is influenced by aesthetic principles of visual placement and contrast as well as by the artist's style of expression. The symbolic approach is complemented by a formal, and process-centered aesthetic that focuses on the nature of the material, colors, gestures and the emergence of images. The aesthetic and symbolic functions of art complement one another. When working I'm immersed in the aesthetic process and the making of a picture that expresses itself in terms of colors, lines, forms, gestures, composition, and feeling. Psychological interpretations come afterwards, or they may accompany the process. I might begin with a psychological theme or feeling that I want to express, but the idea must submit to the spontaneous work dynamic of the aesthetic process. Psychological reflection is a mode of interacting with the image.

You've said that art itself is a psychological activity.

The finished artwork does make a psychological statement. The aesthetic emergence of the painting can also be viewed as an activity which brings forth psychological material without being controlled by the reasoning process of intellect. Art is a form of aesthetic and sensory thinking that provides us with direct access to the image life of the psyche.

Fig. 39

In this picture I continue working with the fish, the pool of water, the cypress trees, the doorway, and the man in a white T shirt and blue jeans. The Italian flag didn't jump out at me the way the cross configurations did. It was consciously planned. I had to go out and carefully study the



proportions of the colored areas and the placement of the green and red. This is the first time the man appeared with red shoes. He may have taken them from the woman.

He has the same facial expression as the woman in the previous picture.

They do have the same face. Their bodies are similar. His upper body resembles that of the woman and a well developed man, suggesting that he's some kind of androgynous character. He has Firenze on his shirt. Some Italian men might be insulted by my presentation of this swishy guy in tight pants under their flag. As I look at the picture now I see an unconscious parody of Michelangelo's heroic David and his other super-human figures that we visited in Florence. I feel a compassion and friendship with men who are able to explore and openly express their femininity. This may be an expression of a doorway through which I haven't passed. The man looks as though he's fleeing from the fish and the depth of the water.

Is the fish aggressive?

I don't think so. It's serious and in the proper place, watching the man. The open mouth might suggest disbelief. What's this guy? The fish lives in its pond where it doesn't have to think about doorways which are part of the human world. I like the aesthetics of the doorway in this picture. It continues to hold my interest. It creates interesting edges on the right side of the picture and it distinguishes the human world from life in the water. The irregular rectangular shapes of the flags and doorways enable me to create a relationship of aesthetic tension between them and the shape of the picture surface. There is also a continuous interplay between the rectangle and the circle. They allow me to introduce color contrast.

Are you consciously working with edges.

Yes, but there's also a thoughtless spontaneity and sensuousness to the process. I'm sensitive to the way shapes and lines touch and don't touch. I'm intrigued by the subtle spaces that are created. In my last year in college I was able to study with Theodoros Stamos in New York, who together with Mark Rothko, experimented with the painting of edges within abstract expressionism. I started as a "non-representational" painter and incorporated its principles of color, line, composition, edges, obliqueness and the relationships between forms into figurative art that came later. As I said earlier, I became involved with figures as a result of my eight years of work with people at Danvers State Hospital. The patients taught me how to paint from the aboriginal soul. It took many years for their influence to take hold. After leaving the job at the hospital, I frequently went back to visit and to make drawings with the patients. I was stimulated by the imagery of the hospital environment.

Fig. 40

This picture is a response to the Cathedral in Florence which I integrate with my more familiar images. The fish is red. The man is grounded and he stands off to the side, leaning casually against the doorway. He's thin but tough looking and he wears black shoes. The man is there in his body and his soul which is expressed by the fish.

Are the trees phallic?

I don't think they have anything to do with male sexuality. For me they are the pre-eminent symbols of the Italian landscape and they're so different from what we have here in Massachusetts. I see a closer relationship between the cypress trees and the tower. The vertical shapes complement the circular forms. The interaction of the male and female is present in everything I do. From an aesthetic point of view I'm working

with the contrast between the extremes of the circle and the rectangle, bold distinctions in color, vertical and horizontal, paint and crayon, rough and smooth.

This Italian series of pictures is so inter-connected that it looks as though they were all done on the same day. The fish is growing larger and the pond is becoming smaller. It looks like the fish is coming out of the water again.

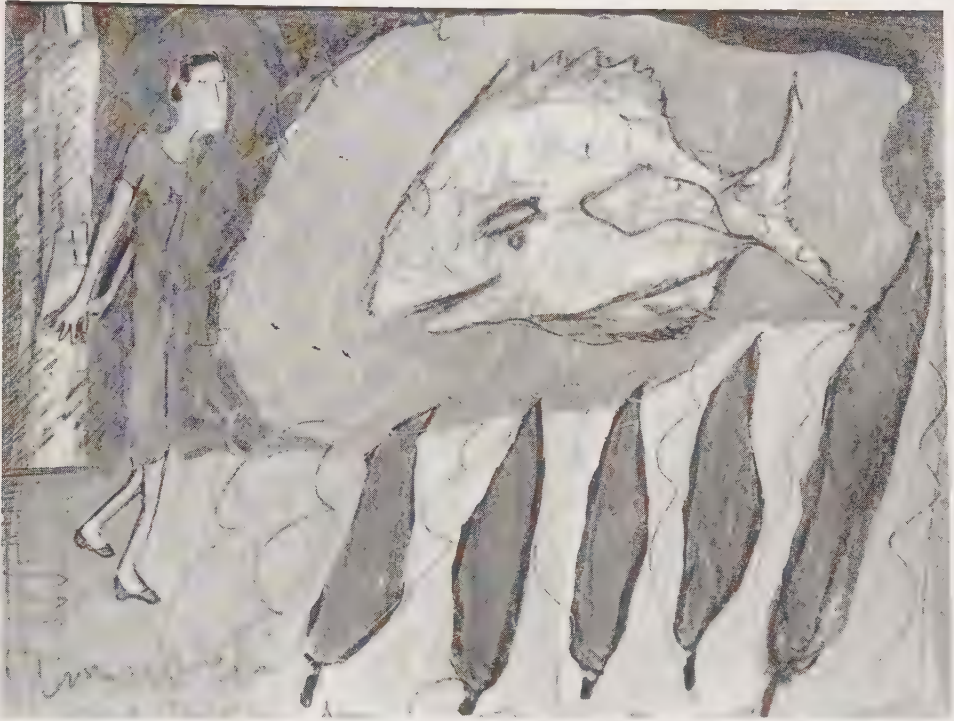
I think of the cliché of the big fish and the small pond. Perhaps the fish needs to get out of the small pond and swim freely. This might relate to the earlier image of the man holding the baby whale. The fish may need the man's help. In this picture, and the one before, the men seem to be involved with something other than the fish. But the large presence of the fish under the church, or in front of it, suggests that unusual things are beginning to occur. The man looks as though he's going to let it all happen. When I was talking to a friend at the college who works in the maintenance department about the changes I was considering in my job, he said: "You need a longer leash."

Fig. 41

This's the last picture in the Italian series. The doorway is almost totally obscured. The colors in the picture build upon the red and green of the flag. The woman is in the open position that we saw in the woman in Fig's. 36 and the man in Fig. 37. She looks like the woman who appeared in Fig. 38. The fish has continued to grow. Now we have a yellow-gold fish in a red pool or cloud. It's becoming a fish of the mind. She seems to be submitting to it, to the idea.

This is the first time that the trees are below.

We went down and into the pool in the previous pictures and now it's rising.



It does look like a pool of the mind.

The fish has taken on more importance. It's growing inside her. It's a symbol of fertility and spiritual life. The series looks like a conception and gestation process. There's a feeling of the fish growing in a womb. It begins in the picture where she goes to the pool to open herself to the three small fish (Fig. 38), or earlier where the man in the Swiss series is accompanied by the fish (Fig.'s 34 and 35). We discussed the conception and egg symbolism in Fig. 36 where the man and woman come together. It would be possible to go back through the entire series and tell a continuous story about the beginnings of life. In this picture the fish in its red womb looks like it's being lifted and nurtured by the trees. It may be ready to be picked off the trees.

Exactly, like a big, ripe fruit.

Big, ripe, new life. The red orb that I began with has become a large red womb. There are also the red shoes and the red dress. With the exception of the man holding the baby whale, the human figures in this series are small and modest, suggesting that human life is being shaped by the larger forces of nature. It turned out that my wife would become pregnant later in the month. It's remarkable for me to now see that I was preparing for this unconsciously by painting symbols of conception and gestation.

Where did the angel go?

The figures don't have use for the wings at this point. The angel will return when it's needed. The series is more concerned with descent, down and into the water with the fish, into the body where new life lives in darkness, in fluids.

My art is a response to my environment. The birth, or rebirth of the fish corresponds to what was happening in my life at the time. This looks like a shamanic fertility series that took place unconsciously. The fish serves as a talisman for my rebirth and the fertility of my family. When the man first looked into the pool of water in Fig. 37 it was empty. When the woman looked in Fig. 38, she saw three fish. After that the fish comes to the man. The frivolous man in Fig. 39 is being called by the fish. He may have to stop his flying for awhile and pay attention to the still waters. In Fig. 40 the man is off to the side as the fish grows and it's turned away from him whereas the woman in this picture (Fig. 41) is in closer contact with it. They face one another. She's letting it grow inside her.

There are so many interpretative possibilities.

Yes. I can change directions with this picture and the series and see the growth of my feminine sensibility. Last night I dreamed that I was working with a community of Roman Catholic nuns as a consultant on spiritual depth and the arts. It was a pure and pleasing dream. I was filled with a spiritual feeling of purpose. I perceive nuns as people who give their lives to the service of a spiritual mission. When I reverse the

energy of my dream I see that the sisters are my spiritual consultants.

This series of artworks shows me that I've made some progress with the male-female struggles that peaked in the Amazon images six months earlier. The conflict forced me into career decisions that I had made prior to traveling to Switzerland. Before the trip I also had the benefit of four months of sabbatical leave from my job. I see my dream about the nuns as indicating that I'm getting back on the track with my male-female cooperation.

January-February 1988

FINLAND AND AMSTERDAM

Fig. 42



I was working with a training group in the countryside outside Helsinki when I made this picture. It's a man leaving the factory. The picture concerns my friend Truman Nelson who died this year at age 76. He was a writer who worked as a young man at the General Electric factory in

Lynn, Massachusetts. There's a line in an essay that I wrote on Truman's life for the *Minnesota Review* in the 1970's, that keeps coming to me. He said: "I left the factory at 40 to dedicate my life to art."

That's what this picture is about. The factory complex on the right, surrounded by a chain-link fence and the many smoke stacks above, looks like a college, an academic factory. I tried to draw the GE but couldn't avoid the projection of the university. I've been thinking about Truman's decision throughout the past year as I struggled, at the age of 40, with the decision to resign from an administrative position at the college.

This odd looking man in red shoes has been appearing frequently. He resembles the men in Fig's. 36 and 37. The red shoes, often worn by the women in my pictures, are a bridge between the male and the female. In this image the man is both flying and walking into life. Perhaps he's floating. This is encouraging because it suggests to me that he's letting life take him. I've been so busy creating institutions that it seems necessary to stop for awhile and see where life takes me. The man in this picture is going into nature where there's a small pool of water with three ducks in it, just behind his right hand.

The man looks as though he's being lifted. He's surging up from the ground. Something is helping him. It looks as though he can take off and fly. The factory seems stagnant and fixed where everything else in the picture is floating—the clouds, the ducks and the man.

Your comment makes me think that he's being lifted and empowered by the impacted energy in the academic factory. Something is being released.

You sometimes wear red shoes similar to the ones in the painting.

Yes. I have a pair of red Nike's. I didn't see this connection. I'm intrigued by the little tractor in front of the factory building. It's a capable and hardworking machine which reminds me of better days, the more constructive times. I've always admired tractors so this solitary vehicle suggests good memories. When my first child was born, I was

working at the Addison Gallery of American Art. The staff gave him a yellow, toy tractor. I enjoyed it more than my son.

The tractor is working by itself.

I've felt alienated from the academic factory, as though I've been working alone and off to the side.

The man has a Finnish flag on his shirt.

It expresses a need to ground myself in Finland and go to work there.

Fig. 43



The Finnish flag is in this next picture which was made in response to a dream. The setting was my 1872 house in Magnolia, Massachusetts that I have been restoring with the goal of living there full-time after moving from an administrative to an academic position at the college. In the dream I was removing wallpaper and found a painting of flowers on the original plaster. An old and dignified Yankee gentleman in a summer hat appeared and just looked at the wall. The scene shifted to a park near the beach where I was talking to a neighbor about one of my trips to Europe, trying to explain what I do there. It seems impossible for the local businessman to understand my work. His two young daughters were standing near us. It was April when the water in Massachusetts is still very cold and a fully clothed man went to the edge of the park and took a flying dive, right in. The water was clear and enticing. I was puzzled because it looked more like the Caribbean than the northern Atlantic.

The dream has been transformed into the painting which has a life of its own. The dignified Yankee gentleman looks like a cartoon figure that might be visiting from France. Like the man in the previous picture, he's somewhere between walking and floating. He has a preppie tie, something a Yankee might wear. The gentleman in the dream was wearing a large hat. In the picture it looks more like the hat of a foppish dandy and not something that a conservative New Englander would wear. Once again he has his red shoes. He is relaxed and the flowers around him look as though they're reaching toward one another, opening, listening, and getting ready to touch. I like the image. The diver looks like he's flying.

The dream images of uncovering the wall and diving into water suggest going further, deeper. You're being shown something when you take down the wallpaper and it appears that the diver wants to find something else.

He's jumping in just for the experience of the dive and the water. When I was eleven my family moved into a house across the street from the ocean in Salem, Massachusetts. The following spring I was in a row boat with friends on a warm and blue day in April but the water was still as cold as winter. We dove in nevertheless to celebrate the rites of spring. That was a strong experience, an initiation ritual that's still with me. I was happy living in Salem.

My work frustration created the energy for the dive. In my life one extreme feeds the other. I do dive into life on a daily basis. But I may be reluctant to take the high and deep dives, the risky ones. I have a strong conservative side. Maybe the diver in my dream has come to help me take a big plunge.

What was your childhood like before moving to Salem at eleven?

We were in the town of North Andover for six years living in a new house. I remember the beauty of the community but also the boredom. My parents had close friends who had a swimming pool and I wished that I could be in it constantly, but I could only go when invited. It was a frustrating, powerless feeling. The summers were hot and humid with little else for me to do but swim when I could find water. There were ponds in the town but my mother didn't care for the environment so we never went there. She felt that the small public pond was polluted. She occasionally took us to the ocean in Marblehead or Salem. It's interesting that fresh water became a taboo for me. I had to go there surreptitiously with my friends. One spring when I was nine or ten I went skinny-dipping with a friend in the large lake that was also the town's water supply. Swimming was forbidden. I had violated a triple taboo against my mother's concerns with safety, the town laws, and an inner feeling that swimming naked was wrong. That was the first time I swam without clothing. It was a clear day and the water was immaculately transparent. I remember it as one of the best physical sensations of my life. The taboo unquestionably increases pleasure. I smile about it now but then it was a source of torment. Whenever I was with my mother I felt a compulsion to confess and get it over with, but I never did and the problem ultimately passed. I don't remember the urge to tell my father. This suggests that the entire experience was connected to my sensory relationship to my mother and the Oedipal myth.

It seems that I've always had a yearning for water. It became a symbol of my longing for a gratifying sensory life. When we moved to Salem, I had the entire ocean. I was also closer to my grandparents who were an intimate part of my life. The family roots were in the Salem-Peabody community. We were known there. North Andover was an often painful time of longing for what I didn't have. There was more physical gratification in Salem.

My best memories of North Andover concern the Episcopal Church and parsonage that we lived next to. The buildings were built in the classic, New England shingle style that Richardson and other architects introduced in the late nineteenth century. I remember the church complex as being constructed in a semi-circular configuration around an open yard. There were archways and other intriguing, and sometimes surprising spaces that characterized shingle style architecture. It was cozy and aesthetic, good Episcopalian taste. There were passageways and tunnels through the bushes behind the church, a private world that I played in. The minister's house was between our house and the church. I remember looking through the mullioned windows and into the library. The house always radiated warmth to me. It was the first house that I feel in love with. There was a foreign intrigue since we were Catholics and "belonged" to another church. Yet I identified with my Episcopalian grandfather who went alone to church, separate from the rest of the family. My parents tell me that when I was a child I wanted to go to church with him. But the "rule" was that children of "mixed" marriages must be raised Catholic. I was more attracted to the commitment of his isolation than to the Catholic herd. He was the outsider that I ultimately became.

I dive alone into the sea. I'm realizing for the first time that the figures in my pictures are often alone.

Is there a symbolic purpose to the dive or does the man in the dream simply do it for its own sake as you said earlier?

In the dream it's cold and stimulating water. Maybe he dives in in order to come to his senses.

The uncovering of the wall in the house suggests looking at what's unconscious. Psychoanalytic theory also sees water as the unconscious and the feminine.

I seem to need a double dosage, in the house and the water. I'm intrigued by the psychoanalytic water allegory, especially the feminine part and the connections that I've described between my mother and water. My two grandmothers were also water gazers. The men in my

family haven't been as interested in the sea. I see myself as diving into the feminine, in myself, in women and in the water itself.

The house is sometimes a symbol of the body. The psychoanalysts likened its facade to outer appearance, the roof to spirit and mind, the cellar to instinct, and the kitchen to transformation.

I generally feel that those principles of correspondence are significant. However, I wouldn't apply them literally. My house dreams concentrate on the discovery of new rooms. For years I was going up through the top of a house to find new floors above with airy rooms looking out into blue sky and the sea. My house in Magnolia has four floors and a roof above that has sweeping views. My more recent house dreams focus on cellars and finding cellars beneath cellars. I feel a correspondence to my concerns with soul, depth and going down. The dream of finding the mural beneath the wallpaper is part of this pattern of surprising discovery. The feeling of being startled by the new image, suggests its psychic importance. I'm just now seeing connections between the Magnolia house and the early fascination with the North Andover church. There seems to be a continuity of longing. The Magnolia house has many rooms, closets and windows so there always seems to be a new space to discover or rediscover. There's a large piazza around the house with lattice-walled passageways underneath.

This picture and the dream that stimulated it, are opening many doors to your emotional life.

They become shamanic doorways. We could create a novel from one painting. The only requirement seems to be a continuous opening of the heart and mind. If I stay open to the image, associations and stories emerge from one another. The Yankee man may be associated to Truman Nelson who encouraged me to stay in Essex County and work there. The dream follows the picture I drew of the man leaving the urban factory at 40. Or he could be my grandfather, or the personification of death inviting my grandfather to join him. He could be someone who lived in my house during the nineteenth century, or maybe the dream man is all of these people.

Are some pictures more evocative than others?

It appears so. The combination of art and dreams opens the deeper doors.

Why?

Because the dream leaves us with a desire to investigate it. Dreams open up our feelings and psyches. They are doorways. Art does this too. But it doesn't have the psychic autonomy of the dream since it's made by the hand. However, the interplay of hand and psyche in this experience of artistic dreamwork engages the most evocative elements from both, the tangible and intangible.

I'm intrigued by the image of the wallpaper and its function in covering up what's underneath.

At this time in my life I'm actually involved in the mundane decision about whether or not we will remove wallpaper in parts of the house and restore the original plaster walls which are now light green. The flowers in the dream were on this plaster wall. I like your reference to how the wallpaper covers. I want to look at what's underneath.

How do you respond to the dream image as it's represented here in the painting?

I see a fullness and delicacy in the flowers. They're very much alive, and blooming even though they live under the wallpaper. The man has a big nose and seems to be moving towards the flowers, perhaps to sniff them. He's not a macho guy.

None of your men are macho.

They're always combinations of male and female traits. The same applies to my female figures. The figure diving into the water looks more aggressive.

I thought he was up against a wall. I didn't see him as diving.

In the dream the man who dove into the water was daring and impulsive. The female presence was in the dream in the form of my neighbor's two young daughters. I have three children, one son and two daughters. There are three flowers. My wife was pregnant when I had the dream so this plunging into the water corresponds to my letting go of my resistance and opening to a fourth child.

The flowers suggest new life. The man looks carefree and perhaps this is an expression of your going along with it all.

Having another child is a big plunge for me. The dream might be suggesting that it's not such a big deal at all but just another immersion in life—new rooms, new discoveries, new children, new life. Family themes are the strongest forces in my life right now and it's likely that they'll unconsciously effect my imagery. I imagine that the dream and the painting also relate to the fact that I was beginning a training group that day in Finland. I was taking a new plunge, a new adventure. In taking off the wallpaper I might have been looking into the souls in the group, into my own and into what we are together. Taking off the wallpaper suggests the removal of masks. The latin word for mask is *persona*. This suggests that the person is a mask. James Hillman was just talking to me about how the Dionysian worldview perceives life as a series of masks with nothing behind them. I'm sympathetic to this idea right now. It relates to what I experience when I go from role to role in life, and from picture to picture. The painting is a mask.

Do you mean that the painting hides what's behind it?

No. The opposite happens. The painting as a mask reveals life. We express ourselves and show ourselves through the masks that we create and wear. They're not superficial or false but they're the forms that the inner life takes when it moves into the external world. I'm intrigued by the little red shoes that the man in the picture is wearing. They are part of his mask, his soul.

It seems that you like the man and want him to stand out.

I do like him, and his feet. They might be dancing shoes, flying shoes. The pants are never red, just the shoes. The man in the dream was more grounded and less frivolous.

Fig. 44



My plan was to spend this year's sabbatical with Truman and organize his personal records. During the 1980's when I was busy acting as a Dean and traveling, the telephone was our primary mode of communication. He was eager to talk but he hated the fact that we had to do it through the phone. During the past year the University of Massachusetts Press

agreed to publish *The Truman Nelson Reader* which will include selections from his novels and non-fiction books and essays, all of which are now out of print. He was sensitive and could not bear rejection. It shattered him. In response he created a philosophy of "revolutionary obtuseness" and a blindness to serious criticism since he was always placing the ideal, the cause, before himself. He couldn't go on otherwise. He was delighted by the acceptance of the reader but he was also afraid that the recognition might be an omen that his life was ending. Yet the book gave him dignity and the feeling that something was moving. After his first novel, *The Sin of the Prophet*, he was selected by the Saturday Review as the new author of the year. But not one of the books was a commercial success. Sean O'Casey, W. E. B. DuBois and many other writers admired his work but he never attracted a large following and in this respect he considered himself to be a failure. His dream was to move the masses to revolutionary action and moral renewal as Tolstoy did.

He was very sick during the past year and I was looking forward to the sabbatical as a time to focus my life on him, completely; to give him the attention that he deserved and that he wanted from me.

He died in July, two months before the beginning of my sabbatical. On the day of his death I played in a golf team match. I rarely play in golf tournaments because I don't feel that I belong in that circuit but I have a history with the sport. It's my father's game and I played as a child and then on the high school and college teams. I stopped for twelve years before beginning again for pleasure and to have something in common with my father. Truman was a father figure, a true God father, a close friend and intellectual guide. He had access to the ideas that I was after and I found the artistic purity of his life appealing. He was the opposite of my father. But they respected each other. The existence of these extremes made it clear that I was to find my own way, while embracing both.

I enjoyed the team match that I played the day of Truman's death. It began with the men of the host club standing in line in their jackets to greet us, followed by a luncheon, the match and cocktails afterward. Most of the men were investment bankers, brokers and involved with money in some way. It's always odd for me to explain what I do within groups of this kind. But I like going between the extremes. I enjoyed the day and burst into the house full of enthusiasm and stories for my wife when she told me that Truman died. The opposites crashed up against each other. What a way to be spending my day when this close, Marxist

friend died. It feels as though the psyche intends for me to operate within these extremes.

On the day before the service Vincent Ferrini and I drove to Newburyport to look at the body at the funeral home before it was cremated. We went there with Maraia Govignon who had been with Truman when he died. There was no public viewing of the body. We arrived and met the undertaker just as he was leaving. He was in a hurry, but he opened the door for us. It was a Victorian house with elegant wood trim in the interior. Truman loved Yankee ornamentations in wood. He was laid out in the middle of one of the rooms and his body was covered with a worn, purple velvet cloth. It was important for me to look at his dead body and create a death mask within my imagination.

In Finland a woman was dealing with the death of her son by painting expressively with black. I was attracted to her colors and the mood of the pictures. I felt that I had to paint Truman and the picture emerged. In contrast to the dream images that I have discussed, this image is intended to concretize and bear witness to an experience in my waking life.

Are you satisfied with it?

No. It doesn't begin to convey what I saw and felt but I needed to do it, as a ritual. It's a static image and stiff. It's not pleasing to look at, but that's the way it was. My pictures typically move spontaneously. I had to stop my movement, my flying, and look at his face. The picture does achieve this.

Why is the Finnish flag over the doorway?

Because I made the picture in Finland.

The door may be the most frequent of the recurring images in my recent paintings. It's a symbol of passage. Truman's death was not only an obvious passage for him, but a significant one for me. I'm making decisions about the course of my life. The door is always there because I'm constantly moving from one place to another. The objective is not nearly as important as the passage itself and it never stops. At that moment in Finland I was emotionally involved with Truman but also open and ready to go into the experience of the group. I once asked my father after a painful loss that we had in a tournament, how he is able to deal with

it. He replied, "I go on to the next one." My doorways express this.

The pool of water underneath Truman is an image of the life that he leaves me with. I originally made three red flags flying in the background but I covered them with black. There was too much going on and they were taking me away from the sadness and the confrontation with his death.

There's water in the first three pictures of this series.

Yes. I see that the pool image is in both of the pictures concerned with Truman (Fig's. 42 and 44). It's the same pool of water that we see in Fig's 36 through 41 in the Switzerland-Florence series. This confirms its appearance as an unconscious representation of new life. The concept of renewal was important to Truman. He said that if he had a second daughter, he would have called her Renewal.

Fig. 45



This next picture continues the theme of the black figures. They're new images for me. The red flags that I omitted from Truman's death scene are transformed into red clouds. The picture suggests going outside after looking at the body. The group is made up of men and women. I have thoughts about a group of mourners, a Jewish prayer group. The doorway is there again. It's more prominent here and there are figures on the other side. I identify with the man who's standing alone on the right side of the picture, leaning casually against the doorway with his hands in his pockets. He resembles the Italian man in Fig. 40. All of the figures are gazing in the same direction.

The theme of passage is manifesting itself consciously and unconsciously in my art and dreams. It's also occurring in my life right now. I'm waiting. I don't have many plans. I'm trying to allow the space to remain empty and I'll wait and see what appears, rather than make something happen in response to a fear of the empty space. The fear of boredom and having no work runs through my entire life. It begins with the North Andover story. I worked on this picture in the city of Helsinki while I was in between training groups, waiting for the next group to begin in Amsterdam.

Is it possible for you to identify with every person in the picture?

Yes. I think that every picture is a self-portrait. This idea fits with the painting as a mask, a persona. The animals and the women are part of my self-portrait, and not just the men. As Whitman said: "I contain multitudes." These multiple figures are not only parts of my self-portrait but they are also distinct from me. I don't possess them. They have autonomous lives. The interplay between what is me, and what is not me, is intriguing.

I don't understand what you mean when you say that all of the men and women in this picture together with the doorway, the flag and the red clouds are part of a self-portrait. I think of a self-portrait as a single image.

I understand your point of view. Perhaps most people think of self-portraiture as a representation of a person's external appearance and individuality. I'm referring to the portrayal of inner life, the psyche's self-portrait of its mutiplicity.

The picture expresses what it might be like in Finland in the “dead” of winter.

The place becomes part of the inner self-portrait. Finland in the winter is stark, grey, empty and of course extraordinarily cold. The conscious process of creating the artistic image involves experimentation with figures, color and composition. The stories that I tell come after-the-fact.

The picture looks like a direct response to your environment: You were in Finland and someone in the group was doing black figures.

I agree but I see the picture as responding to both my inner and outer environment. The emergence of a painting is also influenced by compositional and aesthetic factors. For example, the doorway has as much to do with varying the space of the surface as it does with psychological passage. It adds other dimensions to the composition. It introduces a vertical shape into a horizontal space.

Fig. 46

In this painting the solitary figure emerges from the group. The man appears to be the same fellow who was leaning against the door in the previous image. I was enjoying the colors and their relationship to the black figures. The animals that appear in this picture are part of an old theme in my art. These creatures are a combination of dogs, bulls and mountain goats. They're wild and they're running away from the figure. They contrast to his stiff, vertical posture on two legs. They're closer to the earth and they move swiftly on all fours. Once again we have the relaxed men, lingering at the doorway.

The solitary man looks like he's howling to the sky and the empty space. His mouth is open like the animals. They're the expression of his emotion. His frozen scream may be connected to how I feel about Truman's death. As Dylan Thomas said: “Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.”



The animals are life and vitality and they contrast to the less active men in the doorway. The solitary man stands between the two elements, his animal and human nature. When I was living in the west of Ireland in 1980 I discovered that my last name meant Son of a Black Dog in the Irish language. I identify with the black animals. They're expressions of my deeper, more aggressive qualities. My explorations of the animal motif, and especially the vicious dog, together with the soft and vulnerable human figure, have suggested that aggression is an intimate partner in loving.

The animals are responding to him.

He does seem closer to the animals than he is to the people in the doorway. He looks like an outsider, someone who's not a member of the

group. That's me. I avoid being part of the pack. Perhaps he has passed through the threshold in order to follow the animals and vitality."

Why do you avoid the pack?

There may be a fear that I will lose my autonomy, my critical judgment. What we see as "bad" in ourselves is typically personified as the wild, vicious and instinctive animal. This is an unfortunate distortion. Human imperfection and evil take on animal qualities. For years my art lovingly reached out toward the devilish beast. I don't want to tame the animal within me. I would rather learn more about it, respect it and give it autonomy within a natural ecology of the psyche. I honor the person who knows how to live in the wild without trespassing and agitating the animals that will turn against him only if they feel that their existence is threatened. By suppressing the animals within the psyche we threaten their existence and they instinctively turn against us. We have not learned how to share life with them.

The flag looks incongruous.

It's an expression of my desire to become part of the environment that I am in. I may have been incongruous within the Finnish landscape.

Fig. 47

The frenzied dance with the red dog is a response to the black figures. This picture came quickly while I was in Helsinki. I had to do something more spontaneous. There's an engagement with the animal and its vitality. The human and the animal face one another and interact through the dance as contrasted to the animals running away from the stiff figure. We move with the animals through dance. This picture reminds me of a painting D. H. Lawrence did of human figures dancing with a goat standing on its hind legs. There is a pattern in my art of breaking out of



defined, restricted and sometimes tight forms (Fig's. 44, 45 and 46) with a freer gesture. The doorway and the flag are in this image too, together with the people who don't seem to be watching. They're involved with themselves.

A woman in Finland said that this woman has the face of a man. She does. I didn't see this until it was brought to my attention. In this picture we have the man, the woman, the dog and the spontaneous dance in the foreground. I strongly identify with them all. The doorway and the other people are in the background. My closeness to the woman results in her becoming part of me. But the tension, differences and creative friction between us are always there, within the psyche and the external world. The same thing applies to our relationships with the animals and nature.

In your previous pictures the dogs are often attacking the women or running after the men and going for their vulnerable parts. In this picture the woman/man seems angry at the dog. She's going after it. I don't see her as dancing. She could be disciplining the dog.

There are many dimensions to these relationships. When you say that she appears to be disciplining the dog, my concept of the picture is changed. I can see what you are describing. Women in my past and present life have aggressively disciplined me. I have sometimes been the unruly dog. The image of the dance may be an avoidance of a more painful thing that's happening. The uneasiness in my life right now is connected to the female body taking on the angry and what you describe as the "ugly" male head. This image is a continuation of the themes expressed in Fig's 12 and 13.

Fig. 48

In response to the aggression of the dance and the faceless black of Fig's. 44, 45 and 46, I felt a desire to make a softer and more contemplative figure.

He looks like a monk.

I intended it to be a gentle man. Others have seen it as a woman, thus bringing this female-male theme to my attention again. I'm intrigued by the Jungian idea of anima, the female soul of the man. However, concepts of this kind are limiting. The soul contains numerous characteristics. The inner presence of the other sex is one of many qualities. I'm pleased that you see a monk. Although I was not thinking about drawing a monk I did want to express a contemplative feeling, quickly. I live like a monk when I'm traveling and doing training groups. The group environment becomes a monastery. I've never attached this metaphor to my work before. I've thought about the training groups as retreats but the image of the monk takes it much further. It's a stronger metaphor, more reli-



gious and disciplined. I'm attracted to the purity and the extremism of monastic living but I also need to be in the profane world right now. There's an interplay between inner retreat and outward movement, the precarious balance of kinesis, and the co-existence of extreme and contradictory elements.

The figure looks forlorn, melancholy.

I felt that way at the time. I was missing home.

Fig. 49

The following series of pictures was done in Amsterdam a few days after Finland. It begins with this image of the man with the red bird on his head. I was with many people there and didn't have as much time for my art. In addition to the restraints of time I had an urge to work more spontaneously. This figure is distinctly male. I made the pictures in the Centrum voor Kreatieve Therapie which is in the studio of Annette Brederode. The place is full of antique bird cages with carved birds inside. Again I'm responding to my environment. I was talking to the group about animal imagery and this bird came to me afterwards. Per-

haps it flew from one of the cages. I didn't intentionally set out to draw birds because I was in an artistic aviary. I like the way this solid man with the large neck interacts with the playful bird. They have a delicate relationship. The open cage is swinging in the background.

The picture has a poetic feeling. Does it evoke a story?

Yes. The bird is out of the cage. We have another open door. This continues the theme of liberation from the academic factory and the office. But domesticated birds go in and out of their cages. This corresponds to what was just said about the interplay between inner retreat and outer movement. The repetition of the theme deepens its significance.

Fig. 50

Now the bird is flying. The hand isn't trying to catch the bird, but gently reaches toward it, to interact and play. If you look at the face of the man, it becomes clear that he doesn't want to hurt the bird. The hand is relaxed and open. It's my hand and the same image that we discussed in Fig's. 21, 22 and 23.

This hand makes me think of my father. He has strong and aesthetically defined hands. I was always looking at them as a child. My clearest memories of his hands are situated in the context of his office when he was involved with papers and books. He worked with a gold or silver pen in his hand instead of the throw away plastic ones that I use. I remember the spotless white or blue cuffs that extended out from under the sleeves of his suit jackets. He had big wrists with thick reddish brown hair. I enjoyed watching his hands while he read the paper at the breakfast table together with the clean precision of his suits and ties. His hands also disciplined me. They were both feared and admired. The nails were cut with care and I cannot remember seeing dirt in them. He was a successful perfectionist.

I'm focused on my father right now because he has always been my model for career formation. Truman's death and the loss of my artistic father, all coming at this time of passage, intensifies the process. I cannot



deal with Truman without involving my father. I want to make something significant with my hand.

The man looks as if it might be you in your twenties.

I was starting out then, like a small bird. I'm doing it again and I feel like a beginner. I have a record, and a resume, which I look at from time to time for reassurance. Although I'm a different person than the young man in his early twenties, I feel much closer to him emotionally than I do to the man who was the Dean of a graduate division. I'm out there in the open space like a little bird. That's what I wanted when I decided to change my life and it's what I desire now. I'm attracted to the foolish looking man in the previous picture with the bird on his head. It's time

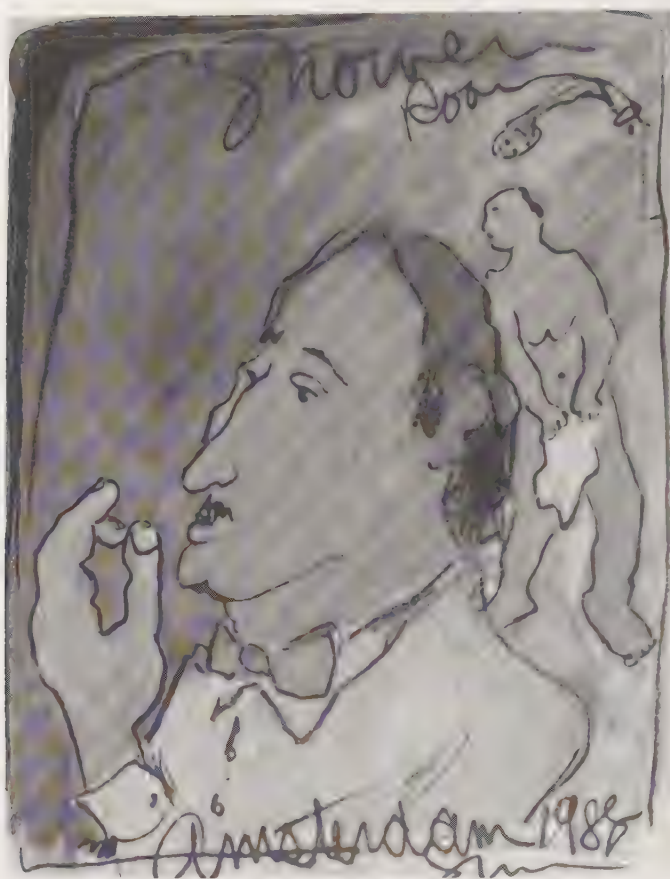
to let go of the role of institutional authority. There's no future in it and it doesn't take me deeper into my work. I did it for many years and this was an important period for me, my family and my colleagues. We created an institution that had an impact on the world. It's influence continues and it's time for someone else to do the office work. I want to return to the more fundamental and essential engagement of the psyche.

The last two pictures of the man with the bird suggest a return to poetic sensibility.

Yes. That's it. This small and humble bird is a provocative symbol. It contrasts to the birds of prey that have appeared in my art in the past. The bird is universally perceived as the embodiment of dead souls. A major part of my life has come to an end. There has been a psychic death. I cannot experience resurrection and renewal without psychic death and destruction. Spring cannot exist without the other seasons. In *The Koran* the bird is a symbol of fate. The flight of the Holy Spirit is represented by the dove which is also a symbol of simplicity, purity and peace.

Fig. 51

This next image responds to a dream that I experienced while running the training group in Amsterdam. In the dream I was at an old-fashioned club in Massachusetts. Once again we see the lifting of the hand by the man in the foreground. He has a big neck like the figure with the red bird on his head. But this man has pinched lips, a tight collar and a bow tie. There is another man in the background who's drying himself with a white towel after a shower. In the dream the man in the shower spoke and the other figure listened. He was discussing membership and said: "At this club we only want WASPS (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) and Irish Catholics with good social backgrounds." The man with the raised hand is a figure who's looking at himself and into himself. The hand is an image of action. It symbolizes what he has done and what he's going to do. The hand is open in this picture and in the



previous one. It has nothing to hold onto, nothing to withhold. It's the hand that draws the picture. The man with the raised hand is wondering how the statement of the man in the shower relates to him. It's possible that the naked man is more open. He's expressing his bias, his insecurity.

Do you identify with the man in the shower?

At first I felt that he embodies everything that I'm against. But if I open myself to the possibility of identification, I see that he expresses a conflict, or an ambivalence, that I've had within myself since I was first exposed to social elitism as a teenager, when I felt for the first time that I may not "belong" and that there may be places that would not accept me because of my geneology. That was a shock. My family didn't operate

this way and they were very much “accepted” within their milieu. As a teenager I was exposed to environments to which my family didn’t belong. I think that the dream and the picture are expressions of how I felt beginning a training group in The Netherlands. I came to them as a foreigner and as an outsider wanting to be accepted. I was preparing to work deeply with them and there are inevitable forms of resistance to me. The club embodies the theme of insiders and outsiders, those who belong and those that don’t, those who have the right qualifications and those who don’t. The WASP/Irish Catholic identification is an image of me in relation to the Dutch people that I was beginning to work with. It’s also an image of a conflict that has existed inside me for years. I didn’t create this particular problem. It’s an historical part of the environment that I was born into. But nevertheless, it’s something I have to reconcile myself with.

How does the man in the foreground relate to the men with the birds and the man who I said looked like a monk? I see different men—an artist, a monk, a WASP.

They’re all in me—the woman/man; the faceless, black outsider who’s howling with the dogs; the one who gently plays with the birds; the foolish one with the bird on his head; and now this dignified fellow with his bow tie together with the one in the shower who’s deciding who can belong and who cannot. The man in the shower protects himself, and aggrandizes himself, through his bigotry and prejudice and his rejection of other people.

The appearance of these different men together with the doors and passages appear to be manifestations of your identity right now.

Who am I? Where do I belong? I’m the man who plunges into the water as well as the man who leaves the factory and who’s somewhere between walking and flying. The man with the bow tie and big neck is grounded. He’s the member of the club. I don’t have a big neck. As a teenager I envied those who did. As an adult I like my body and no longer feel intimidated by men with bodies like burly oak trees. It took a long time for me to realize that many people preferred the slender aspen.

It's possible that my fears about being accepted have helped to shape my pattern of living "outside" and on my own.

There's no danger of being excluded if you are already on the outside.

That's the defensive reduction, and an accurate perception, but there's also an affirmation of the role of the autonomous man, who maintains his freedom. Yet I continue my involvement with the varied elements of my community life. I don't want to be denied access, but I don't completely identify with one group. A friend told me that I live in many worlds. I agree but would expand the statement by saying that I live in many worlds and don't belong to any of them. I will never forget Margaret Mead saying: "I am a citizen of the world."

Do you want to be an insider?

Yes. But I want to be inside many things.

The man in the shower looks self-conscious, as though he's covering himself with the towel.

In the dream he was big and over-weight from all of the rich food he eats and a lack of physical work. He was the type who runs the club, makes the decisions, influences policy and maintains the tradition of exclusivity. I find him more attractive in the drawing. I like his face and balding head. He's more concerned with drying himself than with covering. In spite of his doubts, the man in the foreground is solid.

He seems philosophical. He also looks like he could be a waiter with his white shirt and bow tie.

That's interesting and it's outside my previous frame of reference. He's a working man, someone who serves others and waits for them. This is what I do in my training groups. I do wait on other people. I attend to them, therapeutically. That's a great metaphor. It fits my definition of art

therapy as attending to soul and images. I try to open doors and step aside, or I watch while participants open their own doors. I don't push. When they are ready, I listen to them as a witness, a waiter.

This business of belonging or not belonging is such a sickness. But it's imbedded in us. I agree with those who say that one of our most human qualities is the need to be valued and respected by others.

You are changing roles right now and you do not know what your "position" is.

The change of role is arousing old doubts about myself. I question: Who am I and where do I belong? What am I going to do with my hands? What am I going to make? What's my work? Will I be valued in this new role. The dream of the club touches a deep vulnerability, or wound, that opens the doors of the psyche. It reveals the origins of the pattern of the insider/outsider than runs through the work that we've discussed.

But accepted and respectable roles can become cages. The old culture has to be destroyed from time to time in order for the new one to emerge. In my case I have to live for a period of time in the emptiness. It's a humble but necessary place. The depression brings depth and sensitivity. Out of it will come the energy for a new beginning. The extremes are necessary. I choose them.

March 1988

ISRAEL

Since 1980 I've traveled to Israel twice a year. The country has become a part of my life. I've internalized its conflicts and they've become mine. I gave a keynote address to a conference outside Tel Aviv, while the Israeli army was invading Lebanon. I traveled to the Golan Heights at that time and saw the troops stationed on the Syrian border and the constant traffic of men and heavy military equipment going and returning from Lebanon. During this past trip the Palestinian uprising was at its peak. My first picture was a fast sketch of Arabs throwing rocks at a soldier. In the middle of the action I made a small, red wagon, the kind that a child plays with. I was thinking about the relative tranquility of my childhood and that of my children in comparison to the life of a Palestinian child. As a small boy in many family photos I appear with my "Jordan Racer" wagon. I'm either sitting in it or pulling it. The wagon is a symbol of my childhood, security, play and my relationship to my parents. It's also a symbol of contrast to the violence that the Palestinian community is living in now. I've always had a profound interest in both Jewish and Arab culture. This interest is embodied in the city of Jerusalem which is for me a symbol of eternal and holy conflict.

Fig. 52

In 1984 I drew a picture of a dream that came to me in Israel. The drawing presents a group of long beaked birds with sharp teeth who are poking at the neck of a fallen bird, ripping it apart in a frenzy of violence. In the dream my wife was driving the Bronco that we bought six months earlier. We were in a desert and passed a group of workingmen. Against my protest she went off the trail and into a rugged area. The



workers pointed to a mythic, golden-fleeced animal at the top of a mountain. We drove up to find it dead and bleeding from the neck where it had been attacked by these birds. The animal turned into a Japanese, gypsy-like man who spoke to me in Hebrew as he healed the wounds around his neck while adjusting his jewelry and clothes. The scene shifted into an attic room.

In the dream the woman is driving. She's in control. She goes off the road, the more acceptable path, and onto a more dangerous course. I follow. I let the woman lead. She drives me. The car again appears as a means of passage and travel. The dream is evocative of the ancient mythic history of the Middle East. The workers are expressive of the present and the labor that goes on with the land. The animal began as an image of religious consciousness. The fact that it was beaten and killed is not only expressive of what has always happened in the world, but it also conveys my feelings about what takes place in groups. The man who heals himself while adjusting his jewelry is intriguing. I see him as a Japanese/gypsy/Hebrew Dionysus. He's able to resurrect himself after the conflict and perhaps he expresses the universality and the many faces of Dionysus.

I'm interested in the images of elevation—the attic,
the top of the mountain, the birds.

They may be suggesting that I have to become conscious of what's happening.

The drawing is exciting. It conveys the sense of wild attack. One bird is off to the side with an open mouth and it seems to be screaming at the other birds to stop. I also see a relationship between your dream and the control struggles within marriage.

The power issue has to be let go. The Bronco is a modern "power animal." It's also a working machine and this continues the theme of the laborers. Marital strife is itself mythic and ancient. However, I feel that this picture is closer to the struggles within groups and the archetypal forms of violence. The larger context of aggression in the Middle East reinforces what's going on within my groups. Perhaps the Japanese/gypsy/Hebrew man is expressive of this universality. The stars in the sky of the picture reinforce the archetypal and mythic dimensions of the violence.

Is there a symbolic purpose to your presentation of three stars?

I can give you some associations. The man in the dream had three ethnic qualities. My emotional response to your question focuses immediately on the historic conflict between the three major western religions within the Middle East.

The "one" sun in the sky can be seen as representing the one God that all three religions worship. Within early and recent religions the sun is a symbol of God. The Herder Lexicon says: "In the Old Testament the starry sky symbolizes the promised, numerous progeny of Abraham." Judaism, Christianity and Islam all trace their origins back to Abraham. The close placement of two of the stars on either side of the sun, suggests the fact that Jews and Christians are relatively close and Islam is kept at a distance, like the third star in my picture. As always my heart reaches toward the outsider, and the neglected tradition of Ishmael.

Coming back to my previous question, I'm still wondering if there are also connections to your marriage.

The anger that I've experienced within marriage, including feelings directed at me, isn't of the same intensity as the aggressive panic that I have felt in groups and the violent hatred that I see directed toward different cultures and religions. We might conclude that all of this has origins within family life.

Fig. 53



I did this picture in Israel during my recent trip where I was the only man with twelve women in a group. The picture conveys introspective feelings about male-female relationships. There are clear elements of self-portraiture in the man. The woman stands behind and looks like a shadow image. She's wearing the same red dress that we saw in the Switzerland-Florence series where the male and female interact comfortably with one another. They are at ease here too.

Fig. 54



Now I return to my more bizarre imagery. I decided to do a quick, spontaneous and intentionally crude line drawing. The figures just emerged. The naked woman and the fully dressed male soldier have reversed roles with the Amsterdam characters in Fig. 5. It's interesting that I described the female police officer's resemblance to an Israeli soldier and now the uniformed man clearly appears in Israel. Soldiers are everywhere in that country. This picture also shows the strong impact that Christopher, from Danvers State Hospital, had on my art, since it's clearly in his style. When I was painting, I felt tired of the self-expectation that I must always be expressing a deep, inner feeling. I just wanted to make two figures by letting the lines go and intentionally distorting the forms. It's fascinating that this expressive abandonment is generally a prerequisite for greater artistic depth which dismisses conscious effort. When I work in this way I never know what will appear. The lines create distinct figures that surprise and delight me.

I wonder what he's doing with his hand?

I intended the man and woman to be making contact with their hands.

They look eye to eye.

Each may be looking into the self. The male and female are always changing places in these pictures.

Fig. 55

This is another image where I let the lines, forms, colors and feelings go. I enjoyed making the last two pictures. The man's mouth is open here and the woman's is closed. This is the reverse of what we see in the previous image, so once again they are switching places. The woman's arms are crossed like the man's in Fig. 53.



Are they arguing?

Something is going on between them. She's adamant and he's flustered. These images express some of the emotional attributes of a relationship between a man and a woman. I could continue with many more.

Fig. 56



I want to end with this image. It's the last picture in this Israeli series.

Again I worked with the spontaneous and playful style which produced the man at his computer, the woman in her red dress and shoes, the Israeli tree, and the red wagon which the woman is pulling. The computer emerged because I was unconsciously focused on completing this book. I had to interrupt my work with the manuscript in order to travel to Israel.

There's a clear split between the working man and the beckoning side of the picture where the woman, the red wagon and nature say: "Let's play. Let's get you away from the computer that you're so involved with." I consciously wrote "Jack", my father's name, on the man's T shirt. I identify this love of work with my father. He's always busy with something and immersed in his thoughts.

The night before making this picture I watched the film *Some Like It Hot* with friends in Tel Aviv. In the movie Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis dress up as women and play in a band with Marilyn Monroe. The woman in my picture has the face of a man. We went into fits of laughter

watching the movie. I can see now that Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis are again bringing up the theme of the interplay between the man and the woman. Deep laughter comes when realities bump against one another. This interplay between the male and female can be both funny and serious.

The wagon came as an afterthought at the end of the picture. I put it in to connect with the beginning of this series and the throwing of rocks.

This is the first time that I've seen a picture of you at your computer.

Here I am. This is my life at the moment. Although the man and woman have their backs turned to one another here, they depend on each other. In the past four pictures the male and female figures are close. They're like a yin-yang symbol.

The man/woman in the red dress is sexually provocative.

The figure represents eros, the eroticism of work.

The child's wagon contrasts to the high-tech computer.

There's a playfulness to work and a seriousness in the child's play.

What have you learned from this work?

I'm glad you asked this question. I've been able to prove to myself that there are few limits on the variety of ways that we can interpret an image. There are parallels to the artist who endlessly paints his self-portrait in a way that each is distinct from the other. The same infinity applies to the varieties of subject matter that I can focus on in my art over a given period of time. I don't have to be overly concerned with inventiveness. I've discovered that my best work is done when I just keep painting a theme. Sticking with a theme allows the image to appear spontaneously through the medium, without the restrictions of conscious planning. However, this dialogue with you has shown me how interpretative concentration deepens relationships with images and makes me more aware of them.

My art and the interpretations that I give to the images express themes that I'm pre-occupied with during certain periods of my life. It's the content of my changing emotional and community life which places some limits on the infinity of artistic possibilities. For example, I've now passed through the professional role change expressed by many of the images that have been presented here. I'm now at a different place. If we were to focus on pictures that I will do over the course of the coming year, we'll see many different things. If we were to come back to the same pictures that we've looked at here in a few years, my interpretative responses will probably be quite different. I've learned that paying attention to these images, and giving them the opportunity to help me, enables me to let them go and pass to the next step.

However, we did see that there are recurring themes in your art.

Yes. That discovery is as important as the realization that things are always changing. Continuity and flux complement one another. Art contains both. Again, if it weren't for the therapeutic attentiveness of the art therapy process I wouldn't give myself the time to look into the existence of these recurring forms and themes. I expect to stay involved with a continuing dialogue between the man and the woman, love and aggression, eros and labor, vulnerability and relaxation, the human and the animal, and other patterns that we saw running through my art and dreams.

As we discussed, the images there were many points when you were surprised by what you saw. You described how emotions and themes were expressed unconsciously in the pictures.

The interpretative dialogue is unique to the art therapy discipline. It helps me to see more and inspires me to create art. The latter point may be the most important thing that I've learned. My discovery reverses the frequent fear that artists have about becoming conscious of the origins of their expression. Attentiveness to the image by no means suggests final explanations. I've found that the interpretative dialogue deepens the mystery. As I said at the beginning of this book, a depth psychology of art can't exist without it.

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