A Brief Introduction to Alchemy

(from a talk given at The Dunedin Spiritualist Centre on 24th June 2001)

"A gardener has to have a knowledge of the unseen root of the tree before he can be expected to give his concentrated effort to watering its root so that the whole tree remains fresh and green."
- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi from the introduction of "Transcendental Meditation"

"Of the Means of Arriving at the Secret
The requirements necessary in order to arrive at this Secret, are: the knowledge of Nature and of one's self. One may not understand the first perfectly, or even the second, without the aid of Alchemy. The love of wisdom, the horror of crime, and of falsehood, … the association of the wise, the invocation of the Holy Spirit; not to add secret to secret, to attach one's self only to one thing (because God and Nature delight in unity and simplicity), such are the conditions necessary for obtaining the divine revelation. Man being the epitome of all Nature, must learn to know himself as the summary, the miniature of Nature. By his spiritual part he is allied to all immortal creatures, and by his material part, to all that which is transient in the Universe."
- Antoine-Joseph Pernety, who was amongst other things a Benedictine Monk, and Librarian of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.

This talk is a brief introduction to the subject of alchemy. The subject has many branches, beliefs, and whole set of terminology specific to it, which make it difficult to discuss with others who do not know the words and the associated meanings. I have attempted to keep this talk free of jargon as much as possible, and discuss and illustrate a few points associated with alchemy and its history.

Often when I mention in conversation that I am interested in Alchemy there are two common responses I get. Sometimes it is, "Alchemy? What is that?" Other times it is, "oh, that's about turning lead into gold, right?"

The first response is not too surprising in modern times, when the age of science claims to have superseded the older, and often more spiritual arts and sciences. The second response is partly correct, and is generally the way most people, who have heard the words alchemy or alchemists, have come to understand it - the quest to find a method of turning lead into gold. However, that is only a small part of what alchemists understood alchemy to be.

The transformation of lead into gold was seen as analogous to spiritual progress, of the transformation of that which is base, or common, into that which is spiritual, pure, refined, and incorruptible. The symbolism of gold has always been that of incorruptibility, due to the properties of the precious metal. To the alchemists, all other metals are simply metals, which had not yet reached their full ripeness naturally to become gold. On the spiritual side, we, as common people, have not yet achieved our full ripeness of spiritual attainment and perfection.

Another way of viewing alchemy, in less specific terms, is the increase in the rate of vibration. I have heard several of the clairvoyants mention that spirit is very high vibration, and that the clairvoyant raises their vibration to access spirit. In alchemy it is considered that the more 'perfected' and 'purified' a substance is, the higher its rate of vibration.

So to the alchemist The Great Work, and creation of the Philosopher's Stone is not simply about turning lead into gold, or production of the Elixir of Life to gain immortality. The properties of the Philosopher's Stone, of transforming a base metal into Gold, and the creation of the Elixir of Life to extend one's natural life were seen as a touchstone, indicating that the alchemist had indeed learnt much of the secrets of Nature. It is often said that to be able to create the Philosopher's Stone an alchemist had to have already succeeded in the 'inner work' of spiritual attainment.

The reading I gave earlier from Pernety gives a good indication of the idea that one needs to know and understand oneself, and alchemy was seen by the alchemist as the best

method for achieving this, in part because of the long standing traditions from cultures ranging from Egypt and Greece to India and China teaching similar principles, and also because through working in a laboratory, principles of nature could be discovered and processes replicated to offer physical proof of concept.

Pernety writes: *"The long work is always Nature's; she works simply, by degrees, and always by the same means to produce the same result. The work of Art is shorter; it outstrips Nature. The work of God is done in an instant. Alchemy, properly speaking, is an operation of Nature, aided by Art. It places in our hands the Key of Natural Magic, or Physics."*

The actual origins of alchemy are, as with most spiritual sciences and arts, obscured by the mists of time. Many consider that the word Alchemy derives from the ancient name of Egypt, Khem, thus pertaining to the art of Egypt, while others suggest the word is Greek in origin. Others believe the origins are to be found in China, before finding there way to Greece and the Middle East or from India and the Vedic science being passed on to the Greeks and Egyptians. Regardless of where it originated, it can be seen to be of very ancient origin, well over 2,000 years old.

In modern times, with the advent of materialism and science based purely on empirical evidence, Alchemy has often been relegated to the position in history of being the forerunner of modern chemistry. While it is likely that modern chemistry indeed grew out of alchemical beginnings, that misses the whole spiritual side of Alchemy. It is true that some notable people in the early days of modern science where also alchemists. Two alchemists many people may have heard of are Paracelsus, considered by many to be the father of modern medicine, and Isaac Newton the father of modern physics.

Others in recent times have taken notice of the spiritual side of alchemy, often arguing that there never was a chemical tradition within alchemy, and that it was simply a spiritual science, which used allegories and metaphors of chemical processes to teach about the unseen processes of spiritual development. One of the first to recognise the spiritual aspects of the alchemical writings was Carl Jung, the German psychologist and founder of an entire system of psychoanalysis. Jung recognised that much of what the alchemists referred to corresponded with human psychology and the processes of inner growth and transformation.

Paul Foster Case, founder of the Builders of the Adytum (BOTA), famous for his teachings centred around the tarot cards, was another promoter of Alchemy as a purely spiritual science, and in some of his writings clearly states that no laboratory tradition ever existed.

Another modern author who originally saw alchemy as purely spiritual and psychological teachings was Israel Regardie, author of many books on Qabala and magic and famous for his involvement with The Golden Dawn. He wrote a book called "The Philosopher's Stone", which offers commentary and analysis of several well-known alchemical writings, viewing them from a psychological perspective. After later learning of the laboratory practices and in fact learning such procedures himself he wrote that he no longer held the view that it was solely a spiritual practice, but one which had a firm basis in natural laws and demonstrable processes.

The basic processes of alchemy are often summed up with the Latin words "Solve et Coagula". The processes have three stages, the first, separation, the second, purification, and the third, re-combination. It is this process which has often been likened to the spiritual or psychological processes; of separation, or discovering the various facets of oneself; of purification, or overcoming those areas of our lives which seek to drag us down and/or inhibit our growth; and finally of the recombination, or the creation of a unified self, one that is in balance, in harmony, and in unity with all parts of itself.

Something which modern science often uses to demonstrate that the alchemists had little understanding of actual chemistry is the use of the words salt, sulphur and mercury, along with the alchemical belief of the four elements, earth, water, air and fire. However, it was

not that alchemists believed all matter to be comprised of these substances, rather that these physical substances displayed the properties of the subtle, spiritual, elements.

Salt, Sulphur and Mercury are called the Three Principles. All matter can be divided, via alchemical processes, into these three things. Salt, was not seen as the common salt, but as the body of a substance. After the sulphur and mercury had been extracted, the remaining material could be burned (a process of purification) and reduced to ash, and further to a very fine powder and was therefore the salt. Sulphur is the oily fraction that can be extracted from substances; in the case of plants it is the essential oil. Mercury is the most volatile of the principles, and generally is extracted via the process of distillation (being the 'Spirit' of the matter).

In the spiritual processes, salt is often seen as the physical body, with the sulphur and mercury being aspects of the spiritual side of us, which reside within the body.

The Four Elements spoken of by the alchemists were not the common substances, but again subtle, spiritual, forces that everything is comprised of. This view is a more holistic approach, looking at things as a whole, rather than the more modern reductionist approach of trying to break everything down to its smallest components.

Earth has the properties of dryness and coldness; Water of wetness and coldness; Air of wetness and heat; and Fire the properties of heat and dryness. It was thus considered that all things comprised of these components or conditions in varying amounts.

It therefore can be seen that alchemy was far more than either proto-chemistry or allegory for spiritual progress. It was a world view aimed at understanding both the world around us, and world within us, and the correspondences between the two worlds.

I would just like to finish off with a couple more quotes from Pernety which further give an insight into the concepts of alchemy as it relates to spiritual growth:

"Life is the harmonious result of the union of Matter with Form, which constitutes the perfection of the individual. Death is the appointed limit where the disunion and separation of Form from Matter takes place."

"Sciences are acquired only by study, by meditation, and not by dispute. Learn a little at a time; repeat often the same study; the mind can do all when concentrated upon one sole object, but nothing when trying to embrace too many."

References:

An Alchemical Treatise on The Great Art, by Antoine-Joseph Pernety ([@amazon](#))
The Hermetic Tradition by Julius Evola ([@amazon.com](#))

An Automatic Writing on Consciousness

(received on 1st June 2001)

Looking back at the past tells us how we got to where we are. You have arrived was certain awareness, deception and set of tools, and it is with these that we interact with the present to build the future. The present a sum total collection of accumulated experience, derived from actions, reactions and interactions. As the staging point from which we set off on the next part of a journey. Through spiritual growth and awareness our ability to better deal situations as they arise increases. It is correct that we create our own destiny, and our day-to-day lives and interactions, but mostly (at our current level of awareness) our knowledge of what the future holds is obscured from the conscious mind (cf. occultism, much of what is spiritual is obscured). The reason for this is to allow the experiencer to experience. That initially is the function and reason for the separation of the parts of the mind. This is the

microcosmic version of the concept of God experiencing itself via the "creation" of the universe. This is necessary to facilitate growth in the evolutionary sense as knowledge by itself is not experience of sensations and feelings. Future levels of consciousness extrapolate experiences down to a core level and combined with knowledge serve to create synthesis of what is currently seen as divided. It is correct to perceive a division of mind although fundamentally important to understand that this is how the conscious mind views itself as disconnected from the unconscious, much as man tends to view himself as separate from nature. Nature does not view man as separate from it, nor does it particularly perceive itself, in the usual sense of self awareness. Nature is (nature is a state of being). The conscious mind is what provides self-awareness (cf. "Lucifer" rebellion). The unconscious by nature, is a state of being. In a sense the conscious mind is a mirror to reflect back that state of being via a process of doing. This is necessary to achieve a full reintegration of rearranged concepts and ideas into more refined patterns, much in the way crystallisation occurs. This is the process of evolution, an inner-alchemy of purification and recombination. The recombination of the being mind on the doing mind will occur once sufficient permutations of experiencing states of being have occurred. This is both through experience of physical and spiritual states of being. The process can be completed one lifetime if sufficient experiences can be achieved via communication between the unconscious and conscious minds (i.e. undertaking various esoteric activities). Specific activities to help expediate the process include sensory deprivation, mind control, breathing exercises, and meditation. Esoteric practices have to do with experiencing the unconscious, while mundane life builds increasing self awareness of the physical and conscious self. The single most important interaction of mind is dreaming and all forms of this phenomena (sleeping, waking, visualisation, passive, active). Lucid dreams approximate an advanced state of awareness where the self-aware consciousness is intimately active with the unconscious.

Some thoughts on Esoteric Training

(in progress)

Introduction

I have been consciously involved in following my spiritual path, in one form or another, for the past 16 years. Over that time my thoughts, expectations, and understanding has changed considerably. I therefore do not consider that my ideas and beliefs on esoteric training will remain the same over the next however many years remain in his lifetime. What I present here are my current thoughts, feelings, beliefs and insights on this subject. As such a do not present them as the only "correct" way. My intention is to provide some ideas for consideration, for both newcomers to spiritual and esoteric training, as well as those have been involved for a long time who are in search of other people's ideas and experiences.

In this document I use the words esoteric, spiritual, and magical somewhat interchangeably. While all these words have slightly different meanings, and various systems or ideologies may consider these words mutually exclusive, what I am attempting to do is present some thoughts on, and topics and concepts wealth of to anyone who has embarked on any form of spiritual quest for self growth.

This is the first draft of this document and my intention is to revise and updated over time.

Don't Mistake the Map for the Territory

Without a doubt things exist. As part of the process of being in relationship to self and others, people and groups have developed various methods of communicating ideas and concepts. If we want to explain to someone how to get from one location to another we may draw them a map. Our map may contain various symbols and words in order to communicate our ideas. Different maps could be drawn, perhaps by different people, to convey different information relevant to the intent or purpose of the map. Consider as an example the map of a country. The basic map may just be the shape of the country, perhaps in relation to other countries, to help us locate it. We may draw more advanced maps, would different purposes, overlaying other information upon the shape of the map. This may include roads, buildings, terrain, mineral deposits, weather conditions. We could perhaps even create a fully three-dimensional map including all this additional information. This would help communicate ideas, beliefs, and concepts about this country. However the map is not the territory.

There exist many magical and spiritual systems, and many different maps of consciousness. They all provide a means of describing and communicating abstract concepts. They are the map, and not the territory. Some may feel right for us, while others feel very foreign. There may be overlaps as well as differences in what they describe. It is even possible that some may more closely represent the actual nature of the nonphysical realms. What is important, however, is that they can give us something tangible to work with and communicate our ideas and understandings with others.

I believe it is useful to have an understanding of various systems and maps of consciousness. By having multiple maps we can compare the similarities and differences. By noting the similarities between different systems, I believe that we can begin to see patterns of ideas and concepts that strongly approximate the nature of the nonphysical realms. The differences may be things that are irrelevant, or things overlooked by one system or map of consciousness.

It is a good idea to develop a good understanding of one system, before moving on to learning others. Learning multiple systems is not an academic pursuit. It is necessary to fully immerse oneself in the system to develop the necessary understanding. Otherwise, one could go to the library and sit and go through a stack of books, making lists and diagrams to compare. This in itself is not wrong or bad, but deep understanding cannot be attained this way. I do not believe that esoteric training is an academic pursuit. Once a reasonable understanding of one system has been attained, then more can be gained by exploring other systems. It will then be possible to begin spotting the similarities and differences between the systems, and getting a feel (on an energetic level) for the nature of the nonphysical realms.

Perhaps now is a good time to explain a little of what I mean by maps of consciousness, and nonphysical realms, for those who are not familiar with esoteric training.

Nonphysical realms:

Although in the greater scheme of things everything is connected in part of a continuum, there is generally seen a divide between what is physical and nonphysical. The physical world is that which we live in as incarnate human beings. In general we can see, hear, smell, taste, and touch the things within the physical world. We can quantify them, and they tend to have a static shape, exist in a more or less rational form. They are governed by more or less dependable physical laws. For instance it is reasonably safe for us to assume that as the sun rose in the East and set in the West today, it will also rise in the East and sit in the West tomorrow. We also know that various cycles and patterns exist within our physical world. If it is the middle of summer today, and the tree outside our window is covered in leaves, we can be fairly certain that tomorrow will not be the middle of winter and that the outside our window completely bare.

The nonphysical realms are not governed by the same laws as the physical realms. Many systems suggest that the nonphysical realms contain the patterns which give form to the physical realms. Many different names, levels, layers, and classifications exist for the nonphysical realms. A common term for the nonphysical realms is astral plane. Some groups, especially various branches of modern psychology consider the nonphysical realms to be the unconscious or subconscious various of the mind, perhaps even the collective unconscious. Our understanding of the nonphysical realms is generally via symbolism, sensations, and feelings. It is the realm of dreams and imagination, where what we "see" as a symbolic representation of an idea of concept. Within this realm, a free "positive" the same location at various times, things may appear very different. It may be night in this realm, while daytime in the physical world. Today it may be summer here, and tomorrow the middle of winter. The same tree which today had leaves, may be barren and leafless tomorrow. The tree itself may be an oak today, and a pine tomorrow. All these things are symbolic to us, the actual meaning behind these things generally being of the personal nature, although some symbols maybe cultural, cross-cultural, and otherwise shared within the collective unconscious.

Maps of consciousness:

The simplest map of consciousness may be the division of the conscious and unconscious minds. In simple terms we are conscious when we are awake and unconscious when we are asleep.

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Topics to be covered:
- Don't mistake the map for the Territory-thoughts on different systems, Qabala, modern psychology e.g. Jung, Assagioli, Septenary.
- Old consciousness, evolution, new consciousness-nothing is that.
- Modern psychotherapy as a magical system.
- Various spiritual groups, shallow, academic, political.
- Know thyself-ancient Greek. Personal symbolism over groups/classical symbolism.
- The importance of emotions and feelings. Energies. An intuitive path. Intuition over academic.
- Thoughts on the evolution of a magical order, centred around a "leader". Top-down or bottom-up approach, e.g. system is growing and developed from humble beginnings, as opposed to being conceived as an overall system.
- Beyond Good and Evil. Overcoming limitations of duality. Synthesis.
- Joining esoteric or spiritual groups.
- What to look for in a teacher.
- Finding a teacher - ask. When a student is ready, a teacher will appear.
- "Forms", living roles, insight roles.
- Facades, manufactured reality. Revisionism. My experience with the Guild.
- Beware of self-delusion, self-deception

Sub-personalities – A Personal Perspective

Introduction

The following is based on a talk I gave as part of my 1st Years Psychosynthesis course on 30th October 2002. When I was told we had to pick a topic to talk on this is the first one that sprung to mind, so I decided it would probably be a good one for me to choose to talk on – although I acknowledge that all topics we have covered this year are important and could have been equally beneficial for me to write a talk on.

Over the time I've spent thinking about what things I would write about sub-personalities I became aware of some things that make this particular topic highly relevant for me. It has to do with the relationship between public speaking –giving speeches – and some of my own sub-personalities. I will therefore give a little of the background here, before I talk about what sub-personalities actually are, as I currently understand them.

When I was at high school and we had to give a speech to the class as part of the English curriculum, I would take time off school, "sick", and completely avoid giving the speech. On the occasions where the teacher would still make me give a speech I would look down at my notes, read rapidly in monotone, and basically block out awareness of the other people in the class.

Later in life, mid twenties to now, I have had occasion to speak publicly again. I found it a lot easier, and I did not feel the need to avoid the situations – most likely because I chose to be involved in them rather than "forced" into them. In one situation I even talked for about 10 minutes without any prepared notes – although I did not find this easy at all. While talking though, I noticed something about changes within myself. I was easily able to talk, in a nice loud voice (and be told afterwards that I had a good voice for public speaking), but internally, while talking, I was still not very present. I still lost awareness of the people listening, and what I found worst was that I was very aware that I was just talking, generally reading from a prepared script, and that I was virtually unable to think during this time – so it was a very "mechanical" process of just talking, rather than being relaxed and present.

All of you most likely recognise from what I have just said, there are the two polar opposites, which I now recognise as being sub-personalities, which are coming into play when I talk in front of people. The one which chooses to run and avoid the situation, the other which is able to talk, but still shuts off from the external world and means I do not stay present within the Self while talking.

I therefore see that tonight gives me my first real opportunity to see how well I go with talking and staying present.

* * *

I will first talk about how sub-personalities form and their function within the personality, before discussing how in Psychosynthesis we work to re-integrate them back into the Self.

How sub-personalities form

Rather than our personality being one complete and inseparable "entity", it is in fact comprised of a multitude of smaller parts, which we refer to as sub-personalities. Each of these smaller parts of the overall personality has a life of it's own, and it's own agenda.

In childhood we develop various beliefs about life as we experience it, and from this we develop coping strategies and mechanisms for getting our needs met. These strategies revolve around manipulating others, in order to meet our needs, which is necessary and appropriate for a baby or young child, as we don't yet have the means to meet our own needs. It is from these beliefs and coping mechanisms that sub-personalities form.

A sub-personality has a life of its own and a very rigid belief structure about how it can get what it needs based on the experiences of the past. Over time this belief structure becomes even more fixed and rigid. As they form very early in our development they are all very childlike in their outlook, only concerned with meeting their needs, through manipulation. They each have their own agenda, and ultimately they view what they are doing as being in the best interest of the Self. However, being based purely on past experience, and also formed at a stage where a person is actually dependant on others to meet their needs they tend to be very limiting, and not open to the change that leads to immense personal growth.

A sub-personality is not strong enough to subvert the entire personality, although in extreme cases if there is trauma involved this can lead to psychosis and "split personality" –

also known as "multiple personality disorder syndrome". Probably the most well known case of this multiple personality disorder is the woman known as "Sybil", some of you may have seen the movie or read the book about this case.

A Sub-personality works via an agenda of trying to convince the Self that the sub-personality's beliefs are correct, and getting the Self to carry out its behaviours (via an Act of Will).

Sub-personalities always come in pairs. There is always a polar opposite to a sub-personality, although it may be so weak that it is not noticed, and even when work is first done on sub-personalities it may be difficult to find. However, knowing that there is a polar opposite makes it easy to understand what the traits of the weaker sub-personality are likely to be.

It is due to this imbalance between the polar opposite sub-personalities that issues arise. The dominant one will take over at times when it believes it is needed (i.e. for survival), or at times it is in a situation where is recognises it can meet it's needs. This can cause a conflict within the personality, where the weaker, polar opposite sub-personality also begins to try and achieve it's diametrically opposed agenda. A pendulum type effect results, with each sub-personality vying for attention. It can easily be pictured in a classic type view of a devil on one shoulder, and an angel on the other, each whispering into an ear, telling the Self what needs to be done. Confusion results. This is the stage that sub-personalities are dysfunctional, being unbalanced. Often this can lead to an inability to actually achieve anything, where the mind is clouded with the opposing views of each of the sub-personalities, and we can end up "stuck" not knowing which actions are appropriate for us. This is, however, due mainly to the thinking process, where we can see both sides of the argument, both have some merit, but ultimately neither stands out as the thing that must be done for our happiness, welfare and survival. It is the reason why a creative solution must be found, and "And", which allows us to meet the needs of both sub-personalities to some degree, and start off a transformation process to integrate and synthesis the sub-personalities.

Stages of synthesising sub-personalities

There are five stages in the process of synthesising sub-personalities.

The first stage of the process is recognition. First we must recognise that we have sub-personalities, and then recognise each sub-personality we are to deal with. Without recognition, no work with sub-personalities (or other areas of our Self growth) is possible. Next is acceptance. We must accept the sub-personality for what it is, and understand what it's needs are, and how it was formed. Often we may be afraid or want to reject sub-personalities that have behaviours, which we find repulsive (either to the Self, or to other sub-personalities).

Co-operation is the third stage. We need to gain the co-operation of the sub-personalities involved, no just the dominant one, but also the suppressed one. The dominant one has to co-operate to allow the qualities of the suppressed sub-personality to come through, and for this one to gain some strength and power.

Integration is the fourth stage. It is here that the two polar opposite sub-personalities begin to change and integrate into their "And", into a new sub-personality which embodies qualities of both the sub-personalities, and can better meet the needs of the Self.

These stages may happen "out of order", that is we may get some co-operation and then a little integration before we find more acceptance of the sub-personalities – and this may spark of more recognition, perhaps about the true beliefs or needs of the sub-personalities, or even recognition of other sub-personalities that where closely tied to the initial sub-personalities, in a conglomerate.

The final stage of the process is the synthesis of the sub-personalities back into the Self. Once this has happened the sub-personalities cease to be in the form that they once were, but are now a healthy part of the growing Self.

This is a long process that will happen over time, and changes in our own behaviours will occur, and also be mirrored in our external world.

Personal Experiences

While I started working with sub-personalities last year, during my sessions with a Psychosynthesis 'therapist', it has been this year, in the past couple of months, that I believe my greatest breakthroughs have happened so far.

In a guided session I became aware that one of the main sub-personalities influencing my behaviour was a rebel sub-personality. Originally I had thought it was just a sub I likened to "Indiana Jones", an adventurer. However, in the session it became obvious that The Rebel was doing things for rebellions sake only, and it didn't always have my best interests at heart (although it may have believed so). I was also concerned as I was aware that some of the behaviours didn't really have respect for boundaries, especially other people's boundaries. The Rebel is more concerned with just rebelling, and also seeing how far things can go, really pushing the limits, but without really taking in to account my best interests, or the best interests of other people who may be involved. An example of this was that if I found myself in a situation, even if I didn't particularly want to be there, I found myself staying, just to "see what would happen". So staying with this sub I was not honouring my feelings.

I felt really positive after this session, and think I made the mistake of thinking now that I had a good awareness of this sub, and it's polar opposite, The Moralist, that a lot of situations in my life would change. I still believe that a big change has come over me since I started the integration of these two sub-personalities. The "And" for them seems very positive, and I currently refer to it as "freedom", although originally considered that it was The Adventurer sub, as being adventurous was one of it's main qualities. It is also self-checking towards what is "right" / "wrong" and acts more towards what is appropriate for me in a situation, while still being able to push boundaries – which brings about growth.

I currently believe the "trap" for me was not being aware of the extent to which this sub worked in a conglomerate with other sub-personalities.

My last guided session turned up a lot of stuff for me, which has made me reflect on many aspects of my life. What came up for me was that I have a sub-personality that believes it can only meet its needs via covert behaviours, being sneaky. This made sense in the context of the session. Over the past week I have become aware as to just what extent this has been the case in my life, meeting needs covertly, and being sneaky. To a degree I would say it has left me a little stunned. I have been very aware when I'm in situation where my needs are being met covertly, not completely openly and honest.

Not having realised that there were both The Rebel and also the Covert sub-personalities working in a conglomerate I believe I slipped into a trap, but now the recognition of this has allowed me to see why my behaviours were still the same, and I felt that something still wasn't quite right.

With this "Covert" sub-personality I am really just at the stages of recognition and acceptance. I am constantly recognising when this sub is coming into play, but I have not yet started work on looking at its polar opposite and gaining their co-operation before starting integration. This is my next short-term goal as far as sub-personality work goes, as it is having a major effect on my life and relationships, and the type of people I am attracting into my life.

I am finding it somewhat difficult to really "accept" how destructive and limiting this sub-personality is for me. I am still involved in a relationship which is "covert" and relies on secrecy, and that is another situation I need to find a creative "And" for – ultimately I

recognise it will bring an end to the relationship, but I need to change things within myself so I don't feel that I am just cutting off from the relationship and running away from it, as I have tended to do in the past. I don't believe that that is actually dealing with the situation, as I find I am still attracting the same types of people and situations into my life.

An Introduction to Tattvas

Introductory Note: *The following is adapted from a paper written for a grade within a magical Order that I was once involved in. I have left some of the references to using Golden Dawn techniques of Banishing Rituals and God Names in, generally in parentheses or brackets, although I no longer believe that the paranoia and sterility of 'Western Tradition' magic is necessary or desirable. Any work within one's sub-conscious is real and potentially dangerous. It is possible to spark off deeply repressed memories and traumas, which at the extreme can lead to a serious life crisis. Tattva work is no different, and many tales abound warning against becoming obsessed with one particular Tattva (element), which may lead to a state of imbalance. I highly recommend that anyone wanting to explore the Tattvas at very least be familiar with the concepts of 'active imagination', 'visualisation', or 'pathworking'. It is a good idea to record details of all sessions in a journal or diary, for later reference.*

Tattvas are a way of directly "experiencing" the 5 alchemical elements, so are therefore the logical progression of the previous elemental grade where the elements were first discussed and symbolic ways of working with them described. The student is now taught a method of directly learning the "theoretical" structure of the elemental worlds.

A Brief History of the Tattvas

There are six main schools of thought on Tattvic philosophy. The original Tattva system was developed by the Indian Kapila as part of his Sankhya philosophy. This was about 700BCE, but the roots of Tattvic philosophy go back to at least 2000BCE. Kapila's Sankhya philosophy system divides the universe into five basic Tattvic shapes, which when countercharged become 25 Tattvas.

The word Tattva is comprised of two words, "Tat" (meaning "that") and "Tvam" (meaning "thou"). Tattva basicially means "thatness", that is, the real being of anything. It is generally translated as meaning "quality". Further, "Tat" represents the Godhead and "Tvam" the individual, giving a meaning (which fits in well with Hermetic Philosophy) of "That (which is the Universe) art thou." This is similar to the Hermetic axiom of "As above, so below", and is directly related to the concepts of the Macrocosm ("Tat", Godhead) and Microcosm ("Tvam", individual).

The Hatha Yoga School of Tattvic Philosophy links the energy found in breathing (Prana) with the cycle of the five Tattvas. The eighth chapter of the "Shivagama" is "The Science of Breath and the Philosophy of the Tattvas." It is written within this work that "The Universe came out of the Tattvas; it goes on by the instrumentality of the Tattvas; it disappears into the Tattvas; by the Tattvas is known the nature of the Universe."

The Tattvas are the five modifications of the Great Breath, Prana, which is described as the life principle of the Universe (macrocosm) and man (microcosm). Prana consists of an ocean of the five Tattvas.

The Buddhist texts of Indian Tantra describe 7 energy centres (chakras) in connection with the five Tattvas. This finds its ultimate refinement in the Tibetan Buddhist fivefold chakra system, which is part of their fivefold division of esoteric symbolism for categorising the Universe. The Tattvas correspond to the five lower chakras in the Indian scheme of energy centres, and to all five psychic centres of the Tibetan chakra scheme.

H.P. Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, based in Adyar, India, derived the bulk of their knowledge on Tattvas from Rama Prasad, who taught the Tattvic philosophy of the Hatha

Yoga School. The Theosophists combined these teachings with those of the Esoteric Tibetan Buddhist tradition. On top of this they conjectured two more Tattvas, to make a total of seven, which allowed them to directly match the Tattvas to there sevenfold system, in particular to the seven Chakras.

The Tattvas they added were Adi, which is egg shaped, and Anupadaka, which is a crescent moon containing a radiant white sun.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn incorporated the Theosophical Tattva system, however discarding the sixth and seventh conjectured Tattvas, The Golden Dawn utilised Kapila's Sankhya Tattva system of 25 countercharges. This was the only Eastern concept that the Golden Dawn introduced into their system. It was perhaps influenced by the mention of Tattvas in Bulwer-Lytton's novel Zanoni, which was very likely the first mention of Tattvas in Western literature. In Zanoni the poisoning of the main character was neutralised by the magical visualisation of the Apas Tattva.

The Golden Dawn system parallels the five Tattvas to the Western Doctrine of the 5 elements, the four primary elements and quintessence.

The Tattvic Philosophy in Western Tradition

The Tattvas are the astral form of the Elements, upon which the Physical elements are based. The process of how the Tattvic elements become manifest is a complex process, which will be described briefly below.

From the Sun, a 'solar wind' constantly streams forth. It is a partially electro-magnetic nitrous gas, which is very subtle and non-physical in nature. This is the Prana (Life Matter) of the Eastern Mysteries. The Earth's magnetic field captures this incorporeal nitre as the wind streams past our planet. This unmanifest substance circulates around the planet in a series of fivefold waves, each of which comprises five sub-waves. These waves are constantly rising and falling. It becomes more and more physical as it passes through our atmosphere. A salt is formed as this nitre passes through water vapour. This is "a most subtle virgin earth," the Prima Materia of the alchemists.

The Tattva flows start at sunrise and flow from Spirit, to Air, to Fire, to Water, to Earth. Each sub-Tattva takes four minutes and 48 seconds to transit a given spot, meaning it takes a total of 24 minutes for each main Tattva. Thus it takes a total of two hours for a primary flow of all five Tattvas to transit. The Earth's electromagnetic field and ley lines are vitalised by these currents.

(Note: There are different schools of thought as to the timing of the Tattva flows. This is just one school of thought and was used by the Golden Dawn system.)

All five Tattvas are considered to be "ethers." The atoms of the ether bring the atoms of the atmosphere into the necessary state of vibration for us to perceive it. Each of the Tattvic ethers is related to one of the five senses. Rama Prasad gives the example that Light is the manifestation of the Tejas Tattva (the luminiferous ether) within the atmosphere, that is, matter is brought into the correct visual vibration for us to perceive it.

In "Nature's Finer Forces" Tattvas are defined as the following: a mode of motion; the central impulse, which keeps matter in a certain vibratory state; a distinct form of vibration. Also, "every form and every motion is a manifestation of these Tattvas singly or in conjunction."

The first statement reflects what hermetic science states of the nature of the alchemical processes, that is, "to raise the vibrations of matter" and thus bring it into the condition of harmony, Quintessence. Modern Physics concurs with this ancient knowledge that all matter is energy at various vibratory rates.

The second statement, that all matter and motion is a manifestation of the Tattvas is a direct parallel with the Western Doctrine of Elements, which also asserts that all matter is comprised of varying proportions of the subtle elements.

The other direct parallel between the Eastern and Western systems is that Tattvic philosophy asserts that Akasha is the "most important" Tattva. Akasha is what Western Tradition calls Spirit, or Quintessence, and like the four base elements all deriving from Spirit, "it is out of Akasha that every form comes, and it is in Akasha that every form lives." The Western Tradition's Doctrine of Elements is exemplified by the Enochian system of magick. Compared with the Tattvas, the Enochian system has been more intellectualised. This seems only natural in that (in psychological terms) the Western tradition is one of "thinking" and the Eastern tradition is one of "feeling."

Modern Enochian magickians have proposed a direct correlation between the Elements and the Forces of modern science. This is perhaps very relevant to the Tattvas, in that as "ethers" they are subtle and intangible, something that gives form to matter. Akasha/Spirit is correlated to the hypothesised "Superforce" of the Grand Unified Field theory of Relativity. Air and Fire are in juxtaposition in Enochian, compared to the Vayu and Tejas of Tattvic Philosophy, but are equated to the weak and strong nuclear forces of physics. Water/Apas is linked to electromagnetism and Earth/Prithivi is linked to Gravity.

Each of the Tattvas has a corresponding symbol and colour, which can be considered an atomic form of the element when it is viewed clairvoyantly. These symbols differ from the Western Tradition symbols and colour attributions, and also vary slightly between the various Tattvic philosophies. Each of the Tattvas and their attributes will be described separately below.

Akasha

The Akasha Tattva is associated with the Spirit of Western Tradition and is the sonoriferous ether (sound). It is represented by some as a black or indigo Vesica Piscis, which is almond shaped. It represents the womb of the Universal Mother. In other versions, such as the Golden Dawn tradition, Akasha is symbolised by an oval or egg shape. Akasha is "every colour" or "clear." Black can also be seen as the absorption of all other colours, and its "flashing" (complimentary) colour is luminous.

The quote given before, that Akasha is the most important Tatva, in that all forms come from and live in it, is of particular importance. The Akasha Tattva, when used as a "doorway" for scrying can allow one to scan for information within what Theosophists have termed the Akashic Record. The Akashic record contains, as the quote states, all forms. It could be compared with the "collective unconscious" of Jungian psychology. It contains all memories of human experience, but beyond it contains all future "history" in seed form.

Vayu

Vayu is the tangiferous ether (touch). It is associated with the element of Air in Western Tradition. It is represented by a sky-blue circle.

Tejas

Tejas is the luminiferous ether (sight/light/colour). It is associated with the element of Fire in Western Tradition. It is represented by a red equilateral triangle. The Fire of Tejas is considered to be Agni, which is the Vedic sacrificial fire and the interior fire of Kundalini Yoga.

Apas

Apas is the gustiferous ether (taste). It is associated with the element of Water in Western Tradition. It is represented in the Tibetan version as a purple half circle. The Golden Dawn depicted Apas as a white or silver crescent, with the two points up.

Prithivi

Prithivi is the odoriferous ether (smell). It is associated with the element of Earth in Western Tradition. It is represented by a yellow square.

The sub-Tattvas are represented by placing a smaller Tattvic symbol within the larger main Tattvic symbol. This gives a total of 25 Tattvas: Spirit of Spirit, Air of Spirit, Fire of Spirit, Water of Spirit, Earth of Spirit; Air of Air, Fire of Air, Water of Air, Earth of Air, Spirit of Air; Fire of Fire, Water of Fire, Earth of Fire, Spirit of Fire, Air of Fire; Water of Water, Earth of Water, Spirit of Water, Air of Water, Fire of Water; & Earth of Earth, Spirit of Earth, Air of Earth, Fire of Earth, Water of Earth.

Clairvoyance and the Tattvas

Within the Western Tradition, the Tattvas are primarily used to help develop the faculty of astral clairvoyance.

The symbol of the Tattvas is placed upon cards. Sub-Tattvas are placed within the larger Tattva image. The process of scrying is started by sitting comfortably and gazing fixedly at the Tattvic symbol until it is thoroughly assimilated. The edges of the Tattvic symbol will appear luminous after several minutes, as the flashing (or complimentary) colour appears on the retina. This complimentary colour is considered to be the astral counterpart of the actual colour. While meditating on the chosen Tattva, one should also "feel" the attributes of the associated element, letting the entire consciousness be filled with the appropriate sensations. For example with the Vayu Tattva, one could imagine a breeze blowing around and through them, concentrating on how this airy breeze feels, smells, tastes and sounds. Once the Tattva has been completely assimilated the card can be set aside and the eyes closed. The Tattvas symbol should appear in its flashing colour. This symbol serves as a doorway through which one travels. When entering through the symbol one should feel themselves pass through a 'veil' or membrane. Once on the other side, one should take a moment to adjust to their new surroundings, taking note of what the new surroundings consist of.

A guide can be summoned to accompany you on your exploration of the surroundings, who can explain aspects of the environment to you, and take you to important entities who live within the realm (According to 'safety' and 'protocol' various esoteric groups insist on the following: when first met, a guide should be tested with elemental signs, and the highest magickal names associated with the element. If the guide responds correctly to the signs, then it can be followed in good faith.) It is important to show all due courtesy to a guide, and thank it for its time and co-operation and bid it farewell. It is also of benefit to ask its permission to summon it again when you next return to this Tattva.

This initial entry point is also where one departs from, stepping backwards through the portal. Once back on the other side, one should visualise the portal closing.

This process is intended to allow one to enter into the actual element (Tattva flow), initially via "active imagination" and eventually by spontaneous clairvoyance. By scrying the astral current we are attempting to see beyond the material manifestation of an element by transmuting the physical Element into its astral state. The intent is to learn about the vital principle, which the element represents. Within the astral this vital principle becomes perceptible to us as living beings of approximately human form. Everything within this astral environment is of a form and appearance that is highly symbolic of the meanings and intentions of what it represents. On the physical plane humans have obscured this process of dressing in a ways not symbolic of their true natures. Most animals however still retain a degree of symbolism, such as bright colours often representing the dangerous nature of the animal (especially in the case of tropical fish, tree frogs, and spiders).

On the astral, Elementals may masquerade for a while in deceptive form, buts its true form is always constant with its Element and character. (More from the 'traditions': To try and 'force' them into assuming their true form one can test them by using God Names,

Grade/Elemental signs, Invoking/Banishing forms of the Elemental pentagrams). Deep scanning of an entity's core ideals and feelings allows one to compare how it "feels" with how it "appears," and if the feelings don't match with its outward appearance then deception can be detected.

[More from the 'traditions': Every opportunity to question entities encountered should be taken, being sure to respect and appreciate them as sentient beings. All due courtesy should be shown to them in accordance with their rank, deference and humility being shown to the Superior Orders, the Archangels, Angels and Rulers. Those of lower rank than oneself should be treated as equals, while those of the lowest ranks should be treated with the respect one would show to a servant, without allowing familiarity.

Elementals such as fairies, gnomes, salamanders, etc., must be treated with caution as they are often prone to mischievous although are generally free from malice.]

Conclusion

Through the use of the Tattvas great insight can be gained into the structure of the astral, and the mechanics which remain concealed from physical reality. No opportunity should be overlooked to learn and explore the environments, and wise and knowledgeable entities should be sought who may be able to impart knowledge of and insights into magickal and alchemical processes and concepts.

For Further Information, including the process of 'Tattva Vision' see:
[Tattva / Tattwa from the Golden Dawn Tradition](#)

The One That Got Away

some brief thoughts on synchronicity, symbolism, and the holographic nature of reality

[note: names, dates and other identifying comments have been omitted out of respect for those who were involved in these experiences]

"Wednesday XX-2

I was feeling depressed again today and cried briefly this morning before work. At lunchtime I thought about K again, and how I am helpless to help her, if she doesn't want it. I realise that it is not my place to interfere. I am of course sad that she chooses her current way of life, but that is partly an unwillingness on my part to "let go" and accept that I can't force my views and ideals on the world, and accept that I am not in control - I can only try to gain as much control as possible over myself. I also realised that on K's part she is afraid of a new way of life, one she doesn't understand, as her present way of life is her "comfort zone".

This evening I found a young (baby) bird out under the trees by the road. It was still flightless but didn't want me to pick it up. It struggled, and I let it get away. It hopped into some vines and bushes where I couldn't get it again. Other birds of its kind (blackbirds I think) squawked in consternation. Later when I

looked outside I saw a cat prowling and hopefully (!?!) chased it away before it got the young bird.

Thinking about this it is a variation on the theme with K and me. The bird was frightened of me, and chose to run. I was powerless to help it, and it will almost likely die. Such is nature. This calms me a little, making me realise more than ever that I can only be concerned for sorting out my own situation, and if someone else doesn't want to work with me, then that is their choice, and I mustn't allow myself to be emotionally attached to them."

The above journal entry briefly recounts an experience I had which seemed to me to be both highly symbolic, and synchronistic. I had been through a brief but intense relationship with a girl, K, which I have no doubt was part of a magical process I was working, termed the Inner Mate process, which I will write at length about at a later date. I found that I had become very emotionally attached to K, more so than I had initially believed. It was a big learning experience of what happens if I take on other people's "stuff". However, at the time of writing this I realise that I have still to learn a few things about taking on other people's "stuff", after recent experiences with X, who I am also quite certain was attracted into my life as part of the Inner Mate process.

The event described in the journal entry struck me as being highly symbolic of what was going on for me regarding K. A part of me, which I would now recognise as being a sub-personality, wanted to "help" K, in a protective type of way, showing her a better way of life (my opinion, and beliefs). It was in a similar vein that I wanted to help the baby bird, and "save" it from the dangers it faced on its own. The bird struggled, undoubtedly afraid of me, relying on its own instincts to survive - or not. I recall having the bird in my hands, and realising that if I continued to hold onto the bird that I myself might injure it as it struggled to get free. This mirrors the situation of co-dependence, where if someone is in the role of rescuer they are in fact "injuring" the other person, by not letting them experience and grow.

This was something that was very difficult for me to accept. After things had ended between K and I, I had "known" (that is, intuitively sensed) that she something bad was going to happen to her. This "knowledge" had me rather confused, part of me not wanting to believe that I could know this, while another part of me worried that I would cause it to become a reality by thinking and worrying about it. As things had transpired, K had indeed rung me several weeks before the above-described event, and told me that something bad had happened. I must however note that I do not know the full story of what happened on that night, and unfortunately I cannot totally believe everything that K told me. In the incident with the baby bird, it was the cat that was the predator.

The event with the baby bird was very timely in nature (synchronistic), given what happened earlier in the day, my thoughts at lunchtime about K and how I was helpless to help her. The overall situation with the baby bird I thought was very symbolic of what I was going through internally and struggling to come to terms with. Seeing it played out once again, with me as the main actor, in the role of the rescuer, brought about a new awareness of how it is not my role to interfere in other people's lives. I also believe it shows the holographic nature of reality, the "as above, so below" concept, where what is going on internally is mirrored externally. I say holographically because I believe that the core concept is mirrored multiple times in varying ways and forms throughout my life. In this example, there was the actual event of something bad happening to K, the internal process I was going through (as part of the Inner Mate process, and the anima/animus interaction), and the event with the baby bird. If I was to look closer at everything that was going on in

my life around me at the time, I would probably notice more variations on the theme (as time allows, I may indeed reread more carefully over my journal around the time, and perhaps also give myself some sessions to regress back and find out what was going on around me at the time which was similar).
More recently I had a similar pattern of events.

> *"Monday XX-0*
>
> *Dream: I am driving X's car. It is a cream-coloured station wagon, and NN is with us. I find it hard to control, and turn around to go back up the hill (gravel road) and find it hard to get power. Suddenly I see two cream-coloured wolves ahead of us, one to the left, one to the right - then I see six or more of them, I awoke and the words "the prowlers are out tonight" were in my head. I was tempted to phone X to make sure nothing was wrong, hoping it wasn't some weird premonition dream. I decided against it, although my thoughts were that I would be devastated if something happened to her, which I may have been able to prevent. However, I now think that if something did happen it is X's issue(s) which her life path has for her, and my role is only have someone I know experience whatever (as with K)."*

One week later, when I was getting up early for work I logged onto the Internet and X was online. She told me something had transpired the night before, which had seriously upset her.
Again there was the premonition that something bad would happen to the person who I viewed was in the role of Inner Mate (again I will write more on the Inner Mate process as time allows - however I am certain that X was filling this role at the time). I did find it quite difficult to accept that it is not my business, nor my concern, what X experiences with other people. Nor is it my job to interfere in anyway. The event however set me off in crisis, all sorts of issues coming up for me, my experiences with K and what I had learnt about her and what she had experienced in her life, H who had told me of being raped by her ex-boyfriend, and also JB who had been attacked. I was filled with sadness over these events, and how much it has negatively affected the lives of these women. Then there is the guilt and shame at the part of me which desires "power over" others. I then grow sad at the state of humanity, and the fact that we as humans will be abusive to one another, especially with violence and rape.
As of writing this I still haven't analysed the symbolism in the dream, or the symbolism in X's experience. As X had been in the role of Inner Mate, I am sure the events are rather significant and points at the state of my anima, although I also know that by this stage in time it was an end phase with X, hence a lot of disruption and turbulence, which I have always experienced when things are ending with an Inner Mate. It still makes sense, that although serious changes had taken place in my psyche a couple of weeks ago, a lot more is still needed to finish of the process which is started, and which will be commented on in my writings on the Inner Mate process.
When similar patterns are happening for me, I know that means I have still not learnt what I needed to learn from these experiences. I am certain, after the experience with X, the big thing is personal boundaries, and not getting caught up emotionally in other people's stuff. However this recent experience gave me plenty of time to reflect on how it is not my issue, and that is part of X's life path, as stated in my journal entry after my dream about the

wolves. It also, once again, highlights for me the need to deal with my anger, as one of my reactions was to want to smash those who had been involved.

All of life is learning experience, and through what I know, the practices and techniques, the best I can hope to do this turn these experiences into wisdom.

Tutoring – A Tutors Perspective

(from: Green Lion - Spring 1999)
"The meeting of two personalities is like the contact
of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction,
both are transformed." - C. G. Jung

I have now been tutoring students online for the Guild since February of this year, so almost 8 months. In this time I have had 9 students who have actually started training, and out of these 3 have just started and 1 has currently had his training suspended (by mutual agreement) while his general living situation is taken care of.

The opportunity to tutor students has been a great benefit to my own training. It has allowed me to see tuition from the perspective of the tutor, and how much of my own behaviour must have looked (the good and the bad). So in this respect students act as a kind of mirror – at the end of the day human behaviours are reasonably predictable, so especially having just been through probation and apprenticeship myself it is interesting to see students acting in similar to ways to myself or others I went through this part of my training with. For me personally, I find that when I must judge another persons behaviour, I inevitably end up judging my own behaviour also – reflecting on my own faults and bad behaviours.

The biggest benefit of tutoring a student is that it means you have to be able to actually explain the subject matter to someone, in a clear, concise and logical form. It is always a good test of how well you understand something to have to explain it to someone else. Of course, in occultism there are many things you can tell a student, time and time again in fact, but until they come to certain realisations for themselves they do not understand it anyway.

It is also good to have to go over the Probationary lessons again for oneself. New insights are often found from re-reading these, both because of what has been learned and experienced since, and also from the comments and questions students ask – as they all add something of their own perspective to each lesson. It is not uncommon for a student to question a point that I have not really thought about, or view it in a completely different light (whether rightly or wrongly so).

There are also occasions (many at the moment) when I end up tutoring a student who is more knowledgeable than myself in one or many aspects of the occult, or who exhibit signs that they are more 'advanced' in their esoteric development (or at least one or more aspects of their development) than myself. This is an interesting situation, one which makes one wonder who should be tutoring who! However, the only way this can be approached by the tutor is with honesty. As a tutor I am both only human, and only skilled in what I have studied and experienced. I am not an all-knowing "master", so the only thing I have over all students is that I know the Guild's system of study better than they do. This then is my role, to guide them in learning the techniques and background knowledge (as a framework) to aid them in their own development. A tutor cannot enlighten the student, only guide them, offering them advice, and techniques to use to learn and experience things for themselves.

Something that many students don't realise, and perhaps take for granted, as I did myself, was the amount of time and effort a tutor actually takes in dealing with a student. Online, be it via email or IRC, many hours are spent in discussion with students. Especially when situations arise, some kind of 'crisis' during training where the tutor spends many hours

away from his own studies, family, or relaxation time, to deal with the student, often knowing that even after all the talking is done, the student will end up quitting anyway. For me, hardest thing is spending a lot of time and effort dealing with a student, building up a student-teacher relationship (and even some form of friendship), then having the student suddenly end their training (sometimes when they are doing well at it too), often without any word as to why. It is also difficult when a student misbehaves, and has to be threatened with having their tuition terminated. Often it is clear that before long the student will either need to have their training stopped, or they will quit anyway because they are not getting their own way.

Overall though, I realise that tutoring students is a very necessary task. It is a way of paying back the Order and my tutor for the time and effort that was spent on my own tuition, and is the only way to ensure the continuation of the Order, by increasing the number of members. Tuition within our system is for the lazy or those who would choose to by their 'enlightenment' by mail-order, so it really relies on the more advanced students to provide the newer students with the opportunity to gain skills and experience for themselves, so they can eventually pass on their knowledge to successive 'generations'.

The Jungian Concept of The Shadow

(from: Green Lion - Summer 1999)

In this article I will outline some of the Jungian concepts of the Shadow, which has an important role linked closely with the Anima and Animus, the importance of which will be understood by those who have undertaken Trance Exercise 5[*].

As a side note, it is interesting to note that Jung's concepts of the Shadow (along with the persona, superman and the wise old man) were heavily influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, the prominent German philosopher. Jung used Nietzsche's descriptions as specific archetypal images. It is also worthy of note that Nietzsche had some deeply esoteric aspects in his philosophy, based around the concept of self-overcoming, whereby man can overcome his limitations to become the "higher man", on the road to becoming the "superman". Jung recognised Nietzsche's deep understanding of and willingness to confront the dark shadows and irrational forces, which lay beneath our "civilised" humanity.

The three main archetypes, which have a major influence over the individual are the Shadow, the Anima and the Animus. The Shadow Jung notes is always the same gender as the individual. To become conscious of the Shadow takes considerable moral effort, recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. Jung contended that this act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge.

The Shadow is considered to be a collection of inferiorities, undeveloped, and regressive aspects of the personality. They are primarily of an emotional nature and have a kind of autonomy, displaying an obsessive or more accurately a possessive quality. Jung describes emotion as an activity that happens to the individual rather than an activity of the individual, further reinforcing the idea of the autonomy of certain aspects of the psyche such as the Shadow.

The actions of the Shadow usually happen where adaptation is weakest, and at the same time reveal the reason for its weakness – that is a degree of inferiority and the existence of a lower level of personality. It is at this lower level, with its uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions that one behaves more or less like a primitive who is more or less a "victim" of these emotions and is practically incapable of moral judgement.

Although with persistent effort the shadow (to some extent) can be integrated with the conscious personality there are certain features which offer a great deal of resistance to control and prove almost impossible to influence. These aspects are generally associated

with projections, which are not recognised as such, and their recognition is an achievement beyond the ordinary.

Projection is defined as "the situation in which one unconsciously invests another person (or object) with notions or characteristics of one's own: e.g. a man, fascinated by a woman because she corresponds to his anima, falls in love with her. Feelings, images, and thoughts can be projected onto others. One also projects negative feelings: e.g. a woman has a grudge against a friend, so she imagines that her friend is angry with her."

If an individual shows no inclination to recognise his projections, then the projection-making factor has a free hand and can realise its object, or bring about a situation characteristic of its power. Again is should be noted that it is not the conscious mind, but the unconscious which does the projecting. The projections are not made, they are encountered. The effect of a projection is to isolate a person from their environment as instead of a real relation to it there is only an illusory one. Projections change the world into a replica of one's own unknown face – the Shadow – and lead to an auto-erotic or autistic condition in which one dreams a world whose reality remains forever unattainable. The resulting feeling of sterility are in turn explain by projection as the malevolence of the environment, and by means of this viscous circle the isolation is intensified.

At a certain point, projections are no longer the realm of the Shadow, but the contra-sexual side of the unconscious, that is the Anima in a man, or Animus in a woman.

The Shadow represents first and foremost the personal unconscious, and its content can therefore be made conscious without too much difficulty. While the Shadow can be seen through and recognised fairly easily, the Anima and Animus are much further away from consciousness and in normal circumstances are seldom if ever realised. As far as the nature of the Shadow is personal, it can be seen through, but in its greater archetypal aspect on encounters the same difficulties as with the Anima and Animus. Jung wrote, "it is a quite within the bounds of possibility for a man to recognise the relative evil of his own nature, but it is a rare and shattering experience for him to gaze into the face of absolute evil."

In an supra-personal context, the mankind as a whole is also heavily influenced by unconscious powers. With the relative division of the East (e.g. Russia) and West (America) a collective projection can be seen. While the Western prides itself in its civilised behaviour and keeps its vices tucked away and hidden behind international "good manners" and diplomacy, the East (communism) in general has shamelessly and methodically thrown back in the face of the West. It is the face of its own Shadow which grins back at Western man from the other side of the "Iron Curtain."

Further reading:

"Man and his Symbols" by Carl Jung (@amazon.com)

"The Portable Jung" edited by Joseph Campbell (@amazon.com)

"The Cambridge Companion to Jung" edited by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (@amazon.com)

"The Invisible Partners" by John Sanford (@amazon.com)

[*] Trance Exercise 5 is entitled "The Garden of the Philosophers - Wherein the Ruach and Nephesch Are Examined" and follows on from the four trance exercises given in Probatur Temporis.

Spiritual Emergency – When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis

(almost inadvertently typed When Crisis Becomes a Personal Transformation, which is also very apt for the themes in this book and Personal Growth in general)

Rather than just review this book in a normal fashion I have chosen to concentrate on writing some thoughts and feelings that have come to me during the time I've read this book.

Briefly, my overall feelings on the book are that it is possibly the most influential book I have yet to read relating to personal transformation and the processes of therapy. With essays from a wide range of authors it shows that there is an undercurrent to the dominant medical view of mental disorder/illness, which has a firm basis in reality rather than trying to force a medical model onto conditions with an "unknown cause" – that is a cause that may not have an apparent logical, rational, or objective basis.

I feel a sense of hope reading this book, seeing that others (some with qualifications in psychology or psychiatry from prestigious Universities) share some common beliefs about the spiritual basis of transforming crises.

What follows are some thoughts and occasionally questions I will ponder on for some time before they become clear:

There is a theme of "non-standard" states of consciousness being suppressed.

In ancient times: imprisonment, torture, death, and isolation

In modern times: medication to suppress

Transformative psychological events often parallel shamanic experiences.

Question: Increase in "mental illness" stemming from evolutionary change in consciousness? This is being suppressed at present by psychiatry. Is consciousness trying to change and evolve into higher forms on a larger scale, rather than more isolated shamanic initiations?

The importance of the subjective experience, e.g. Past Life Regression. The objective or factual explanations are not necessary or relevant to the transformative process. Only the subjective is necessary in the scope of Self Growth or therapy. It is irrelevant whether one actually had that Past Life, or whether the Past Life memories are a fictional way of experiencing a set of beliefs and issues within one's psyche.

Recurring (personal) conflict between super-normal experiences and consensus reality. This is the basis of psychosis (for diagnosis), that a person's thinking is non-rational, and departs from what is considered normal or representative of what is normal. For me personally, I have had to adjust from being highly sceptical of anything which was non-rational, non-logical, to being able to thinking and understand in transpersonal, spiritual and magical terms. This probably places me within the definition of psychotic, although I have also kept a reasonable grip on consensus reality also, not departed from it. So, while "magical thinking" is one of the symptoms of psychosis, the ability to "think magically" and also function within society seems to allow one to functional fully. Possibly medicating people with tranquillising medicines stops people being able to work through a psychotic departure from reality and retain the ability to "think magically" but also to function within society or the physical world.

Question: Is Possession akin to Multiple Personality Disorder Syndrome? And rooted in sub-personalities. It certainly seems likely to me the MPDS stems from a severe trauma resulting in a subpersonality or conglomerate of subpersonalities taking over to ensure the survival of the individual Self, in some form. Possession also is a departure, usually temporary, from the Self being in control and a dominant and regressive subpersonality being in control, or perhaps even an external "entity". Perhaps that would lead to two types of possession, one by an external agent the other being sub-personality possession?

With new "mental states" one needs to adjust to living with new views of reality and still retain the ability to function in mundane society. This carries on from the above comments on "magical thinking" and psychosis. It may be productive for a time for a severe departure from reality, but preferable to have an experienced guide (therapist / shaman) to assist one's journey and even more preferable (but generally unobtainable in present society) a retreat where one can go to and work through changes in the view of reality. It seems that

it is possible to keep a grip on rationality and also experience non-rationality intermittently or at the same time, and with some effort functional to some degree within society (ie. Hold down a job, and maybe even a relationship!), and grow and expand one's consciousness into new realms, and formulate new views of reality.

Death and World Destruction themes. The birth – life – death – rebirth (renewal) are common themes in paganism and alchemical process. In Alchemy (spiritual and laboratory) there are phases of putrefaction, negredo (blackening) and other "unpleasant" stages through which things are transformed.

Dysfunctional families. This is another strong theme in the book, and basically the topic for my one-hour talk! It is families that are seen as the root of psychosis in many instances. The term schizogenic is used by one author, although I've not looked into exactly what he means yet.

In dealing with people in Spiritual Emergency personal qualities are more important than professional qualifications. Non-labelling is also important, and something we talk about in Psychosynthesis, about not putting "things" and "people" into little boxes, but letting them be how they are.

According to John Perry, the renewal process requires an emotional framework (a partner). This is curious and relates back to what I've been taught, thought about, and experienced with the Inner Mate process, and various interactions of the anima and animus. It may also relate heavily to "Self in relationship to Other" which is the theme of second year, and the various functions of a guide (shaman or therapist).

General Systems Theory and Psychosynthesis

Note: The following article was the first of two research assignments as part of 2nd Year Psychosynthesis in 2003. The question was:

"Please explain the essential elements of the General Systems Theory in Physics and how it fits with Psychosynthesis Principles. Give examples of how it works from your own process."

The bulk of my research on General Systems Theory has been from the book *General Systems Theory – An Introduction* by Lars Skyttner. Most of the quoted principles and elements of General Systems Theory and related subjects are from this book. My other main source was *Psychosynthesis – A "Systems" Psychology* by Molly Young Brown.

On researching the topic of General Systems Theory I quite quickly came to realise that there are many elements that form important laws and principles regarding systems. Likewise, many people have differing views on exactly which laws and principles are the essential ones. It is the different views, and different models of systems that allow General Systems Theory and Psychosynthesis to sit well together. It has been suggested by the likes of Molly Young Brown that Psychosynthesis could be seen as the Systems model of Psychology. Also, Psychosynthesis has developed into divergent expressions from its early formulation by Roberto Assagioli. Along the way various people have added components of Jungian psychology, Gestalt concepts and practices, and various teachings on co-dependence. As such, Psychosynthesis shows itself to be a highly adaptive system, the core elements remaining, while new ideas and processes being added as required.

General Systems Theory, and Systems Thinking has developed and evolved over time, tracing common ideas and concepts back to early philosophies. In more modern times, Operational Research struck me as an important forerunner to General Systems Theory. Operational Research can be summed up in three main elements (my comments follow each point):

- *It is not necessary to understand everything, rather to have it under control. Ask what happens instead of why.*

This fits in extremely well with Psychosynthesis therapy. We don't need to understand everything going on in our life, but we need to have a certain amount of control that allows us to function to a level we are happy with. As a therapist, this principle is even more relevant. We do not need to understand everything about a client. We don't need to ask *why* they are angry, or sad, rather what was going on to make them like that? Asking *why* is something that keeps us in our thinking space and cut off from our emotions and learning to actually understand. I will expand on this a little more latter when I discuss General Systems Theory and its similarities to Psychosynthesis with regard to looking at the relationship between things.

With regards to having things under control, Psychosynthesis, through the process of identification and dis-identification allows a person to gain more control of their life. It is considered that whatever we identify with we are control by, and whatever we can dis-identify with we can control. By the process of identification and dis-identification we can begin to find out what is happening, gain some understandings, and achieve a certain amount of control in our lives.

In my own process: this is something I've begun to accept and work with, not asking endless questions, or weighing up all the options in my head. A mentor of mine once described the process of over-rationalising and over-intellectualising everything as "head wanking" which is quite a suitable analogy. It doesn't really achieve anything, although may lead to a measure of excitement (in this case in one's head). It is not grounded in reality or living in the now. It may provide self-pleasure to think about one's intellectual capacity and achievements but it tends to solve nothing (and often achieves nothing).

Likewise, learning to dis-identify from feelings, emotions, body, and mind, allows me to find a calm and centred space where I am not at the mercy (so to speak) of stormy emotions or constant chatter within my head.

- *Do not collect more information than is necessary for the job. Concentrate on the main consequences of the task, the small details may rest in peace.*

The collection of endless amounts of information, to me, fits in with the analytical, rational, logical, thinking parts of a person. Trying to find out all the information surrounding a task ends up becoming mindlessly time consuming. A certain amount of information is necessary to discover what is required. In Psychosynthesis the main consequences could be seen as our feelings. If we concentrate on our feelings, and only gather enough information to get a sense of what was or is going on that is causing us to feel a particular way, we can indeed leave the small details to rest in peace. We can follow a path of the feelings, considering them as supplying the bulk of the important information, and pad it out with enough description to get an understanding of what relationships between things are causing the various states of being to arise.

Likewise, I believe this fits in with a bottom-up approach, rather than top-down. An organic process can arise where the base (roots) is built and the overall structure is built upon this (trunk) and branches out as required (branches / growth).

- *Solve the problems of today and be aware that pre-requisites and solutions soon become obsolete.*

This fits in very well with the concept of *being present* (living in the 'Now'). Essentially we need to take care of problems that are affecting us at the moment. In our Psychosynthesis therapy sessions we generally start looking for an entry point of something that is happening at present (rather than use the thinking processes to find something from the past to work on, which may lead to avoidance of what is actually more important). We also constantly update our information and focus by asking what feelings are present throughout the course of a session (or what we are feeling in response to any given situation in our day to day life).

Psychosynthesis also teaches that just because something once worked, and was our chosen solution, it doesn't imply it will work in the future or continue to meet our needs. In

fact, it is the failure of repeated patterns and beliefs of our sub-personalities that we often find ourselves unhappy, or worse still, in crisis. This is because sub-personalities only take into account one need and generally have very limited scope for meeting that one need. These patterns and beliefs were generally started and made *fixed* and *inflexible* when we were very young (generally under the age of 7 or 8 years old). Sub-personalities may have met our needs, as children, but as we have grown into adulthood we often find that the solutions they offer are obsolete, and not in line with what are present day problems are.

In my own process: I have now done a reasonable amount of work with sub-personalities. I have learned that many of my past actions, and the motivations behind them, have been failing me for years, and worse still leading me into crisis. My biggest learning of recent is about an unrecognised Achiever sub-personality that means I over-commit myself trying to take on too many things and achieve too much. This is repeatedly leading me into ill health now, leaving me feeling drained and out of energy. It is by being aware that the old solutions, offered in the main by our sub-personalities, are obsolete that I've learned to find new ways to meet needs, and learn to recognise what my needs actually are!

An important similarity between Psychosynthesis and General Systems Theory is illustrated in a quote from Skyttner's book: "Systems thinking **expands** the focus of the observer, whereas analytical thinking **reduces** it."

This is to me a very important part of Psychosynthesis. Our aim is to expand the field of consciousness, to allow us to better understand the various aspects of the sub-conscious and how they affect us. There are two main ways that Psychosynthesis can assist someone in expanding their focus. The first is via the process of dis-identification. Once we have stripped away our identification with the thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations surrounding our state of being, or stepped outside of our sub-personalities into the self (or another sub-personality) through dialoguing we are able to begin to see a bigger picture. This is expanding even further through contact with the Higher Self, which we use to see the bigger picture from a holistic point of view, outside of the duality and subjective experiences of our sub-personalities.

I believe that it is analytical thinking that keeps us trapped in our problems, and stifles our growth. In therapy, it can lead to an awareness of what our problems are, but seldom, it seems, able to truly see the bigger picture, and find a holistic solution to allow us to grow and move on. This to me is the downfall of psychoanalysis. It has the risk of keeping one trapped within the logical confines of the thought processes, where everything seems pretty much black and white. There is little scope for true creativity or expanding the focus to find a holistic solution outside of what is already known through analysis.

Skyttner also writes: "Synthesis does not create detailed knowledge of a system's structure. Instead it creates knowledge of its function (in contrast to analysis). Therefore, synthesis must be considered as **explaining** while the scientific method must be considered as **describing.**"

This illustrates a very important difference between synthesis and analysis. I believe that Psychosynthesis, through its various processes, allows us to explain the things we need to understand. Bringing about an understanding is very important, whereas, to me describing something leaves us with knowledge only. In the Qabala the sphere of knowledge is pretty much an illusionary sphere. It is located below the supernal (transpersonal) spheres where wisdom and understanding reside.

Another important similarity between General Systems Theory and Psychosynthesis is found in the use of analogy. Skyttner relates that "analogies are explanations done by relating something not yet understood to something understood" and that this can be promoted to achieve integration. Psychosynthesis makes extensive use of analogy and metaphor to allow us to work on a symbolic level within the sub-conscious. For instance, the process involved finding an "And" (synthesis between polar opposites) can be best related through analogies.

Even describing the "And" process we can show that it is set apart from "Either" / "Or" logic. For instance we could illustrate the "And" principle by giving two statements:

1. You can have *either* a piece of cake *or* a biscuit.
2. You can have a piece of cake *and* a biscuit.

People tend to understand this quite easily. We can then set about with further analogies to what we are trying to achieve within the sub-conscious with a further example of finding an "And" within a group of people:

Imagine a group of people attending a workshop. The facilitator asks what time people would like to take an hours lunch break at, and no consensus is forthcoming. So, the facilitator says, well, how about we take an half hour break now, *and* another half hour break later? In our imaginary example here, people are agreeable to it, so an "And" has been found.

So, now, having established an analogy for the "And" principle, we can begin to explain how the "And" can be used to synthesise opposites within our psyche. A diagram can be drawn to give a visual analogy to the principle:
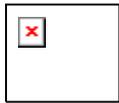
                                        And

                        Either   Or

By drawing the triangle, we have given a visual analogy that the "And" can be seen as a point of intersection between the "Either" / "Or" options. We can further go on to explain that the "And" can be the best parts of the options, or it can be something entirely new outside of our current knowledge of the matter.

What is important to convey is that the "And" has effectively widened our focus and brought about a synthesis which transcends the limits we faced with the "Either" / "Or" options.

> **In my own process:** Analogy is important to me. Analogy helps explain things by showing the relationships between something unrelated. To help me understand sub-personalities I was once given the analogy of a captain and his ship. The captain can be seen as the self, and the sub-personalities as the crew. If the captain is not in control then the sub-personalities are basically in a state of mutiny and will hijack the ship to try to meet their own ends.

Another important systems thinker mentioned by Skyttner is Hegel (1770-1831). The important points of Hegel's in relationship to Systems are as follows:

- The whole is more than the sum of the parts
- The whole defines the nature of the parts
- The parts cannot be understood by studying the whole
- The parts are dynamically interrelated or interdependent

This fits in well with the Psychosynthesis concept of the psyche as represented by Assagioli's Egg Diagram. A person is more than just a sum of memories. A person is more than their thoughts, feelings, emotions, sensations, and body (as recounted in the Disidentification Exercise). The Higher Self, which can be seen as the pattern behind our being, defines the nature of the whole and ultimately this defines how the parts are through life experiences guided along a personal path of self-growth via the Higher Self. We cannot understand our sub-personalities, emotions, thoughts, feelings or bodily state via looking at the whole person, but we can see that each is interrelated and interdependent. There is a constant interplay (often given an analogy of a dance) between such things as our feelings, our sub-personalities, and even our relationships with other people and beings.

Hegel is also well known for his dialectic process, which has a lot in common with synthesis and the "And" principle. Hegel used the terms thesis, antithesis and synthesis. He believed

all that the human mind always moved in a process of contradiction and reconciliation. This started at an initial belief, moved to it's polar opposite, and was ultimately transcended by a higher conception that involves (in part) both of the opposites. In turn, this synthesis becomes the new thesis for finding an antithesis to achieve yet another synthesis.

This is most echoed in Psychosynthesis with sub-personality work, where the weaker, polar opposite of a sub-personality is found, and the two worked with to achieve a synthesis ("And") between the two. It is acknowledged that at some point this new sub-personality will be worked with, it's polar opposite found, and synthesised.

Skyttner states that "in General Systems Theory on of the basic assumptions embraces the concept of order - an expression of man's general need for imaging his world as an ordered cosmos within an unordered chaos. A consequence implicit in this order is the presumed existence of a law of laws which in turn inspired the name of the theory."

Psychosynthesis is a system and model by which we can view and understand an ordered inner cosmos while still acknowledging and recognising what we currently perceive as unordered or chaotic. The processes of Psychosynthesis can in-turn allow chaotic and unordered inner parts to come together via synthesis and become more ordered and functional (for us). A lot of this I believe has to do with expanding the focus of one's inner world.

A good analogy I once read on the topic of self-discovery was comparing understanding the self with observing the Sun by watching a mirror on the ground, and never looking at the sky. The focus of the mirror only allows a certain amount of information to be understood. For instance on cloudy days the Sun cannot be observed at all, so it appears that this thing (the Sun) is a rather chaotic thing which only comes and goes in some unknown pattern. However, if our focus is expanded, and we actually turn to face the Sun, we may observe many more things, and likewise, from a higher vantage point (analogous on an inner level with connection with the Higher Self) one may observe that the Sun is present whether or not the sky is cloudy, and perhaps from a higher perspective again (of the whole galaxy) one sees that the Sun is actually the central point and it's rising and falling through our sky is in fact illusionary; that in fact the change in the position and transit of the Sun is caused by the rotation and orbit of the Earth instead.

Skyttner gives the currently accepted principles of General Systems Theory as having derived in the main from Ludvig von Betanlanffy (1955) and Joseph Litterer (1969) and several others. They are summarised by Skyttner as follows (with my commentary under them):

- **Interrelationship and interdependence of objects and their attributes** - Unrelated and independent elements can never constitute a system.

Psychosynthesis looks at the individual and society, as both have relationships with each other. Psychosynthesis principles can be used to explain interactions between individuals as well as the inner relationships and dependencies.

> **In my own process:** To me, it is this recognition of relationship and interdependence that has been one of the most insightful and useful things in my own self-growth. I find that a recognition that we are all in relationship to each other (within groups, society, and nations) is important to realise. We are social animals. There is also a recognition, for me, that we need to have healthy inner relationships (between parts of our psyche) to have healthy relationships in the outer world.

- **Holism** - Holistic properties not possible to detect by analysis should be possible to define in the system.

Psychosynthesis considers many properties within the psyche (and the *group mind*) that other psychologies doesn't. The best example would be the concept of the Higher Self. While it is possible to increase the connection with the Higher Self through various techniques and construction of new beliefs, many psychologies would just deny the possibility from the outset, as there is no supporting data there to start with. This leads on

to the point that many transpersonal qualities may be unknown from the start, and only present themselves when the focus is expanded and the bigger picture considered. The Higher Self, in many ways is a holistic property of the individual. It encompasses the entire individual, and gives rise to new properties not observed within the parts – the transpersonal qualities. These include such things as reconciliation of opposites (the "And" / synthesis), and unconditional love and forgiveness. These qualities can in turn be used within the other parts of the psyche to achieve integration, change and growth.

- **Goal seeking** – Systematic interaction must result in some goal or final state to be reached or some equilibrium point being approached.

Psychosynthesis tends to not promote what many self-development or psychological systems would consider *goal setting*. This is partly semantic, as there are goals within Psychosynthesis, such as the synthesis of sub-personalities. However, the goals tend to be conceptual in nature rather than a fixed outcome, thereby allowing freedom and flexibility for the outcome to manifest in an appropriate way for the individual.

Again, the reaching of an equilibrium point could be considered to be the "And". A point of synthesis is reached, which in turn can become the starting point for a new pattern to emerge and eventually be transformed or transcended.

I consider it import to reiterate one of the statements from operational research, to "solve the problems of today and be aware that pre-requisites and solutions soon become obsolete." So while the goal is to solve the problem, there is no fixed solution that is trying to be achieved (which may be a wild goose chase).

An example of a non-fixed goal for society could be the discovery or manifestation of a new, efficient, clean, and safe form of energy. A fixed goal would be the creation of a water-powered motor, which could potentially turn into a fruitless goal, or unachievable with current understandings. To the contrary, it may also become the end solution if the non-fixed goal path had been taken.

Other goals within Psychosynthesis, depending on how much the individual chooses to undertake, include finding unfolding one's life purpose. Again, this isn't fixed, and can change, given that what one needs to be doing is what one's Higher Self needs one to be doing at that time.

Within a therapy session the goal could be stated to be bringing about some shift of change in the individual, at very least giving them a little insight into one of their issues or problems. The goal of on going therapy sessions is to help the person find their centre (Self, or 'I') and perhaps find connection with their Higher Self (in some form) to allow them to become empowered to overcome issues for themselves. This again is highly flexible, and is not about a planned, step-by-step, goal.

> **In my own process:** I find it a relief not to set myself virtually unachievable goals! I believe that our needs are best met by finding our centred space (the Self) and being aware of our emotions and feelings, and acting from this space. By being in the Self, we are open to the flow of energy, information and guidance from our Higher Self, which allows us to make better decisions than simply relying on the known facts. I also believe that trying to dis-identify with the outcome and making a decision but accepting that the best outcome will come from it, rather than a set outcome opens life up to be a wonderful, exciting place full of mystery and learning. There is less disappointment, because I am not identified with the outcome and full of desire for it. I may desire the attainment of a concept, but I will remain open to what the actual outcome is. For instance, I may decide I need employment to earn some money to pay the bills. But I will be open to what comes up, not fixed on working in the computer industry, or refusing to be a factory worker. My current job is something I'd never considered in the past, filing records, but it pays as well as my last job as a computer technician and I am in a reasonably harmonious work environment (from my own perspective).

- **Transformation process** – All systems, if they are to attain their goal, must transform inputs into outputs. In living systems this transformation is mainly of a cyclical nature.
- **Inputs and outputs** – On a closed system the inputs are determined once and for all; in an open system inputs are admitted from its environment.

These two points overlap to a greater or lesser extent with what I have to say next, so will be covered together.

This again fits very well with Psychosynthesis, which after all is about transformation via synthesis. A specific transformation process integral to Psychosynthesis teachings is "The Will". The Will is the part that transforms choice into action, and again is best illustrated via a descriptive analogy:

Hold your hand out in front of you. Think about dropping it, and what it will feel like. Make the choice to drop your hand. Visualise dropping your hand back to your side. Imagine that it is by your side again. Now, drop your hand.

As is illustrated (and you can try it for yourself to get a feel for it) the process of making thinking about doing some, choosing to do something, and even visualising something does nothing without a transformation process, which in Psychosynthesis is defined as Will.

Another important transformation process in Psychosynthesis is the process by which we interact with our environment in general. Assagioli wrote that the process goes from Sense, Feel, Think to Act, showing a process by which inputs to our senses (and inner sensations) give rise to feelings, which in turn we can *think* about, before going into output mode and acting.

In a more modern expression of Psychosynthesis, the process is changed slightly, to Sense, Feel, Act, then Think. To me, this fits better with the process of an open system, as *Think* becomes a process of feedback into the system to update our actual knowledge (more a reflective process of analysis once action has already occurred).

So a brief description of this transformation process becomes:

Inputs:
Senses (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, smelling) and Inner Sensations
Processing:
Feelings and emotions arise from the senses and sensations
A choice is made dependant on how we are feeling
The process of The Will is invoked (a subsystem)
Output:
Action in accordance with our choice
Feedback:
We reflect on how the choice and action has affected us, and whether it met out needs. This may lead us into other processes, such as working with the Higher Self, to discover ways which would better meet out needs.

An example is we have the sensation of hunger pangs, which give rise to us feeling hungry. We make the choice to eat an apple and go ahead and do so. We then consider whether or not that has cured our hunger, or do we want to eat something else.

- **Entropy** – This is the amount of disorder or randomness present in any system. All non-living systems tend toward disorder; left alone they will eventually lose all motion and degenerate into an inert mass. When this permanent stage is reached and no events occur, maximum entropy is attained. A living system can, for a finite time, avert this unalterable process by importing energy from its environment. It is then said to create negentropy, something which is characteristic of all kinds of life.

Psychosynthesis recognises a cyclic process of life. While life can be sustained for a period of time, and maybe extended via healthy living (taking care of one's bodily, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs), eventually this causal (personal) life comes to an end. So while the process may be unavoidable, life is finite, and something that we can learn to accept and cherish rather than fear and try to avoid.

For some within Psychosynthesis and Transpersonal Psychologies it is considered that it is only the lower, personal, parts of the psyche that are in fact transitory in nature, and the transpersonal parts of us, such as our Higher Self, will remain after our current existence is over.

Whether or not this is accepted, the processes of unfolding one's Self through Psychosynthesis means a recognition of the finite time we have in this incarnation, and therefore leads to being able to work with this knowledge to fulfil our life's purpose.

- **Regulation** – The interrelated objects constituting the system must be regulated in some fashion so that its goals can be realised. Regulation implies that necessary deviations will be detected and corrected. Feedback is therefore a requisite of effective control. Typical of surviving open system is a stable state of dynamic equilibrium.

I have covered the process of feedback above. However, as far as regulation of the individual goes, Psychosynthesis has much to offer. Via working with a process such as the "And" one can start to achieve equilibrium between the various parts of the Psyche. Becoming more aware of one's Self and in touch with feelings and emotions allows a greater degree of regulation within the psyche. Feedback could be considered discovering (by whatever process is worked with at the time) what needs are not being met, or could be better met by finding new ways to meet them. Feelings can be considered the most reliable for of feedback we receive (on an inner level) as they instantly alert us to what is going on. Thinking on the other hand, can be a good method of feedback for reflecting and mulling over what has been going on. Thinking is limited however in that we are limited to known facts. To go beyond this we need to go back to the feeling level, and work with the energies associated with the Higher Self to gain an holistic understanding of what is going on, and what we need to be doing to best meet all our needs (rather than meeting only one or few needs).

- **Differentiation** – In complex systems, specialised units perform specialised functions. This is a characteristic of all complex systems and may also be called specialisation or division of labour.

It can be easily recognised within Psychosynthesis that there is a division of the psyche, as a complex system. Various distinct areas are defined, such as the body, mind and emotions. Various parts of the psyche are defined as the Self, The Higher Self, and sub-personalities. The body for instance contains most of our sensory inputs, and contains the brain, considered to be where our mind exists. The mind, for the main part, provides us with our rational faculties of thought and reason, as well as the lower instinctive parts and drives. Within the individual there are also the feelings and emotions which have importation specialised roles, alerting us to what is currently going on for us. For example, if someone is encroaching on our space, and overstepping our boundaries we may feel angry, or perhaps frightened, depending on the specific circumstances. This is separate from our thoughts, as logically we may be thinking, "but I shouldn't feel angry (or afraid)". Perhaps we have children, and they are intensely seeking our attention, running around, being noisy and jumping on us. We are trying to prepare a meal, and become angry when they won't settle down and allow us to do the work we have chosen to do. So our specialised area of emotions says "Boundary violation… switch on Anger". On the other hand, our mind has a different set of data, and we say to ourselves, "but they are just kids, I shouldn't be feeling angry with them, they're just playing". I use this only as an illustration of the different specialised facultie, and won't attempt to unravel or explain the situation or what could possibly be done to actually solve it!

- **Equifinality** and **multifinality** – Open systems have equally valid alternative ways of attaining the same objectives (divergence) or, from a given initial state, obtain different, and mutually exclusive, objectives (convergence).

This state is something else I believe relates to some import areas of Psychosynthesis. For example, being open to possibilities and creative solutions via the Higher Self,

Psychosynthesis recognises that there are many equally valid alternative ways of attaining something. These will vary from person to person, or from time to time, dependant on any number of factors and the choices we make at any given time.

As for obtaining different and mutually exclusive objectives from an initial state, this would fit well with the creation of sub-personalities within the psyche. Sub-personalities come about to meet a need, and develop around one single belief which becomes more and more fixed over time due to repeated experiences with trying to meet the need. Sub-personalities tend to be mutually exclusive as they attempt to meet only one need, the only way they know how, at the exclusion of any other sub-personality. They always have a polar opposite, with one sub-personality being more dominant and the other suppressed or repressed or just under-developed and 'weak'.

It is the up to the processes mentioned above to work through what is needed to best meet all needs, the recommend way being via working with the Higher Self to find one of the many creative solutions!

The most important factor between General Systems Theory and Psychosynthesis I found was the defining of a system as things and how they relate to each other. In Psychosynthesis we talk about the relationship between Self and other, as well as the inner relationships between the parts of the psyche. On the level of looking at personal relationships, groups, societies, cultures and humanity itself, the relationship between beings is for me one of the most important aspects to consider. It is perhaps the reason why we are here, to experience things as a human, such as the relationships between ourselves and other beings.

True Democracy and a Way Forward

Note: The following article was the second of two research assignments as part of 2nd Year Psychosynthesis in 2003. The question was:

"In 1500 The Great Peacemaker, [Deganawidah](#) of the Huron Tribe of Native America, established a form of pure democracy called the Twelve Cycles of Truth. It was upon this foundation that The Iroquois Confederacy existed before Anglo-Saxons invasion. What were the 12 principles that provided the foundation for them? How do they compare to the Twelvefold Path of the Buddha, established as a comparable paradigm for social change 1000 years earlier. Looking at both these sets of principles, how do you see the philosophies of Psychosynthesis correlate with them to form a model that could be used by Western Society today to begin to heal?"

The process of researching this topic has been an interesting one. It seemed that it would be easy to find information on the Twelve Cycles of Truth if it formed the basis for the Iroquois Confederacy. However, it didn't take long to discover a distinct lack of information on the Twelve Cycles of Truth, while finding a vast amount of information on the Iroquois Confederacy.

It initially came to me that perhaps the person promoting the Twelve Cycles of Truth did indeed gain their information from an oral tradition, as it is acknowledged that there are no complete or exhaustive writings on Native American teachings.

Likewise, I considered that [Carlos Castaneda](#) is also highly likely to have made up his stories, yet much of his philosophies are coherent with teachings from various sources. I've seen it suggested that much of his philosophy derives from others such as Gurdjieff. So, Castaneda is promoting reasonable (in my opinion) philosophies based around a fictional teacher (Master) and fictional events, to illustrate his points on magic. As a willed suspension of disbelief is an important function of the magical process, writing about

magical and spiritual teachings in an easy to read, fictional, way helps get the message across by stimulating the imaginative side of the brain.

However, checking further into the person promoting the Twelves Cycles of Truth, the only good reviews of her works seemed to come from people who had been recommended her books and hadn't read them yet.

I discovered a whole [web site](#) devoted to exposing people who are ripping off the teachings of the Native American cultures, mainly for profit. [Jamie Sams](#), who seems to be the only person claiming the Twelve Cycles of Truth to be traditional teachings, comes from a long lineage of people promoting concepts and beliefs that have never been part of any tribes cultural treasures, and often making a lot of money from it.

This, at very least, seems to be highly disrespectful to the cultures they claim to represent. Then, their only recourse at defending their claims is to counter that the tribes are only angry because they don't want their teachings made public (implying that the tribes are in fact racist towards the Europeans who are lapping up the pseudo-native teachings).

Although I haven't read any of Jamie Sams' books myself, if the information reported about them was correct, then I couldn't accept her teachings as being in any way authentic or useful (to me). For instance it is claimed she has created a 12-month lunar calendar (perhaps to fit with her Twelve Cycles of Truth), when most (if not all) native peoples, worldwide, have a 13-month lunar calendar. Likewise, if it is true that she promotes various acknowledged frauds, such as the 'crystal skulls' teachings, and the 'medicine shields' and is a member of the Wolf Clan (which has many alleged fraudsters operating under its banner), then it makes it incredibly difficult to take her Twelve Cycles of Truth seriously at all, especially as she doesn't seem to be living them in the slightest.

All this information is compounded by the fact that the authors of the book [The Paradigm Conspiracy](#) (which from my cursory readings of it appears to be worth some consideration) have based the structure of their book on the Twelve Cycles of Truth, and relate that these Cycles formed the basis for the Iroquois Confederacy. It seems that no matter how much research is done, it is possible to overlook untruths because we identify strongly with them, and desire them to be *the* truth.

So, it is from this knowledge that I write my thoughts on how the Twelve Cycles of Truth correlate to the Buddhist teachings on the Twelve Link chain of causation, and how, along with the principles of Psychosynthesis, a model can be constructed providing a method through which Western Society can heal.

To be in the spirit of things, I will consider the Twelve Cycles of Truth on their own merit, free of any claims of falsity, or validity, although must state that from my research I cannot find any point of evidence that they formed the basis of a working model in the past. The merits of the Iroquois Confederacy stand on their own, including that they are acknowledged as helping inspire the Constitution of the United States of America, which in turn gave rise to the charter behind the United Nations. At the heart of the Iroquois Confederacy there is the respect for the sovereignty of each and every person (man and woman alike) and an aim of averting conflict through effective communication (to achieve peace).

Having written this, new information has come to light, in the form of Jamie Sams' [Sacred Path Cards](#) book – so I have now skimmed through one of her books. It doesn't change my impression that much of what is passed off as Native American teachings is done in order to make money (not to genuinely promote Native teachings, or even relevant spiritual teachings in the guise of Native teachings). It does give an insight that Jamie Sams' claim of the Twelve Cycles of Truth being the basis for the Iroquois Confederacy has been blown out of proportion (most likely by the authors of The Paradigm Conspiracy). It seems likely they wanted a 12 fold structure for their book and chose the Twelve Cycles of Truth as this, perhaps reading into Sams' statement that the Cycles formed the basis for a very powerful (empowering) and successful form of Democracy.

Jamie Sams' brief statement on the Twelve Cycles of Truth is a little ambiguous, and I can actually read it two ways. She writes, "Our intention follows the Iroquois Peace Confederacy Tradition that uses the Twelve Cycles of Truth to bring peace." (Card 18 – Whirling Rainbow, *Sacred Path Cards*)

To me, this could mean her intention uses the Twelve Cycles of Truth, or that the Iroquois Confederacy uses the Twelve Cycles of Truth.

Okay, so the validity (or "truth") of Jamie Sams' claims leads me to another issue. What is "truth"? Is there a Universal Truth that the Twelve Cycles refer to, which each of us needs to be aligned with in order for a peaceful world? Or is truth rather subjective?

To me, both answers are correct to some degree. Truth is mainly subjective when viewed by us as an individual, and it is our personal *truth* that we must express, as it is our individual purpose and identity in this incarnation.

So this led me to ask, what does truth mean?

The words *truth* and *troth* both stem from the Old English word for loyalty, firm, trustworthy. Further back, the words *true* and *tree* are related etymologically. Via their Germanic lineage *trewam* (tree) and *treuwaz* (true) they extend back to the Indo-European root *deru-* or *dreu-* referring to wood, and hence firmness. This therefore gives the word *truth* a meaning of "something firm". It is said that the word Druid derives from the root words dru- and wid- meaning "strong seer". (Etymological notes were researched via www.dictionary.com)

This sits well with me personally. I get the sense that truth (for me) is our personal truth, and what we feel strongly about in our expression of our own uniqueness. It is a loyalty to our Self via the expression of our Self, our expression of our own unique Tree of Life, and that in turn we are strongly connected with the Universal Tree of Life. It is the expression of our own unique essence as provided by our Higher Self – our Higher Self perhaps being our essential truth (and us as an individual the potential of expressing it).

The Twelve Cycles of Truth are: learning the truth, honouring the truth, accepting the truth, observing the truth, hearing the truth, presenting the truth, loving the truth, serving the truth, living the truth, working the truth, walking the truth, being grateful for the truth. To me, this all relates to the various aspects of expression of our own personal truth.

Each of the Twelve Links is dependent on the one after it:

Ignorance is dependent on Karma; Karma is dependent on Consciousness; Consciousness is dependent on Name and Form; Name and Form is dependent on Six Sense Fields; Six Sense is dependent on Contact; Contact is dependent on Feeling; Feeling is dependent on Craving; Craving is dependent on Grasping; Grasping is dependent on Becoming; Becoming is dependent on Birth; Birth is dependent on Old age / Death; Old age / Death is dependent on Ignorance.

[Francesca Freemantle](#) sums up the Buddha's view of worldly phenomena by saying, "The Buddha described all worldly phenomena as having three characteristics: impermanence, suffering and nonself. We suffer because we imagine what is not self to be self, what is impermanent to be permanent, and what, from an ultimate viewpoint, is pain to be pleasure."

These fits well with Psychosynthesis as we understand people tend to strongly identify with various things external to themselves, or with sub-personalities, so are not centred within their own Self. Material things are seen as permanent and lasting, as perhaps are such things as reputations and how powerful we become (how much power we exert over others). When acting from sub-personalities various concepts are considered right, or noble (and we should therefore find them pleasurable), such as being an achiever (doing a lot), struggling to achieve things the 'tried and trusted' way, rather than re-evaluate its effectiveness and worth, and whether a new and better way could be achieved. There is the soldiering on when we are ill, or being a "hard man" and continuing to play on in a game of rugby even though we are in pain and perhaps aggravating an already serious injury.

In my understanding, an aim of Buddhism is to allow one to break free from the distortions, and find one's true Self (Buddha nature). So breaking any of the links of the Chain of Causation assists one in breaking down the illusions. In Psychosynthesis we talk about clearing away blockages, synthesising sub-personalities and becoming more aware and centred in the Self.

This then is a connection between the Twelves Cycles of Truth and the essence of the Twelve Link Chain of Causation. Ultimately there is a truth relating to expressing our own truth, by becoming aware and acting from our *True Self*. The two are coming from different viewpoints. The Twelve Cycles of Truth are about expressing the truth, whereas the Twelve Links of Causation describe processes that obscure or distort the truth – the truth being an expression of one's *True Self*.

To me, expressing the truth of each individual's *True Self* will be the core of any model which can help the Western world heal and bring about the necessary change for a sustainable society that lives in harmony with the environment rather than trying to fix the things we keep breaking, or fix the things we don't understand (which aren't broken).

The [Haudenosaunee](#) (Iroquois Confederacy) people embodied this in their recognition of the sovereignty of each individual. The [Great Law of Peace](#) contained three principles (although I find two of them repeated in various sources, the final one is varied depending on the source).

When making decisions under the Great Law of Peace, the Three Principles are:

Righteousness: meaning that the good of all the nation (which is viewed as a family) must be taken into account, and the needs of seven generations to come. This would effectively mean that decisions would have to offer viable solutions for the next one to two hundred years.

Power: meaning that the power of the people must be maintained, including the equal sovereignty of men and women. It also means the people acting in accordance with what is best for all, ie. United in their decisions. This is the ultimate in democracy, power to the people, for the people, by the people. It is important to recognise this is **not** power over, which is what the current paradigm and current regimes embrace.

Peace / Health: Peace fits in with the fact it is the Great Law of Peace, so is included first. Basically the Law is around maintaining peace at virtually any cost. If people are willing to work towards what is best for everyone then this is easily achievable. As a last resort a nation (or person) is entitled to use reasonable means protect themselves. Health is related to peace, in that a healthy mind, body and spirit (and emotions!) create a healthy individual. This leads to a healthy society that promotes peacefulness and well being of all individual members of the society.

There is much more of great worth that the Haudenosaunee people had within their Confederacy, which fleshes out the common law and rules. The proof is in the pudding, and the common Law allowed six nations (originally five) to co-exist and put an end to constant warring and cannibalism.

I believe this model can still work. It, however, needs a commitment from those involved to actually live the principles, which I believe can be summarised in terms familiar with Psychosynthesis practitioners.

Self-responsibility is necessary to maintain one's health and personal power. Being in touch with one's own needs and emotions, and preferably one's own Higher Self. One needs to be working towards living their own truth, their own purpose in life. While in line with their Higher Self they will be acting in the best interests of all involved.

One needs to work towards good health, especially emotional health, which is a part of Western Society, especially amongst men, which is in desperate need of healing and renewal. When one is in harmony within they are able to be more in harmony with the external world also.

There has to be a willingness to practice forgiveness and unconditional love of self and others, accepting that we are human and will make mistakes.

The most important thing for inter-personal relationships, whether in partnership, community, or nation is open communication and a willingness to work together to find solutions to problems that meets the needs of everyone best. In Psychosynthesis this is finding the "And".

Ultimately, I believe it is the only way the world can go if we want to sustain it (and our human race) for any reasonable length of time. At current rates we are serious damaging the planet, and destroying societies and lives through our actions. We need a global shift in consciousness allowing people to move into a new way of thinking where all citizens of nations can genuinely participate in the governance of their people. This is achievable, I do not doubt it, but until (collectively) we are willing to let go of the model of *power over* and allow a model of *self empowerment* to be our guiding principle for attaining peace things will not change.

However, on a not so gloomy note, I believe the implementation of any of the principles, even partially, by groups, societies, or nations, will began a process of healing which will allow the necessary changes to take place.

Psychosynthesis Notes 1

The following are various notes and chapter summaries of Roberto Assagioli's book *Psychosynthesis*. Although I found the text, so far, to be reasonably clinical (e.g. use of many clinical terms, such as patient rather than client) it was no more difficult than a standard Psychology book, but in general more interesting and relevant to my interests.

I also noted that in the first part of the book the work "spiritual" seldom appears, instead the word "religious" is used.

In part, it is difficult to know what was the original "spirit" of Assagioli's work, and what has been 'lost' in translation. I also realise that Assagioli was primarily a Psychiatrist and a product of his time, so there is a tendency for 'drier' (more structured?) writing than is common in many modern books which are more aimed at a wide audience of the general public, rather than those within the medical and psychological fields.

In the first part of this book, there is some confusion over what the "stages of the will" actually are. They are listed as follows:

1. deliberation 2. motivation, 3. decision, 4. affirmation, 5. persistence, 6. execution

Later they are listed as:

1. goal, valuation, motivation 2. deliberation, 3. decision, 4. affirmation, 5. planning, 6. direction of the execution.

In part this is a subtle change, but it also may show a development and growth of Assagioli's philosophy. It may also be due to 2 different translators or translations. It is also possible the first list was listed out of order.

It is the deliberation and decision stages which are in many ways divergent to Jay Ray's teachings on Psychosynthesis, as the deliberation is a 'thinking' process which leaves one in the head. Combining the two stages (2 & 3) a choice is still made. In part the intellect may be engaged, as in asking "how do I feel about this?" leading to listening to one's feelings, then answering "it feels wrong, I choose not to do it" or "it feels right, I choose to do it".

It is more appropriate within Jay Ray's teaching to have a deliberation phase after 6, execution, to learn and draw wisdom from the experience, rather than wasting time in circular thinking before acting.

This was summarised in 1st year in Jay Ray's lesson on The "And" Principle:

Appropriate: 1) Sense 2) Feel 3) Act 4) Think

Inappropriate: 1) Sense 2) Feel 3) Think 5) Act (learnt in childhood)

I noticed Assagioli comment on the "Spirit of Synthesis" in one paragraph, and it brought to mind the concept (doctrine) of the 4 Elements in Western Qabalistic thought, where Earth, Air, Fire and Water are brought together (synthesised) into harmony to give rise to Spirit (i.e. all 4 elements when in harmony are pure/refined spirit).

I was intrigued to read a comment by Assagioli that the most important results in Psychotherapy have come about from independent researchers rather than academic psychologists. This is perhaps due to the independent researchers (seemingly he refers mainly to medical and psychiatric doctors) have a great deal of experiential evidence and build their theories from observing a vast array of clients, rather than formulating theories based on laboratory experiments, other people's theories, or personal fancy.

The first half of Chapter One I found to be a little vague, just naming authors and theories to give an overview of some areas of transpersonal psychology. I saw it to be of little immediate value, but would be fine for looking deeper into various philosophies and research on transpersonal topics.

The way Assagioli describes the outer 'shell' of the Egg diagram is good, using the words "delimiting not dividing", which to me really encompasses the ideas of boundaries. Although we are all part of a oneness we have boundaries, which are very important to us as individuals. We are delimited by these boundaries, not divided (cut-off) from all else. The whole concept of an egg is great, as eggs are permeable even though seemingly hard shelled.

I found the talking about the personal self and the true self a little confusing to start with. I didn't find this particularly clear. Overall though, to me, the personal self is us at our stage now, being able to find our centre, and be aware of our individual sub-personalities. The true self is once we have grown enough to really be on our true path, in touch (and in tune) with our Higher Self. This would make sense in a Qabalistic worldview also, where the Ruach (male) and Nephesch (female) parts of ourself are in conflict (as with the subs in Psychosynthesis worldview) but are eventually brought into harmony in an indivisible self, Yechidah.

I noted a quote in part of Chapter one which is very similar to something Jay had in one lesson, perhaps it was a direct quote from this book:

"We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves."

This makes a lot of sense to me, both from what I've learn in Psychosynthesis, and also looking at magical worldviews. For example, magicians would sometimes evoke a disease in the form of a "demon" which could be seen as externalising (so as to disidentify the illness) from themselves or their 'patient', then magically battling with it, to overcome it.

Where Assagioli talks about the Realization of One's True Self, it sounds to me like the esoteric concepts of "crossing the abyss" where one becomes a true "Adept". It is a uniting of the higher and lower functions / consciousness. With Assagioli the True Self is brought about by uniting the Self with the Higher Self.

Although different terminology is used, a part of chapter one talks about boundaries, especially where Assagioli talks about extraversion of the self. Some of this is not covered by Jay's course (so far at least), where Assagioli talks about indirect self-realisation, which is through someone else, and sounds a lot like co-dependency. However, the diagram given a little later looks very similar to Jay's diagram of how a therapist acts as a link between the client and their Higher Self to begin with, which is this same or similar idea to indirect self-realisation. Assagioli only covers it briefly here, but I don't see that in a limited sense, as a stage of one's self growth that an external dependency is necessarily detrimental. It occurs during childhood, of necessity, and in early adulthood could be appropriate for a time to allow one to begin to come aware of their own Self. If it goes on for too long however it become detrimental to growth and therefore of no value, and worse begins to restrict growth.

Assagioli also outlines 2 methods of approaching Self Growth. The first involves visualisation of an aim for the new personality. This is not really the approach of Jay's variety of Psychosynthesis, although to a degree it is used within sessions to establish 'ideal' or 'better' models for what one may become, or work towards.

The second approach, which is favoured by Jay's method is the intuitive method, of listening

to "the Spirit within" – guidance by the Higher Self, and following feelings and intuitions. While both methods have some merit, I personally favour the second approach on a broader, day-to-day level, while the visualised aim is great for sessions and working through particular issues.

A large section of Chapter 2 is the same as in the book "Spiritual Emergency" which I've already read and written ideas stemming from the book.

Towards the end of chapter 2 Assagioli talks about childish dependence carrying on in later life on either the parents or other individuals, which is really the root of co-dependence. Although Assagioli probably hadn't developed anything specific (at least terminology-wise) on co-dependence it certainly indicates he had experience dealing with and understanding these issues.

Psychosynthesis Notes 2

The following are various notes and chapter summaries of Roberto Assagioli's book *Psychosynthesis*. Overall I find the chapters just read to be easy enough to follow in most instances and I can understand some of where Assagioli is coming from.

It came to me that it would seem Assagioli is partly a product of his training in Freudian thought, and Psychiatry (and also his Qabalistic thought, although this doesn't easily show through in his writing, but there are the occasional comments which allude to it or would fit well with Qabala, especially where he talks about Spirituality. Because of the background of Assagioli, I can see how many of the differences between his "version" of Psychosynthesis and Jay Ray's "version" differ. Assagioli was really the seed or beginning point of Psychosynthesis, developing the system from his own theories and experiences, and from tools and techniques he had worked with in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy fields. His "version" carries with it an aura which is the product of his own Self. Jay Ray's "version" of Psychosynthesis carries an aura which is the product of her own Self, and living "sum total" of her experiences. Jay's Psychosynthesis and teachings draw on other things such Shamanism, and co-dependency, plus all of Jay's own insights and wisdom, and comes (in my opinion) from a much more Spiritual focal point, rather than the academic background of Assagioli (both Psychiatric/Freudian, and Qabalistic which tends to be very cerebral and academic in the main).

Some of Assagioli's writing tends to be a little unclear, and again this is possibly from the translation of from Italian. I find often where he is talking about the Self it is unclear exactly what he is getting at. He talks about the personal Self and the observing Self. At times it is unclear (to me) whether he sees these as different or the same.

I agree with some of the statements Assagioli makes and I originally came across some of them from other sources, and have come to understand and agree with the comments. Such things as:

- Techniques are only tools and can be modified. There is a high importance of the **principles** and the basic purpose of the entire endeavour. This to me is the experiential part of learning. Such things as the talks we are doing, it is the process, which is most important, not a right/wrong of the actual talk.
- All techniques can be modified at will, but should keep in mind the purpose of the therapy.
- From a previous mentor I learned (first from his theories, then from my experiences with him, and students of my own) that there is a high importance of the actual relationship between the Guide/Teacher/Therapist and the Student/Client. This in some ways is **more** important than the techniques used. Following on from the above, techniques are not the be-all and end-all of therapy (or anything really). Assagioli included a quote from L.W. Dobb to illustrate this point: "technicians tend to fall in love with, and then be corrupted by, psychological weapons." I have noticed

and had pointed out to me that this is often a common thing, people become hung-up in the technique. An example related to me was in Golden Dawn circles people became known as "astral junkies" because they became totally absorbed in astral projection, and spend all their free time doing it. This is a form of escapism. In another instance, a friend of mine I spoke to for the first time in about 8 years (we'd lost contact), is now involved in hypnosis and self-hypnosis and was telling me how it is the be-all and end-all of 'therapy'. However, to me hypnosis is simply one technique that may be used, and I also have serious doubts as to whether it is viable long term at letting people become consciously aware of their problems and limitations. Overall I believe that techniques are just tools and can be discarded (temporarily or permanently) when they no longer give the desired results, and a new technique used. I believe it is about being open to possibilities and not limiting one's focus.

I noted in this section that Assagioli appears to have concepts (boxes) about different groups or types of people. There are the "nervous patients", "normal people", academic / well educated people (who should easily be able to understand Assagioli's concepts!), and people of varying degrees of "culture". I find this limiting, and not truly recognising the individual, unique essence within people. I can understand that at times it is hard not to be judgemental, and view one's Self as being 'above' the rest of the crowd, and in some ways I don't feel this is wrong, as long as there is an overall recognition that everyone is on their own journey, and everyone is different rather than there being a 'better' / 'worse' category. A quote I like (which from memory is attributed to an Apache Indian) is "love your enemy, but hate his behaviour". To me this captures some of the essence of recognition of uniqueness. People are all human beings with a unique gift for us, even if that is in the way of a huge learning experience that we might find extremely unpleasant, distasteful or abusive. While we may find their actions abhorrent we can still step back and look at the bigger picture, learn from them, about ourselves, and recognise that they are still a human being at the bottom of it all, just lacking in many of the skills necessary for personal interaction which can be considered appropriate or respectful. In the main I would suggest it is nurture, not nature, which creates aberrant human behaviour, but also believe that in a greater scheme of things even the 'vilest' of people are here to help and aid the conscious evolution of humanity.

I don't feel that it is useful to put clients into boxes or be judgemental on them as to their academic abilities or "culture". Anyone seeking any kind of Self development or psychosynthesis, no matter how small the degree they are capable of achieving or committing too, deserves a lot of credit. In this respect I like Jay's approach of breaking down the concepts of Psychosynthesis to be digestible by the lowest common denominator. Psychosynthesis is a powerful concept (or set of concepts / world view) that it should not be limited only to those of high academic calibre, but to anyone who seeks to know themselves or overcome issues or problems they have.

Essentially Assagioli's philosophy agrees with my statements, as he says true integration and growth require more than mere analytical treatment, rather the use of active techniques. This leaves for a very broad scope to achieve the aims of psychosynthesis, and doesn't require much in the way of academic ability.

Chapter 3

In chapter 3 Assagioli begins to outline techniques used. He starts off by stating that the first step is knowledge of both the conscious and unconscious aspects of one's personality. I agree with this approach, initially studying any issues we feel we need to address, and/or are consciously aware of. Undoubtedly, from my experiences, exploring what we consciously know, through the techniques of psychosynthesis, quickly leads us into the unconscious areas and starts bringing up issues for us to look at which we were not originally aware of. So while I agree in the main with Assagioli that we have to understand the conscious before we explore the unconscious, I don't believe the two areas are really separable, and looking

at what we know will undoubtedly lead us into learning about what we don't know (what is sub- or un- conscious at present). I disagree in one sense also, that if we spend a lot of time just going over what is consciously known we will begin to go around in circles. I believe an understanding only comes with a thorough exploration of conscious and unconscious attributes. And understanding is something which is multileveled or multi-dimensional. While we may believe we understand something well enough, over time our understandings change, so there is no need to **thoroughly** understand anything before you explore a little deeper into the unknown. Once more is actually brought into conscious awareness our understanding then becomes to deepen and become more full.

Assagioli is quite clear that he considers a scientific attitude as very important part of Psychosynthesis. The scientific attitude is always trying to look at things objectively in a reductionist way. In contrast, the Psychosynthesis of Jay's is far more subject, about what feels right to us as an individual. Overall, it is more holistic. This makes greater sense with me and I feel is more appropriate and beneficial for individual uniqueness and growth. Further, even modern social psychology asserts the importance of subjectivity. A quote I read went roughly along the lines of the following: "Before you enter a building you only need to know subjectively that the roof won't fall on your head to give you the confidence to feel safe inside it. You do not need an engineer to give you a report on the building." In this manner, acting out of the subjective approach we are more involved in the experience rather than a passive observer.

However, having said all this, there is indeed an important role for objectivity. I see, in the main, that working with the Higher Self and going into the Higher Self energy to look at issues gives an objective approach. This fits in with subjective = temporal and objective = transpersonal / transcendent.

Assagioli also looked at freeing oneself of emotions while looking at issues. He described emotions as "disturbing and distorting". This is where Jay's teaching differ greatly, as do my own beliefs. Emotions can be "disturbing (more so) and distorting (less so)" when one is not familiar with emotions, as many of us are in present society, especially men. However, emotions are critical in being human, and alive. Once one learns to accept emotions, even "disturbing" emotions can be experienced with relatively less discomfort, and far from being distorting they help clarify the picture. Assagioli's relegation of emotions to "distorting" fits in with his sense -> feel -> think -> act model, as thinking in his opinion is critical at making the "correct" decision, and more appropriate to scientific thought and method. Acting on something that may be disturbing is not necessarily rational. However, feelings and emotions are something that have developed within humans and other animals for very important reasons and in humans aid, and are aided by an analytical mind. The analytical mind helps give us self-awareness, and the ability to look outside the now, with reflection and heuristic abilities, we can add to what we know through direct experience. Verbal and written communication is also aided by the analytical mind. However, we remain very much entities existing in the "now", so need the feedback our thoughts and emotions provide us to exist within the flow of things, rather than the rough ride trying to rationalise and second-guess life provides.

Techniques

As an overall comment, some of the techniques are used by Jay and some are not. To me, some are useful and some are less useful, although individuals may find some value in doing them. Some I have mixed feelings on, and some I think are academic exercises and don't really assist in Psychosynthesis. Some would appear to derive from Freudian Psychoanalysis.

3. Biography – As with many other techniques, I don't doubt that there would be value in doing an auto-biography. It is not something Jay has taught in her class. I don't think it is necessary to get a biography from a client before working with them. The client will relay their past to you during sessions anyway. For an individual there could be plenty of benefit in writing a biography for personal use and as a

therapeutic tool, especially when compared to and combined with the Family of Origin (Origin of Traits).

4. Diary – this is something Jay mentions but has given no specific information on. I've kept a diary on and off for about 6 years, and find it a valuable personal tool for seeing progress and growth, and expressing ideas and emotions. I am in two minds about giving a diary to a therapist (or anyone else for that matter) to read. I have been in a situation where a mentor has read my journal, and also in a position I've let other people read my journal. I've also been in the possession that a mentor had copies of my journal stolen by a third party who then related personal details of mine to someone else (in this case an ex-girlfriend). While there was some anger at the third party, I felt sufficiently 'together' that it didn't particularly worry me. However, some of my other journals and journal entries contained much more open and honest writings and I would have felt rather nervous about what could be done with the information contained within.

5. Origin of Traits. This was basically what Jay presented in first year as Family of Origin. I find it personally very useful, and continue to find its relevance in my continuing growth and learning about my issues and their genesis.

6. Conscious Complexes. This would appear to stem from Freudian psychoanalysis. We don't tend to talk about complexes, certainly not "mother complexes" or "father complexes". To me, the closest things that fit in are talking about "issues" (which is far more general), or conglomerate sub-personalities. This is however quite different than what Assagioli discusses.

7. Polarities, Ambivalences and Conflicts. We talk about polarities, particularly with sub-personalities. Jay has not used the word ambivalences, but we have discussed switching between the two polar opposite sub-personalities. Conflicts have also been covered in Jay's course in some form or another, although perhaps under the terminology "blockages".

8. Sub-personalities. This seemed to be similar enough to Jay's material. The thrust of what Assagioli was saying is that the aim is to synthesise subs without repressing useful traits. This makes sense, and is basically what is done with the "And" process (which is another name for Synthesis anyway).

9. Traits belonging to preceding psychological ages. This is not really covered by Jay. To me it seems far more clinical and about labelling, rather than just experiencing and expressing. The closest thing of relevance I noted was talking about infantile traits, which we would discuss as being related to the Inner Child. I don't see any particular benefit to labelling traits as being infantile, adolescent or adult. I find more use in labelling things as appropriate or inappropriate for our continued growth, happiness, fulfilment and well-being.

10. Constitution of Man. It was interesting that Assagioli suggested giving this lecture to "well educated people"… it seems a little pretentious that he wasn't offering a system for the "common person" but one of well educated peers. I did however notice his comments on it being a "working hypothesis" which fits in with my thinking of things being a map, not the territory.

11. The Self. Nothing to say on this.

12. The Will. Assagioli sees this as primarily unconscious motivation. He discusses both the will of the personal self and the unconscious will. He talks about bringing the Will of the Higher Self in line with the Will of the personal Self. I'd suggest it was the other way around, that the personal Self needs to align more closely with the Higher Self to be on one's own path. In esoteric circles this is the process of Initiation, and finding one's True Will.

13. Valuation. I agree with a lot of what Assagioli discusses (in general). I see that in general people will be happy to look at "Higher Self" stuff, but when looking into the shadow Self there is a serious devaluation there, as shadow and lower energies are

looked at in a negative (moral/ethical) way. Assagioli talks about helping "the patient to more mature values" which to me is rather moralistic and ethical. To me, what is essentially important is continued survival and functionality, experiences, sensations, feelings and thoughts. Values have little merit, especially in the bigger picture. Values have immense value in aesthetics. I agree with Assagioli that values are relative to the individual, age, general condition and stage of therapy.

Psychosynthesis Notes 3

The following are various notes and chapter summaries of Roberto Assagioli's book *Psychosynthesis*.
Chapter 4
Catharsis – I have some mixed views on Catharsis. I can understand that if it is done correctly it can indeed lead to an emotional discharge. It is stuck in my mind for some reason though, from first year Psychology, that Catharsis is a myth. It seems something which is still contended today. For me, I can understand the rational behind Catharsis being a 'myth'. If other aspects of the personality are not changed also, then the emotion which one is discharging can build up to new levels, ie. If anger, it could go from mild anger, to more and more explosive anger, however it may take a lot more to push the buttons so to speak. I can relate to this from personal experience. Even now, I'm not sure that certain things wouldn't set off a blind rage. However, I would suggest that where the 'failing' is, is not in Catharsis itself, but in integration of the sub-personalities one is acting out of. Once these other areas are dealt with, and integrated / synthesised and emotion is discharged through Catharsis, then true resolution can be achieved.
The other 'problem' I have with Catharsis is from an esoteric / spiritual point of view, and can be somewhat moralistic. I've had suggested to me that one can visualise the person, or people, who have 'wronged' you in the past, and direct your anger and aggression at them. To me though, this would be an act of black magic, and contravenes the 'not harming others' maxim. Theory: magic = creating change through a willed act. Therefore utilising intense emotional discharge, focused intently via the will at a target can indeed bring about change. Beyond 'right' and 'wrong' I'm in two minds as to whether retribution type magic is valid or appropriate. Seeking the understanding from within the event is perhaps more appropriate for me.
Assagioli talks about symbolic satisfaction and the act of symbolic retaliation as though it is a good thing, but I wonder if it is more acting out of subpersonalities, and that learning unconditional love and forgiveness techniques may be more beneficial and appropriate.
I still have much to ponder on here.
Self Identification – I don't really have a lot to comment on this. I see it has great merit to be able to see that one has a centre, which exists no matter what the condition of the mind, emotions or body. It can allow a powerful space to work from when overwhelmed by emotions or internal/external conflict. And conversely, being able to strongly identify with an emotion, feeling, thought, or body part can be extremely useful and provide a powerful space to learn and grow from also. To me, all this starts to get to the core of 'Know Thyself', from where one can really being to grow and start to learn what indeed am 'I', what is my 'Self' and what is it's place in the big picture and the small picture. Perhaps these techniques, of disidentification and identification could be seen as revealing the seed of the 'Self' from which can grow the overall personality (in it's renewed form, free of the previous lack of understanding, and unconscious control by sub-personalities).
The Will – The Will is something I need to spend a lot more time on contemplating and learning about. I can understand some of what Assagioli is putting across, and parts I agree with, and parts I disagree with. Many of his exercises seem to be around strengthening determination, which he seems to use synonymously with the Will. To me these two things are vastly different. One can be extremely determined, but if one doesn't actually **will** the act (through blockages) then 'failure' to perform is inevitable. An example of this from a

personal point of view would be when I was in Doubtful Sound and went swimming at 6:00am in the cold water of the sounds. I made the choice to go swimming, got all ready and stood at the end of the boat. I basically said 1, 2, 3, go… but I didn't jump in. There were **fears** coming up surrounding the depth of the water and it's temperature. It took 3-4 attempts to actually mobilise my body to take the plunge. This is comparative to Jay's technique for demonstrating the Will by holding one's arm out in front of them, deciding to drop it, but not actually dropping it, then finally dropping it. The Will then is the 'thing' that transfer concept into action. From form to force maybe.

A lot of Assagioli's techniques seem to me to be incidental to actually following one's life path. To me, in esoteric terms, one is to find one's "True Will". To me, this comes from the centred Self, and essentially the Higher Self. I don't see that it needs 'strengthening' but uncovering (dis-covering). There is merit in doing some of the exercises Assagioli suggests, for sure, for instance if one is working in a mundane job then framing tasks in the light of exercises to achieve more spiritual or therapeutic ends can be beneficial. On the other hand, it could be suggested it is more advantages to discover what the reason behind being involved in this kind of work is, the mechanisms and energies which have lead to this situation in life, and what it reflects or relates to on an inner level. And if it is something which makes one extremely unhappy then I would suggest it is out of line with the True Will and life path. And energy is being wasted on doing something unnecessary.

On "the performing of useless exercises" I would suggest that most government departments do a lot of this, with very little real achievement, I would conclude it is not really very effective at 'strengthening' the Will. From more spiritual perspectives, performing of any mundane exercise, as mentioned above, can be used to draw enlightenment from (as Zen asserts also).

The only other comment I have to make on the Will at the moment is that it seems around the time of Assagioli there seemed to be a lot of interest in various places about the Will. The occultist Aleister Crowley termed his system / religion "Thelema" which is Greek for Will. It is also suggested he 'stole' his idea in a large part of Francis Rabelais, whose book "Gargantua" talked about the Thelemites, in a not dissimilar fashion to Crowley. I believe Crowley claimed to have been Rabelais in an earlier life to get around this fact however…

Psychosynthesis Notes 4

The following are various notes and chapter summaries of Roberto Assagioli's book *Psychosynthesis*. Chapter 4 part 2

Imagination & Visualisation

I have no real problems with the stuff Assagioli talks about here. It is material I've covered a lot in the past 10 or so years, and in the main I both understand and agree with a lot of what he has to say. It also fits in with things I've been taught and worked with, and fits in with some of the Psychosynthesis course and "therapy" I've experienced. That said, I do wonder whether some is appropriate or necessary for working with the general public. A lot of what Assagioli talks about is great for someone who is interested in deeply working with their psyche, such as those of us who have chosen to do this course, or for others involved in spiritual practices or other therapies. I don't feel that the general public would be overly interested in spending many sessions practicing visualisation or imagination building skills, nor are they likely to want to do this in their own time. This does not invalidate the practices, only their relevance to therapy. Some of the ideas Assagioli suggests could be useful though to help a client learn to visualise or improve their imagination, but I'd suggest it is more appropriate if the client asks for more background information or feels they can't actually do these things easily or at all – and in which case this may be a sub-personality which can be explored rather than spend time re-inventing the wheel. In generalised terms we can all imagine and visualise, although I could understand that some people with brain

injuries or something may indeed be incapable of this – however they are unlikely to be our clients.

I feel it is far more useful and appropriate to spend some time explaining that we can all imagine already, or at very least get a sense of something. I know from my own experience I was very hung up on being able to visualise things clearly as if they were before my open eyes. This is a mistake and misunderstanding that many people have, or at least a number of people I've met! Once I got past trying to see things and just allowed myself to feel and sense them I found that often I could see things anyway. In some of my early "trance work" sessions when studying magic my mentor was quite surprised I could go through an entire session productively without really seeing anything, only sensing things out.

I also like Jay's suggestion that if someone can't imagine things a certain way, ask them "if you could imagine it a certain way, how would it be."

In my early training, I was told that initially with trance work (which was seen as "astral work") it was fine initially to "make things up", basically to fill in the blanks, so the process of building a scene could be partly spontaneous and partly made-up. An example would be in an oasis scene, you're aware there is water, but if you can't see it, you could **imagine** it as being blue (because you know water is blue). However, it is important to not build up everything, even more so in therapy, because of the symbolic nature of things, and if water presents itself as red, orange or pink, then that is symbolic of something.

So, it is important to note (and explain to a client if necessary), that they should not try and force imagery to be 'correct', but that however something appears is fine. This fits in with the questioning techniques where sometimes it is explained to the client that what comes up may not be logical, but that is okay, and we'll work with it.

The only other comment I have for now on imagination and visualisation techniques is their usefulness for getting a 3D memory happening. We can relive experiences, or experience new things via imagination and visualisation to get feelings, emotions, visuals, sounds and kinaesthetic senses working (and taste and smell as well if necessary).

Some of the Psychosynthesis techniques we use visualisation heavily, such as getting an image or symbol for a sub-personality, or getting a sense of which part of the body feels different, or stands out, and what that feeling sounds like.

Plan of Psychosynthesis

Having a treatment plan is different than anything Jay has taught us this far, and I am unaware that it is to be taught. I have mixed feelings on the usefulness of a plan. For long term 'treatment' or training in a course situation it may work well. It is useful to have some form of a map as to where things should be leading.

However, in general, working with a client (having experienced it from a client's point of view) the main aim is to work with what is currently coming up, then go back to the earliest memories where beliefs formed, and work on changing the belief structures to allow for the desired change in belief / behaviour (ie. To make life 'easier' or at very least to allow it to flow).

In general, we know where we need to be heading with a client – leading them to be more aware and responsible of their Self (and higher Self) and their own feelings, emotions and needs, and away from external dependencies (especially with regards to relationships).

Some of this can be covered with the client, as the need arises, but the way I see it, unless a client expresses interest in learning the background to things then there really isn't time in a session to cover teaching.

Working spontaneously with what presents itself in a session, and giving a little bit of teaching as appropriate to help them understand the process seems "best" to me. This makes the process very experiential, rather than long sessions of 'learning' and leaving the client to tie the experience with the concepts they learnt weeks ago.

Ideal Models

I find it thought provoking a lot of the concepts Assagioli gives here, particularly on the models we find ourselves faced with, both the models we hold of our Self, and the models

we are confronted by of how others see us. The most important one I see is the one that we can become (which I think is where Ferrucci got the title for his book, What we may be.) Finding our potential, our place in life is what I consider to be one of the main things when studying the Self and the psyche. It is unfolding our Self, rather than trying to live up to an "ideal model" though. We are already our Ideal Model. I believe it is part of the process to discover what makes us unique and walk the path which is ours to walk.

Symbol Utilisation

This seems to fit right in with Jungian stuff, so quite timely now we are starting work with Jung. I don't have too much to say on this right now, but do consider it important in varying aspects and to varying degrees, as appropriate. The most important thing is the subjective feelings, emotions and sensations that someone has in relation to a symbol. It can, when appropriate, be useful to look at symbols in their greater context, such as archetypal attributions. Symbols can play an important part in techniques, as mentioned above, when getting an image for a sub-personality perhaps. Likewise, symbols can be 'analysed' in dreams (what feelings and emotions they represent, what things symbolically mean to the individual). As life is all highly symbolic and outer and inner world reflect each other then a knowledge of working with symbols in therapy would seem to me to be a highly valuable skill and tool set. And to me, the main thing for me is the subjectivity of the symbolism though, what it means to me, or what it means to a client, and not being hung up on what it means to other people.

Psychosynthesis Notes 5

The following are various notes and chapter summaries of Roberto Assagioli's book *Psychosynthesis*.

Chapter 5 – Spiritual Psychosynthesis

This was probably the most interesting chapter for me, however I see that parts of it are not really appropriate for therapy work (at this stage in time anyway), and some is good background for the therapist or self-practitioner, however I wouldn't talk to most clients about it unless they showed an interest in the more spiritual side of things.

Assagioli again shows some of his sub-personalities coming through stating that spiritual is akin to the superconsciouness or "those functions generally not active in average man". I would disagree with Assagioli, unless things have changed a lot since his time I would suggest that people frequently (to a greater or lesser degree) have "spiritual" experiences and seek very hard to block them out (in general). I would say the functions are often not focused on, or their uses underdeveloped, but I do believe that anyone is capable of working in the superconscious / spiritual realms, with the proviso that they require certain belief structures, to make it worthwhile to them and give them the ability to 'tune in' to what is already there.

Overall, this chapter gives lots of thoughtful stuff on the topic of Spiritual Emergence. It is here that Assagioli also gets more Qabalistic. His diagram where he talks about the "second class of genius" bears a high resemblance to the Qabalistic Tree of Life. His points 8 (2 points labelled this) correspond to Binah (Understanding) and Chockmah (Wisdom). Point 6 is the Higher Self, or Kether on the Tree of Life.

Having said some of the above, I would also like to point out I disagree with a lot of what Assagioli says. For example his talk about genius sounds like it is coming from a sub also. It is judgemental (albeit of a 'positive' nature) to ascribe genius status to various of the people he does, and indeed only a matter of values with regards to the importance of various peoples input into the world. For example, a number of people challenge the assertion of Einstein's 'genius' – undoubtedly he had a few clever insights, but it is seldom talked about that he asked the questions and designed some of the equations which were later solved by others, and likewise his equations were drawn heavily on the works of those before him. And since him a lot has happened to confirm and refute various things that Einstein wrote. Likewise some contend that a modified Newtonian physics can account for everything

Einstein's models can, plus more. Potentially in a few hundred years time both Newtonian and Einsteinian models may well be outdated and seen as a small sub-set of a much larger and complete map of the 'physical' world, which may well include the Psyche / Psychology as a part of it.

It is useful however, from a spiritual point of view, to consider how and by what mechanisms things such as creativity, intuition etc, come about, and how we may gain more of this in our lives.

A lot of the techniques Assagioli talks about I don't feel a appropriate for therapy work, although again it depends on the client, and someone with an affinity for the spiritual, or in spiritual crisis may benefit from some of the techniques. The use of symbols is sort of an exception, and I would say all, or most, people can benefit from and work with symbols, as from what I understand the mind works in a symbolic fashion, and even language is symbolic (albeit generally more abstract). I recall having commented on symbolism in the past, so won't say much more than to reiterate that I consider it is important for the individual to draw their own meanings and feelings from a symbol. Looking at symbols in a larger context is something a client can do in their own time, or something a guide can mention as appropriate.

I was pleasantly pleased with the timeliness of reading this chapter, as parts of it fit in well with my talk. Things such as the Technique of Dialogue, in general terms (not Assagioli's specific / dry processes) can be useful, as is evidenced by the amount of dialoguing we do in sessions anyway. Getting someone to realise they have access to inner guidance and wisdom is an important part of therapy from a Psychosynthesis point of view (in my view). This gets people away from external dependencies, whether it be parents, a partner, or a therapist.

The Exercises for Spiritual Psychosynthesis appear to me to be akin to 'rituals' offered by various esoteric groups. Again I don't see that these would be appropriate for general therapy, nor do I see any specific benefits to the symbolism of the legend of the Grail or Dante's Divine Comedy, unless they already have some interest in these particular legends. Otherwise, from what I've seen the performance of rituals which one does not really 'sync' with becomes a rather dry and sterile 'going-through-the-motions'. As a starting point, the give a good idea of the sort of symbolism one can employ in a 'ritual' way.

The technique for the use of intuition has some interesting things to think about, and again it is the use of intuition and inner guidance that I see as being highly important. Thus, techniques can be made individual and personalised, to work best for one's Self.

Not really much else to comment on in this Chapter. A good overview of how Assagioli saw the spiritual side of Psychosynthesis, but contains little of real use for me, or for use in therapy. I find it far more useful the course that Jay teaches, combined with my previous background in various spiritual and esoteric disciplines.

Psychosynthesis Notes 6

The following are various notes and chapter summaries of Roberto Assagioli's book *Psychosynthesis*.

Chapter 6 - Technique of Imaginative Evocation of Interpersonal Relationships

Not much to say on this. This is something we use in Psychosynthesis frequently, mainly for going to past wounds and talking to the people involved. Likewise, it is similar to what is used extensively in magical practices I was involved in, where a person could be "called up" and talked to. I have personally had a varying degree of success with this technique, but definately believe it works for dealing with future situations. Dialoguing with people from past situations has also been greatly beneficial in my personal growth.

Chapter 7 - Music as a cause of Disease and as a Healing Agent

No too much to say here. Assagioli's background theory is sound (no pun intended), although then again, sound is also the background of his theory. I think over the years it has been clearly shown the sounds and music have great ability for healing and disease.

From the early Egyptians- part of a sacred text states the power of the voice "I am the girdle of the robe of the god Nu, which shineth and sheddeth light, which abideth in his presence and sendeth forth light into the darkness, which knitteth together the two fighters who live in my body through the mighty spell of the words of my mouth, which raiseth up him that hath fallen"

Prayer and Chant have long been used by healers and religious people. I have read claims that the Egyptian Pyramids were built using sound waves to lift the blocks into place, and likewise rumours about the Coral Castle in America which was built by an eccentric man seemingly without the use of power tools! I read an article about the Maori using singing to carve greenstone (otherwise it begs the question of how stone aged people carved greenstone), and even using song to make trees blossom out of season (although that was supposedly a demonstration).

Songs and nursery rhymes are sung to babies and children to calm and sooth, and likewise playing music to cows in milking sheds has been shown to improved the cows well being.

The Negative affects of sound are reasonably well known also. The Germans (I believe) had developed sound waves generators that could knock down buildings. Armies march out of cadence when crossing bridges as it is believed that a vibration would be set up which could make the bridge collapse.

Music has been linked to suicides, the first cases I've heard of were after the song "Gloomy Sunday", even the title sounds quite depressing. It also seems that many people who are depressed listen to depressing music. I've noticed with some of the music I listen to that this is the case, and Maria has commented similarly about her choices of music.

I've noticed the uplifting moods music can cause, and likewise experienced music as a catalyst for allowing my emotions to flow. In particular for me the songs seemed to strike a chord, and cause my emotions to be released when they had been blocked up. However, it is an important point that while the 2 songs helped me it doesn't make those 2 songs relevant to other people. That is where I would disagree with Assagioli on the use of classical music. I used to hate classical music and if someone had have tried playing it as a therapy I would not have been in the slightest open to it.

So again, with Assagioli's techiques and ideas I see a limit use. It is certainly an important aspect to know about and understand I believe, and something which could be used in a teaching situation or workshop, and maybe in a more clinical therapy model (where someone is living in a facility and attending a day programme or something), but I don't see it being very applicable to day to day therapy with clients.

Music is also another possible avenue for people to express their emotions, if applicable to their abilities, by playing music, or perhaps even just experimenting with rhythms (such as drumming) and tunes. Perhaps it could even be cathartic for someone to be noisy with a drum or drums as a contrast to being told to be quiet ("children should be seen but not heard" sort of thing) during childhood.

I had a bit of a chuckle at Assagioli talking about Beethoven's 9th Symphony which if I'm not mistaken was Alex's (in A Clockwork Orange) favourite bit of music, and yet he was a very violent person.

Alexander Scriabin was also mentioned by Assagioli which is interesting. I found Scriabin's music to be quite stormy. He is interesting for having devised a light show to accompany music, although it didn't catch on at the time! (not until disco really).

The Magician

By Lord Lytton
Introduction
(from: "The Nightmare Reader" by Peter Haining)

Edward George Lytton Bulwer (1803 - 73), author of that classic horror story "The Haunted and the Haunters" (sometimes known as "The House and the Brain"), is the first of our

contributors to have found his inspiration from dabbling in the darker recesses of the occult and black magic. He in fact had a life packed with macabre experiences, beginning with the day in his youth which he spent in a haunted room in Knebworth House ("I looked with bristling hair into the shadowy abysses of hell" he recorded in his diary), followed by his own experiments to raise spirits and finally his tutelage in occultism by Eliphas Levi, the renowned nineteenth-century French mystic.

According to his autobiography, one of Lord Lytton's ancestors had been a magician and many of his own rituals were based on what he knew of this shadowy figure. Naturally this side of his life figured in his work, most notably in his underestimated novel of black magic, Zanoni (1842), which clearly shows its creator's deep understanding of mysticism. This book had in fact evolved from the following short story which Lord Lytton wrote while at the height of his occult experimentation in 1832. The tale is of considerable rarity and I am very delighted to be able to return it to print herewith.

* * *

It was deep night, and the Magician suddenly stood before me. "Arise," said he, "and let us go forth upon the surface of the world." I rose, and followed the sorcerer until we arrived at the entrance of a cavern. Pursuing its subterranean course for some minutes,- with the rushing sound of imprisoned waters loud and wild upon the ear, we came at length into a colder and fresher atmosphere; and presently, through a fissure in the rock, the sudden whiteness of the moon broke in, and partially lit up walls radiant with spars, and washed by a deep stream that wound its mysterious way to the upper air. And now, gliding through the chasm, we stood in a broad cell, with its lofty arch open to the sea. Column and spire, brilliant with various crystallizations - spars of all hues, sprang lightly up on either side of this cavern; and with a leap and a mighty voice, the stream, whose course we had been tracking, rushed into the arms of the great sea. Upon that sea, star after star mirrored its solemn lustre; and the moon, clad in a fuller splendour than I had ever before seen gathered round her melancholy orb, filled the cavern with a light, which was to the light of day what the life of a spirit is to that of a mortal. Passionless, yet tender - steadfast - mystic - unwavering - she shone upon the glittering spars; and in a long line, from the cavern to the verge of heaven, her sweet face breathed a quiet joy into the rippling billows - 'smiles of the sea.' A few thin and fleecy clouds alone varied the clear expanse of the heavens. And,

"Beautiful," said I, "is this outward world! - your dim realms beneath have nothing to compare with it. There are no stars in the temples of the hidden earth - and one glimpse from the lovely moon is worth all the witchfires and meteors of the giant palaces below."

"Young mortal," said the Wizard in his mournful voice, "thou beholdest my native shore. Beside that sea stood my ancestral halls - and beneath that moon first swelled within my bosom the deep tides of human emotion - and in this cavern, whence we now look forth on the seas and heavens, my youth passed some of its earnest hours in contemplations never known to your lesser race clogged with the mire of ages: for that epoch lies remote in primeval times, which even tradition scarcely pierces. Your first fathers - what of their knowledge know ye? - what of their secrets have ye retained? Their vast and solemn minds were never fathomed by the plummet of your researches. The waves of the black Night have swept over the ancient world; and you can only guess of its buried glories by the shivered fragments which, ever and anon, Chance casts upon the shores of the modern Time."

"Do we sink, then," said I, "by comparison with the men of those distant dates? Is not our lore deeper and more certain? Was not their knowledge the imperfect offspring of confused conjecture? Did they not live among dreams and shadows, and make Truth herself the creature of fantastic Fable?"

"Nay," replied the shrouded and uncertain form beside me, "their knowledge pierced into the heart of things. They consulted the stars - but it was to measure the dooms of earth; and could we recall from the dust their perished scrolls, you would behold the mirror of the

living times. Their prophecies, wrung from the toil and rapture of those powers which ye suffer to sleep, quenched, within the soul, traversed the wilds of ages, and pointed out among savage hordes the cities and laws of empires yet to be. Ten thousand arts have mouldered from the earth, and Science is the shadow of what it was. Young mortal, thou hast set thine heart upon Wisdom - thou hast wasted the radiant hours of opening life amidst the wearisome thoughts of doting sages: thou hast laboured after Knowledge, and in that labour the healthful hues have left thy cheek, and the worm of decay creeps into the core of thy youth while the dew is yet upon its leaf: - and for this labour - and in the transport and the vision that the soul's labour nurtures - thy spirit is now rapt from its fleshly career on earth,- wandering at will among the chasms and mines wombed within the world - breathing a vital air among the dead,- comraded by Spirits and the Powers that are not of flesh,- and catching, by imperfect glimpse and shadowy type, some knowledge of the arch mysteries of Creation; - and thou beholdest in me and in my science that which thy learning and thy fancy tracked not before. No legend ever chanced upon my strange and solemn being: nor does aught of my nature resemble the tales of wizard or sorcerer that the vulgar fantasies of superstition have embodied. Thou hast journeyed over a land without a chart, and in which even fable has hackneyed not the truth. Thou wouldst learn something of the Being thus permitted to thy wonder; - be it so. Under these sparkling arches - and before my ancestral sea - and beneath the listening ear of the halting moon - thou shalt learn a history of the antique world."

The Tale of Kosem Kesamim

"Along the shores which for thirty centuries no human foot has trod, and upon plains where now not one stone stands upon another, telling even of decay - was once the city and the empire of the Wise Kings; for so termed by their neighbours were the monarchs that ruled this country. Generation after generation they had toiled to earn and preserve that name. Amidst the gloom of mysterious temples and the oracular learning of the star-read priests, the youth of each succeeding king was reared into a grave and brooding manhood. Their whole lives were mystery. Wrapped in the sepulchral grandeur of the imperial palace; seen rarely, like gods, they sent forth, as from a cloud, the light of their dread but benignant laws: the courses of their life were tracked not - but they were believed to possess a power over the seasons and elements, and to summon, at their will, the large-winged spirits that flit to and fro across the earth, governing, like dreams, with a vague and unpenetrated power the destiny of nations and the career of kings.

There was born to this imperial race a son, to whom seer and king alike foretold a strange and preternatural fate. His childhood itself was of a silent, stern, and contemplative nature. And his learning, even in his boyish youth, had ransacked all that the grey priests could teach him.

But when wind encounters wind the meeting is warfare - the warfare is storm. Wind meets with wind when the mind of youth soars from earth to seek wisdom and the heart of youth ranges heaven to find love."

The Magician paused for a moment, and then, in a voice far diferent from the cold and solemn tone in which his accents were usually clothed, he broke forth: -

"O, beautiful, beyond the beauty of these sicklied and hoary times, was the beauty of Woman in the young world! The glory of Eden had not yet departed from her face, and the lustre of unwearied Nature glowed alike upon earth and earth's majestic daughters. Age after age Man invents and deserts some worship of idols in his yearning for symbols of a Power beyond the reach of his vision and the guess of his reason. But never yet has he forsaken the oldest idolatry of all - the adoration of earthly beauty as the fairest image of celestial good. Yet to me, for I am that prince of whose throne and whose people no record in Time remains,- to me even the love of Beauty was a passion less ardent than the desire of Knowledge! My mind launched itself into the depth of things - I loved step after step to trace effect to its first cause. Reason was a chain from heaven to earth, and every link led me to aspire to the stars themselves. And the wisdom of my wise fathers was mine; I knew

the secret of the elements, and could charm them into slumber, or arouse them into war. The mysteries of that dread chemistry which is now among the sciences that sleep - by which we can command the air and walk on its viewless paths, by which we can wake the thunder, and summon the cloud, and rive the earth; the exercise of that high faculty - the Imagining Power - by which Fancy itself creates what it wills, and which, trained and exercised, can wake the spectres of the dead - and bring visible to the carnal eye the Genii that walk the world; - the watchful, straining, sleepless science, that can make a sage's volume of the stars; - these were mine, and yet I murmured - I repined! - what higher mysteries were yet left to learn! The acquisition of to-day was but the disappointment of the morrow, and the dispensation of my ambition was - to desire!

It was evening, and I went from the groves of the sacred temple to visit one whom I loved. The way spread over black and rugged masses of rock, amidst which the wild shrub and dark weed sprung rife and verdant; for the waste as yet was eloquent of some great revolution in the earlier epochs of the world - when change often trod the heels of change; and Earth was scarcely reconciled to the sameness of her calm career. And I stood beneath the tree where SHE was to meet me; my heart leaped within me as I saw her footsteps bounding along - she came with her sweet lips breathing the welcome of human love, and I laid my head on her bosom and was content.

And, "Oh," said she, "art thou proud of thy dawning fame? The seers speak of thee with wonder, and the priests bow their heads before thy name."

Then the passion of my soul broke forth, and I answered,- "What is this petty power that I possess, and what this barren knowledge? The great arch secret of all, I have toiled night after night to conquer, and I cannot attain it. What is it to command even the dark Spirits at war with Heaven - if we know not the nature of those whom we command? What I desire is not knowledge, but the source of knowledge. I wish that my eye should penetrate at once into the germ and cause of things: that when I look upon the outward beauty of the world, my sight should pierce within, and see the mechanism which causes and generates the beauty working beneath. Enough of my art have I learned to know that there is a film over human eyes which prevents their penetrating beyond the surface; it is to remove that film, and dart into the essence, and survey the One Great Productive Spirit of all Things, that I labour and yearn in vain. All other knowledge is a cheat; this is the high prerogative which mocks at conjecture and equals us with a God!"

Then Lyciah saw that I was moved, and she soothed me into rest with the coo of her sweet songs.

Midnight had crept over the earth as I returned homeward across that savage scene. Rock heaped on rock bordered and broke upon the lonely valley that I crossed; and the moon was still, and shining, as at this hour, when its life is four thousand years nearer to its doom. Then suddenly I saw moving before me, with a tremulous motion, a meteoric Fire of an exceeding brightness. Ever as it moved above the seared and sterile soil, it soared and darted restlessly to and fro; and I thought, as it danced and quivered, that I heard it laugh from its burning centre with a wild and frantic joy. I fancied, as I gazed upon the Fire, that in that shape sported one of the children of the Elementary Genii; and, addressing it in their language, I bade it assume a palpable form. But the Fire darted on unheedingly, save that now the laugh from amidst the flame came distinctly and fearfully on my ear. Then my hair stood erect, and my veins curdled, and my knees knocked together; I was under the influence of an awe; for I felt that the Power was not of this world, nor of any world of which the knowledge ye call magic had yet obtained a glimpse. My voice faltered, and thrice I strove to speak to the Light - but in vain: and when at length I addressed it in the solemn adjuration by which the sternest of the Fiends are bound, the Fire sprang up from the soil - towering aloft - with a livid but glorious lustre, bathing the whole atmosphere in its glare,- quenching, with an intenser ray, the splendours of the moon,- and losing its giant crest in the far Invisible of Heaven!

And a voice came forth, saying - "Thou callest upon inferior Spirits; I am that which thou hast pined to behold - I am The Living Principle of the World!"

I bowed my face, and covered it with my hands, and my voice left me; when again I looked round, behold, the Fire had shrunk from its momentary height, and was (now dwarfed and humble) creeping before me in its wavering and snake-like course. But fear was on me, and I fled, and fast fled the Fire by my side; and oft, but faint, from its ghastly heart came the laugh that thrilled the marrow of my bones. The waste was past, and the giant temple of the One God rose before me; I rushed forward, and fell breathless by its silent altar. And there sat the High Priest; for night and day some one of the sacred host watched by the altar; he was of great age, and the tide of human emotion had ebbed from his veins; but even he was struck with my fear, and gazed upon me with his rayless eyes, and bade me be of cheer, for the place was holy. I looked round; the Fire was not visible, and I breathed freely; but I answered not the Priest, for years had dulled him into stone, and when I rose his eye followed me not. I gained the purple halls set apart for the king's son. And the pillars were of ivory inlaid with gold; the gems and perfumes of the East gave light and fragrance to the air; the gorgeous banquet was spread; and music from unseen hands swelled from floor to roof as I passed along. But lo! by the throne, crouching beneath the purple canopy, I saw the laughing Fire; and it seemed, lowly and paled, to implore protection. I paused, and took the courtiers aside, and asked them to mark the flame; but they saw it not - only for me did it gleam and burn. Then knew I that it was indeed a Spirit of that high race, which, even when they take visible form, are not visible save to the students of the Dread Science! And I trembled but revered.

And the Fire stayed by me night and day, and I grew accustomed to its light. But never, by charm nor spell, could I draw further word from it; and it followed my steps with a silent and patient homage. By degrees there came over me a vain and proud delight to think that I was so honoured; and I looked upon the changeful face of the Fire as upon the face of a friend.

There was a man who had told years beyond the memory of the living - a revered and famous soothsayer - to whom, in times of dread and omen, our priests and monarchs themselves repaired for warning and advice. I sought his abode. The Seer was not of our race - he came from the distant waters of the Nile, banished by the hierophants of Egypt for solutions more clear than their own of the mysteries of Osiris and Naith. It was in the very cavern in which we now stand that the Seer held his glittering home - lamp upon lamp then lighted up, from an unfailing naphtha, these dazzling spars, hailed as a beacon by the seamen who brought the merchandize of the world into yonder bay, then so loud and swarming, now so desolate and still. Hither had my feet often turned in boyhood, and from the shrivelled lips of the old Egyptian had much of my loftiest learning been gleaned; for he loved me; and seeing with a prophet eye far down the lengths of Time, he foretold the dates at which Nations should be no more; and yet, far as he could look, beheld me living still; me, the infant he had cradled on his lap.

It was on that night, when the new moon scatters its rank and noxious influence over the foliage and life of earth, that I sought the Egyptian. The Fire burned with a fiercer and redder light than its wont, as it played and darted by my side. And when, winding by the silver sands, I passed into the entrance of the cave, I saw the old man sitting on a stone. As I entered, the Seer started from his seat in fear and terror - his eyes rolled - his thin grey hairs stood erect - a cold sweat broke from his brow - and the dread master stood before his pupil in agony and awe.

"Thou comest," muttered he with white lips. "What is by thy side? Hast thou dared to seek knowledge with the Soul of all Horror - with the ghastly Leper of ? Avaunt! bid the fiend begone!"

His voice seemed to leave the old man, and with a shriek he fell upon his face on the ground.

"Is it," said I, appalled by his terror - "is it the Fire that haunts my steps at which thou tremblest? Behold, it is harmless as a dog; it burns not while it shines: if a fiend, it is a merry fiend, for I hear it laugh while I speak. But it is for this, dread sire, that I have sought thee. Canst thou tell me the nature of the Spirit? - for a Spirit it surely is. Canst thou tell me its end and aim?"

I lifted the old man from the earth, and his kingly heart returned to him: he took the wizard crown from the wall, and he placed it on his brows; for he was as a monarch among the Things that are not of clay. And he said to the Fire - "Approach!" The Fire glided to his knees. And he said, "Art thou the Spirit of the Element, and was thy cradle in the Flint's heart?"

And a voice from the flame answered "No."

And again the Egyptian trembled.

"What art thou, then?" said he.

And the Fire answered, "Thy Lord."

And the limbs of the Egyptian shook as if in the grasp of death.

And he said, "Art thou a Demon of this world?"

And the Fire answered, "I am the Life of this world - and I am not of other worlds."

"I know thee - I fear thee - I acknowledge thee!" said the Egyptian; "and in thy soft lap shall this crowned head soon be laid."

And the Fire laughed.

"But tell me," said I,- for, though my blood stood still, my soul was brave and stern - "Tell me, O seer! what hath this Thing with me?"

"It is the Great Ancestor of us all!" said the Egyptian, groaning.

"And knows it the secrets of the Past?"

"The secrets of the Past are locked within it."

"Can it teach me that which I pine to know? Can it teach me the essence of things - the nature of all I see? Can it raise the film from the human gaze?"

"Hush, rash prince!" cried the Egyptian,- "Seek not to know that which will curse thee with the knowledge. Ask not a power that would turn life into a living grave. All the lore that man ever knew is mine; but that secret have I shunned, and that power have I cast from me, as the shepherd casts the viper from his hand. Be moderate and be wise. And bid me exorcise the Spirit that accosts thee from the Fire!"

"Can it teach me the arch mystery? When I gaze upon the herb or flower, can it gift my gaze with the power to pierce into the cause and workings of its life?"

"I can teach thee this," said the Fire; and it rose higher, and burned more fiercely, as it spoke, till the lamps of naphtha paled before it.

"Then abide by me, O Spirit!" said I; "and let us not be severed."

"Miserable boy!" cried the Egyptian; "was this, then, the strange and preternatural doom which my Art foresaw was to be thine, though it deciphered not its nature? Knowest thou that this Fire, so clear - so pure - so beautiful - is -"

"Beware!" cried the voice from the Fire; and the crest of the flame rose, as the crest of a serpent about to spring upon its prey.

"Thou awest me not," said the Egyptian, though the blood fled from his shrivelled and tawny cheeks. "Thou art-"

"The Principle of the Living World," interrupted the voice.

"And thine other name?" cried the Egyptian.

"Thy Conqueror!" answered the voice; and straight as the answer went forth, the Egyptian fell, blasted as by lightning, a corpse at my feet. The light of the Fire played with a blue and tremulous lustre upon the carcase, and presently I beheld by that light that the corpse was already passed into the loathsomeness of decay - the flesh was rotting from the bones - and the worm and the creeping thing which the rottenness generates, twined in the very jaws and temples of the Sage.

I sickened and gasped for breath.- "Is this thy work, oh fearful fiend?" said I, shuddering. And the Fire, passing from the corpse, crept humbly to my feet; and its voice answered - "Whatever my power, it is thy slave!"

"Was that death thy work?" repeated my quivering lips.

"Thou knowest," answered the Fire, "that death is not the will of any Power - save One. The death came from His will, and I but exulted over the blow!"

I left the cavern; my art, subtle as it was, gave me no glimpse into the causes of the Egyptian's death. I looked upon the Fire, as it crept along the herbage, with an inquisitive, yet timorous eye. I felt an awe of the Demon's power; and yet the proud transport I had known in the subjection of that power was increased, and I walked with a lofty step at the thought that I should have so magnificent a slave. But the words of the mysterious Egyptian still rang in my ear - still I shuddered and recoiled before his denunciation of the secret I desired to know. And, as I passed along the starry solitude, the voice of the Fire addressed me with a sweet and persuasive tone. "Shrink not, young Sage," it said, or rather sang, "from a power beyond that of which thy wisest ancestors ever dreamed; lose not thy valour at the drivelling whispers of age: when did age ever approve what youth desires? Thou art formed for the destiny which belongs to royal hearts - the destiny courts thee. Why dost thou play the laggard?"

"Knowledge," said I, musingly, "can never be productive of woe. If it be knowledge thou canst give me, I will not shrink. Lo! I accept thy gift!"

The Fire played cheerily to and fro. And from the midst of it there stepped forth a pale and shadowy form, of female shape and of exceeding beauty; her face was indeed of no living wanness, and the limbs were indistinct, and no roundness swelled from their vapoury robes; but the features were lovely as a dream, and long yellow hair - glowing as sunlight - fell adown her neck. "Thou wouldst pierce," said she, "to the Principle of the World. Thou wouldst that thine eye should penetrate into my fair and mystic dominion. But not yet; there is an ordeal to pass. To the Whole Knowledge thou must glide through the Imperfect!" Then the female kisses my eyes, and vanished, and with it vanished also the Fire.

Oh, beautiful! - Oh, wondrous! - Oh, divine! A scale had fallen from my sight - and a marvelous glory was called forth upon the face of earth. I saw millions and millions of spirits shooting to and fro athwart the air - spirits that my magic had never yet invoked - spirits of rainbow hues, and quivering with the joy which made their nature. Wherever I turned my gaze, life upon life was visible. Every blade of grass swarmed with myriads invisible to the common eye - but performing with mimic regularity all the courses of the human race; every grain of dust, every drop of water, was a world - mapped into countless tribes, all fulfilling mortal destinies through the agency of mortal instincts,- hunger and love and hate and contest. There was no void in space, no solitude in creation. Bending my eyes below, I saw emerging from the tiny hollows of the earth those fantastic and elfin shapes that have been chiefly consecrated by your Northern Bards: forth they came merrily, merrily - now circling in choral dances, now chasing gossamers whose airy substance eludes the glass of science. If all around was life, it was the life of enchantment and harmony - a subtle, pervading element of delight. Speech left me for very joy, and I gazed, thrilled and breathless, around me - entered, as it were, into the innermost temple of the great system of the universe.

I looked round for the Fire - it was gone. I was alone amidst this new and populous creation, and I stretched myself voluptuously beneath a tree, to sate my soul with wonder. As a Poet in the height of his delirium was my rapture - my veins were filled with Poesy, which is intoxication - and my eyes had been touched with Poesy, which is the creative power - and the miracles before me were the things of Poesy, which is the enchanter's wand.

Days passed, and the bright Demon which had so gifted me appeared not, nor yet did the spell cease; but every hour, every moment, new marvels rose. I could not touch stone nor herb without coming into a new realm utterly different from those I had yet seen, but

equally filled with life - so that there was never a want of novelty; and had I been doomed to pass my whole existence upon three feet of earth, I might have spent that existence in perpetual variety - in unsatisfied and eternally new research. But most of all, when I sought Lyciah I rejoiced in the gift I possessed; for in conversing with her my sense penetrated to her heart, and I felt, as with a magnetic sympathy, moving through its transparent purity, the thoughts and emotions which were all my own.

By degrees I longed indeed to make her a sharer in my discovered realms; for I now slowly began to feel the weariness of a conqueror who reigns alone - none to share my power or partake the magnificence in which I dwelt.

One day, even in the midst of angelic things that floated blissfully round me - so that I heard the low melodies they hymned as they wheeled aloft - one day this pining, this sense of solitude in life - of satiety in glory - came on me with intense increase of force. And I said, "But this is the Imperfect state; why not achieve the Whole? Why not ascend to that high and empyreal Knowledge which admits of no dissatisfaction, because in itself complete? Bright Spirit," cried I aloud, "to whom I already owe so great a benefit, come to me now - why hast thou left me? Come and complete thy gifts. I see yet only the wonders of the secret portions of the world - touch mine eyes that I may see the cause of the wonders. I am surrounded with an air of life; let me pierce into the principle of that life. Bright Spirit, minister to thy servant!" Then I heard the sweet voice that had spoken in the Fire - but I saw not the Fire itself. And the voice said unto me -

"Son of the Wise Kings, I am here!"

"I see thee not," said I. "Why hidest thou thy lustre?"

"Thou seest the Half, and that very sight blinds thee to the Whole. This redundant flow of life gushes from me as from its source. When the midcourse of the river is seen, who sees also its distant spring? In thee, not myself, is the cause that thou beholdest me not. I am as I was when I bowed my crest to thy feet; but thine eyes are not what then they were!"

"Thou tellest me strange things, O Demons" said I; "for why, when admitted to a clearer sight of things, should my eyes be only darkened when they turn to thee?"

"Does not all knowledge, save the one right knowledge, only lead men from the discovery of the primal cause? As Imagination may soar aloft, and find new worlds, yet lose the solid truths of this one - so thou mayest rise into the regions of a preternatural lore, yet recede darklier and darklier from the clue to Nature herself."

I mused over the words of the Spirit, but their sense seemed dim.

"Canst thou not appear to me in thine old, wan, and undulating brightness?" said I after a pause.

"Not until thine eyes receive power to behold me."

"And when may I be worthy that power?"

"When thou art thoroughly dissatisfied with thy present gifts."

"Dread Demon, I am so now!"

"Wilt thou pass from this pleasant state at a hazard - not knowing that which may ensue? Behold, all around thee is full of glory, and musical with joy! Wilt thou abandon that state for a dark and perilous Unknown?"

"The Unknown is the passion of him who aspires to know."

"Pause; for there is terror in thy choice," said the Invisible.

"My heart beats steadily.- I brave whatsoever be the penalty that attends on my desire!"

"Thy wish is granted," said the Spirit.

Then straightway a pang, quick, sharp, agonising, shot through my heart. I felt the stream in my veins stand still, hardening into a congealed substance - my throat rattled, I struggled against the grasp of some iron power. A terrible sense of my own impotence seized me - my muscles refused my will, my voice fled - I was in the possession of some authority that had entered, and claimed, and usurped the citadel of my own self. Then came a creeping of the flesh, a numbing sensation of ice and utter coldness; and lastly, a blackness, deep and solid as a mass of rock, fell over the whole earth - I had entered DEATH!

From this state I was roused by the voice of the Demon. "Awake, look forth! - Thou hast thy desire! - Abide the penalty!" The darkness broke from the earth; the ice thawed from my veins; once more my senses were my servants.

I looked, and behold, I stood in the same spot, but how changed! The earth was one crawling mass of putridity; its rich verdure, its lofty trees, its sublime mountains, its glancing waters, had all been the deceit of my previous blindness; the very green of the grass and the trees were rottenness, and the leaves (not each leaf one and inanimate as they seemed to the common eye) were composed of myriads of insects and puny reptiles, battened on the corruption from which they sprang. The waters swarmed with a leprous life - those beautiful shapes that I had seen in my late delusion were corrupt in their several parts, and from that corruption other creatures were generated living upon them. Every breath of air was not air, a thin and healthful fluid, but a wave of animalculae, poisonous and foetid; for the Air is the Arch Corrupter, hence all who breathe die; it is the slow, sure venom of Nature, pervading and rotting all things; the light of the heavens was the sickly, loathsome glare that steamed from the universal Death in Life. The World was one dead carcass, from which everything the World bore took its being. There was not such a thing as beauty! - there was not such a thing as life that did not generate from its own corruption a loathsome life for others! I looked down upon myself, and saw that my very veins swarmed with a motelike creation of shapes, springing into hideous existence from mine own disease, and mocking the Human Destiny with the same career of life, love, and death. Me thought it must be a spell, which change of scene would annul. I shut my eyes with a frantic horror, and I fled, fast, fast, but blinded; and ever as I fled a laugh rang in my ears. I stopped not till I was at the feet of Lyciah, for she was my first involuntary thought. Whenever a care or fear possessed me, I had been wont to fly to her bosom, and charm my heart by the magic of her sweet voice. I was at the feet of Lyciah - I clasped her knees - I looked up imploringly into her face - God of my Fathers! the same curse attended me still! Her beauty was gone. There was no whole,- no one life in that Being whom I had so adored. Her life was composed of a million lives; her stately shape, of atoms crumbling from each other, and so bringing about the ghastly state of corruption which reigned in all else around. Her delicate hues, her raven hair, her fragrant lips - Pah! What, what was my agony! I turned from her again,- I shrank in loathing from her embrace,- I fled once more,- on - on. I ascended a mountain, and looked down on the various leprosies of Earth. Sternly I forced myself to the task; sternly I inhaled the knowledge I had sought; sternly I drank in the horrible penalty I had dared.

"Demon!" I cried, "appear, and receive my curse!"

"Lo, I am by thy side evermore," said the voice. Then I gazed, and, behold, the Fire was by my side; and I saw that it was the livid light which the jaws of Rottenness emits; and in the midst of the light, which was as its shroud and garment, stood a Giant shape - which was the shape of a Corpse that had been for months buried. I gazed upon the Demon with an appalled yet unquailing eye, and, as I gazed, I recognised in those ghastly lineaments a resemblance to the Female Spirit that had granted me the first fatal gift. But exaggerated, enlarged, dead,- Beauty rotted into Horror.

"I am that which thou didst ask to see face to face.- I am the Principle of Life."

"Of Life! Out, horrible mocker! - hast thou no other name?"

"I have! and that name - CORRUPTION!"

"Bright Lamps of Heaven!" I cried, lifting my eyes in anguish from the loathly charnel of the universal earth; "and is this, which men call Nature,- is this the sole Principle of the World?" As I spoke, the huge carcase beneath my feet trembled. And over the face of the corpse beside me there fell a fear.-And lo! the heavens were lit up with a pure and glorious light, and from the midst of them there came forth a Voice which rolled slowly over the charnel earth as the voice of thunder above the valley of the shepherd. "SUCH," said the Voice, "IS NATURE, IF THOU ACCEPTEST NATURE AS THE FIRST CAUSE - SUCH IS THE UNIVERSE WITHOUT A GOD!