

V. Empty Willing: The Psychotransformative
Significance of the
Contemplative Gesture

When we analyze with all the tools modern psychoanalysis brings us, we shall find ourselves pushed back to the level of attention or intention as the seat of will.

Rollo May, Love and Will

1. ATTENTION AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Without arguing about who is clever...
just do zazen. You will then naturally
improve.

Dōgen

a. The Question of Depth

Contemplative method, by the very fact of what it offers to man--the conformation of his living consciousness to Ultimate Reality (the Way, the Will of God)--claims to be a psychology of depth. Yet it differs starkly from the contemporary psychology that takes that adjective as its own in at least one crucial respect: contemplative method, as we have presented it through the writings of John and Dōgen, does not involve "the unconscious." More specifically, the psychotransformative paradigm behind contemplative praxis does not involve "bringing unconscious contents to consciousness." Neither John nor Dōgen pays particular attention to the examination or interpretation of the mind's autonomous productions in waking or dream life.

But neither does contemplative method spring to the usual alternative. It does not rely on conscious rationality over against an exploration of the unconscious. Rather, it stands a middle ground that refuses the lure of both. We have called this middle ground non-discursive attention. To understand its uniqueness, it will help us

to take a brief look at an operational paradigm of depth psychology.

Practitioners in the modern schools of depth psychology recognize two kinds of thinking, two languages, between which and by means of which psychic life is maintained. Freud's terms are primary and secondary process; Jung's non-directed and directed thinking. Primary process is the language or thought-process of the unconscious psyche. Like blood and breath it flows on ceaselessly beneath the surface skin of consciousness, a river of tendencies, impulses, predispositions, desires, anxieties and drives which influence and often determine behavior. Depth psychology attempts to alter behavior patterns by building bridges between secondary process (conscious rationality) and primary process though commerce on this bridge is conducted quite differently according to the different points of view of the schools.

For example, Freud saw primary process as basically unruly and chaotic, antagonistic to well-being, especially if left unconscious. Its instinctual demand and infantile character had to be tamed, educated and re-directed by the rational process if it was in any way to be turned from foe to friend. Jung, on the other hand, though warning of primary process' capacity to overwhelm and cripple conscious life, takes overall a more friendly view of it. Opposing Freud's tendency to see the psyche as an inexorable conflict of forces, Jung understands the domains of primary

and secondary process to be encompassed by a governing principle of equilibrium. Primary process is a friend to secondary process and, if consciously befriended, a boon to its life and creativity. It is a stream of affect, instinct and image that seeks somehow to describe and promote individual growth.

Despite different approaches, however, depth psychologists are united in their fascination with the vast, unexplored field of primary, non-directed mentation opened up by Freud's pioneering effort. It is little wonder that he, Jung and others invested all their creative energies in searching for the laws that governed this field. Nor is it surprising that their therapeutic, psychotransformative strategies came to rest on a single basic formula: the bringing of unconscious contents to consciousness. Different attitudes, as we have said, led to distinct ways of filling in the formula. Freud would defeat primary process, decipher its messages, explain it; Jung would befriend primary process, embrace its messages, consult it. Still, the "bringing of unconscious contents to consciousness" forms the strategic heart of each man's vision of psychological transformation.

The heart of the contemplative gesture, by contrast, is neither attention to primary process, nor reliance on secondary process nor any overt commerce between the two. It is, as far as we know, a form of mentation found nowhere but in spiritual tradition. This gesture, as we have argued

above, is the systematic, methodical use of non-discursive attention. It is neither primary process thinking nor secondary process thinking, but, as Dōgen calls it, non-thinking. The questions at hand are: is this gesture psychotransformatively effective--that is, does it alter the structural determinants of consciousness to a degree that merits the accolade "depth?" And, if so, how?

The answer to the first question from the camp of depth psychology, we might surmise, would be that it can do no such thing. Without an awareness of the unconscious or without a method of exploring and interpreting it, one is bound to be lived by it. The attempts of spiritual discipline to engender the "new man" without consulting the unconscious are attempts involving repression, regression and self-delusion on a grand scale.

But the record causes us to object. Certainly aberrant personalities dot the pages of religious history but generally speaking, the great contemplatives have offered images of the best that man can be. Regression and self-delusion probably attract little genuine love. Yet contemplatives and saints seem often to have been the magnetic center of great love and dedication, and remain to this day sources of inspiration. The ability of the religious will when joined to contemplative discipline to produce unusually deep transformations of the psyche is attested to by the psychoanalyst Medard Boss. Writing of his experience in India, he says:

...the Indian sages seem to have worked the miracle of truly freeing themselves from evil. I was forced to the conclusion that in them is nothing at all evil, covetous, destructive, fearful, guilty, or dark, to be consciously controlled and unconsciously repressed. No matter how carefully I observed the waking lives of holy men, no matter how ready they were to tell me about their dreams, I could not detect in the best of them a trace of selfish action or any kind of repressed or consciously concealed shadow life. They seemed to me to consist of pure love, which had long since redeemed in them all hate and desire (188).

Many great religious figures are not contemplatives in the practical, methodical sense here being investigated. Some have simply been possessed of an unshakable predisposition of the heart which results in a life of great creativity or outstanding service to mankind. Yet many others, like Catholic contemplatives and Zen Buddhists, take this predisposition of the heart as a starting point and from there endeavored to transform the structure of consciousness toward a new awareness, a new internal freedom and beatitude. We must take for granted that contemplative discipline can indeed issue in deep psychological transformation, but how does it work?

Depth psychology has taught us that meaningful psychological change occurs only as we become free of the conflicts and automatisms that have been etched into our psychic network. Whether we take Freud's "where id was there let ego be" or Jung's "walking through life" as opposed to "being dragged through," the goal of the work is to somehow get

beyond old, entrenched patterns of thought, behavior and emotive reaction which keep us on a psychic treadmill. The end of depth psychology is consciousness' right relation to its structural determinants and the personality's ability to be wholly and healthily in the world.

The operational paradigm of depth psychology is thus marked by a determination to clear vision. It is the determination not to cloud our vision with unconscious identifications, projections and compulsive acting out of what we see, but simply to see it clearly and relate to it rightly. Ann and Barry Ulanov compare the gradual process of freeing oneself from projection to Husserl's phenomenological epoche or "bracketing:"

If we could bracket all our preconceptions--lay them aside and look directly at what is before us--phenomena might be allowed to show themselves directly, in their and our immediacy. Depth psychology seeks to set aside the psychological blocks that efface such simplicity of vision, those neurotic biases, conflicts and problems which obstruct the bracketing and the freedom that it brings to contemplate the world as it is in itself (56).

Neither the phenomenologist nor the psychologist claims to arrive at the ding an sich; they claim only to erase certain modalities of phenomenal blindness. By such erasure, reality, whatever be its ultimate nature, is disclosed with purer accuracy to the inquiring mind and in more beneficent light to the undivided and unconflicted self.

Our reflection on the contemplative gesture shall continue along similar lines. This study attempts to keep the mystical experience and the claims surrounding it in the background. We have avoided the "peak experience" and turned our attention to the climb. Rather than attempting to explain the mystic's experience of the Absolute, we are taking a gentler approach, concentrating on how the practice of contemplation may be understood to erase modalities of human blindness, slash the cords of human bondage. In what follows we shall offer a psychospiritual understanding of contemplative method, seeking the answer as to how it makes its contribution to simplicity of vision, to the untying of psychological knots, to the undoing of the automatism and conflict in the self which place a veil between it and the world.

In our textual study of John and Dōgen we discovered two interrelated gestures comprising contemplative method--attention and intention. This section and the following one will consider each of these in turn. Propaedeutic to both treatments, however, is the task of marking out a broad philosophical horizon against which alone the fullness of meaning which the contemplative gesture has for man becomes clear. To this end we shall have to enter upon an excursus which is likely to seem an aimless digression. Indeed, some of the threads presently to be laid out will not be tied up until our final chapter. For this we beg the reader's patience.

b. Man's Dual Ontological Motives

Throughout his "tenacious exploration of the universe of desire" (Ricoeur, 1970), and his wish to understand the energetic Force which called the tune of the psyche's dance, Freud sensed an interplay, indeed a conflict of opposing elements. Characteristically, he revised and reformulated his understanding with each new vista opened by psycho-analytic investigation. Freud first conceived the antagonists as the survival instinct, which acted on behalf of the individual, and the sexual instinct which acted on behalf of the species. Later, as Freud shifted his attention from mapping the unconscious to more existential concerns and a developmental psychology of personality, the ego was understood as the pitiable slave of two diametrically opposed masters, the liberal id and the conservative super ego. But as Freud's mind moved to and fro between consulting room and culture, between ontogeny and phylogeny, between individual and world, he caught glimpses of the systole and diastole of all that lives, the expansion and contraction that manifests itself in all creation, differing from one locus to another only in rhythm and intensity. Faced with the omnipresence and irresistibility of these seemingly antagonistic forces, Freud gave them mythical names: Eros and Thanatos. Six years before his death he described them, simply, in the following words:

...the instincts that we believe in divide themselves into two groups--the erotic

instincts, which seek to combine more and more living substance into ever greater unities, and the death instincts which oppose this effort and lead what is living back into its organic state. From the concurrent and opposing action of these two, proceed the phenomena of life which are brought to an end by death (1964b:107).

Freud was not the first to formulate a total process in terms of the action between two complementary or opposing forces. Already in 800 B.C. the Chinese had formed a consistent theory of universal process with the principles of yin and yang. But Freud was the first to set the formulation atop a mountain of clinical evidence. The obviously archetypal nature of the idea of dynamic polarity, linked with Freud's evidence and persuasiveness, was more than enough to keep the Eros-Thanatos formulation from being easily dismissed. Moreover, Eros--the synthetic, unifying force in nature--was empirically evident. Not so, however, with its negative counterpart. The negative complement was logically and psychologically necessary, but even early on, to men like Jung and Rank, the idea of a 'death instinct' was weird, indigestible.

As a force which, in Freud's words, "works silently within the organism towards its disintegration," Thanatos had at least some resonance with the second law of thermodynamics. But, as Koestler has suggested, the latter applies only to closed systems not to living organisms. (64n). Moreover, Koestler puzzles, it is hard to understand

how this silent disintegrative force is linked to overt aggression, a phenomenon for which Thanatos was also used as an explanatory principle:

Freud's death instinct which works so quietly within the organism, appears, when directed outward, as active destructiveness or sadism. How these two aspects of Thanatos can be harmonized and causally connected is difficult to see. For the first aspect is that of a physico-chemical process which tends to reduce living cells to quiescence and ultimately to dust; while the second aspect shows a coordinated, violent aggression of the whole organism against other organisms. The process by which the silent sliding towards senescence and disintegration is converted into the infliction of violence on others is not explained by Freud (64-65).

Koestler also marshals recent biological research into the protozoa to argue that neither senescence nor natural death are inevitable consequences of life qua life. In many primitive, multicellular animals senescence and death are absent. "Fusion" and "budding" leave no residue behind. In the long view of evolution, the phenomenon of natural, biological death is a relatively new thing. Koestler concludes that "Freud's primary drives, sexuality and the death-wish cannot claim universal validity; both are based on biological novelties which appear only on a relatively high level of evolution" (66).

Koestler, however, does not reject the idea of dual ontological motives. Far from being a mere debunker of Freud, he is interested in finding a formulation that can

claim universal validity. The phrase "dual ontological motives," we might add, is not Koestler's. It belongs to Ernest Becker. What is interesting is that, in quite independent works, Koestler, working from the outposts of biology and physics, and Becker, forging a synthesis between psychoanalytic genius and the insight of the western existential-theological tradition (1973) have arrived at virtually the same formulation. We find this convergence compelling. And because no human psychology, including the psychology of contemplation, should fail to take account of an interplay of forces that is found alike in protozoa, people and planetary systems, we are offering these "ontological motives" as a horizon against which we can frame our understanding of the contemplative response to reality.

A suggestive sketch need not detain us long. It begins with a reflection on the meanings of "part" and "whole." "Part" usually conveys the meaning of something fragmentary and incomplete, something which finds its existence or function only as part of a larger whole. "Whole" usually conveys something complete in itself, existing autonomously. These meanings of part and whole are ingrained in our speech and thought. But the more closely we examine the world within us and around us, the more we find that "parts" and "wholes" in any absolute sense do not exist--neither in the domain of living organisms, nor in social organizations, nor in the encompassing universe.

Each part we seize upon will be seen to consist of constitutive parts which then make that "part" a quasi-autonomous whole. Yet each "whole" is but a sub-whole of a larger, more encompassing whole in which it performs its function. The reader will admit that he or she is something of an autonomous whole, yet the 'partness' of an individual, both within the social organization and the biosphere, is obvious. As we descend into the living organism we find the same pattern. The body is not a complex chain of quarks (as of this writing, the closest physicists have come to "ultimate" particles) telling each other what to do, but a multi-leveled, stratified hierarchy of sub-wholes--the circulatory system, the digestive system, the autonomic nervous system, and so forth--which in turn branch into sub-wholes of a lower order, such as organs and tissues, down to individual cells, and the sub-wholes by which they are constituted.

Koestler has coined a term for these hierarchically arranged sub-wholes found throughout the manifest world: holon. A holon is a part of some larger whole, yet in its own right, a "stable, integrated structure, equipped with self-regulatory devices and enjoying a considerable degree of autonomy and self-government." Koestler says:

Cells, muscles, nerves, organs all have their intrinsic rhythms and patterns of activity, often manifested spontaneously without external stimulation; they are subordinated as parts to higher centers...

but at the same time function as quasi-autonomous wholes. They are Janus-faced. The face turned upward, toward the higher levels, is that of a dependent part; the face turned downward, toward its own constituents, is that of a whole of remarkable self-sufficiency (27).

The interdependent functioning of sub-wholes is apparent not only in the continuity of the life-process of an organism, but in cognitive and motor processes as well. Driving a car does not consist in the conscious activation of individual muscles in the driver's brain, but in the triggering of sub-routines, functional or behavioral holons like accelerating, braking, changing gears, and so forth. Chomsky's school of psycholinguistics understands the act of speech as a kind of spelling out of an intention or amorphous idea through a step by step activation of sub-wholes which terminate in the actual motion-pattern of the vocal chords.

Koestler's mentor in all of this is general systems theory which proposes that the more we understand of the interdependent parts of the universal continuum the more we see the stratified structure of sub-wholes co-operating in a chain of higher, more inclusive centers. Koestler's point is that whether we take the astronomer's view of the wheels-within-wheels display of solar systems, or the astounding complexity of a cell, or, between them, the undeniable wholeness/partness of the human individual, it should be at least conceivable that we are living in a

system of holons, a "holarchy."

Now, if we human beings are holons in the universal continuum, we too are Janus-faced entities. We too have a face turned upward toward the higher and more inclusive levels of the holarchy, the face of a subordinate part in a larger system, and a face turned downward to the holons of which we are composed showing us to be quasi-autonomous wholes in our own right. Not only "we" as whole organisms but every part of the "we" possesses this Janus-faced disposition. This implies, since we are living organisms in process, that every holon of which we are composed, including the holon that we are is possessed of two opposite tendencies or potentials. Koestler calls them the integrative tendency (or "participatory" or "self-transcending") to function as part of the larger whole, and a self-assertive tendency to preserve its individual autonomy. In other words:

The self-assertive tendency is the dynamic expression of the holon's wholeness, its integrative tendency the dynamic expression of its partness (58).

If the universe is a holarchy in somewhat the same manner as Koestler suggests, and if these two dynamic tendencies are simultaneously in act throughout the numerous dimensions of the holarchic order, we might very well suppose them to be deep-rooted dynamics within human beings. Indeed, the self-assertive tendency and the integrative

tendency, when moved from the cosmic to the psychological order, are Koestler's version of Freud's Eros and Thanatos. The crucial difference is that, in Koestler's formulation, the barren negativity of Thanatos becomes a creative negativity: the self-naughting involved in any genuinely integrative or self-transcending activity. It becomes the negativity through which the destructive potential of the self-assertive tendency is checked. In his own remarkable study of Freud, Ricoeur (1970), also pondering the oddity of a death instinct, puts it perfectly:

Do we not find [in the idea of Eros/Thanatos] the beginning of a genuine dialectic of desire in which negation is placed at the very center of desire? Are we not invited thereby to reinterpret the death instinct and relate it to the negativity through which desire, Eros, is educated and humanized? (482).

Indeed we are. And it is Ernest Becker who responds to the invitation with the decisive psychological formulation. No one, it seems, needs to be convinced of the individuating, self-assertive force that pulses through all forms of life. Before Freud, Spinoza had given this force a powerful rendition in the term conatus, Schopenhauer in the term will. Becker is content to keep Freud's term, Eros. But he too is dissatisfied with both Freud's name and Freud's understanding of that mysterious countervailing force.

Both Koestler and Becker wonder why Freud did not reach for the obvious existential explanation of aggression: that it is a pathological extreme of the self-assertive tendency when frustrated or provoked beyond a critical limit. Such an explanation, as Koestler says, would not require the "gratuitous postulate of a death instinct for which there is not a trace of evidence anywhere in biology" (65). We may also note that sexuality in this new reading of the ontological motives is not to be classed under Eros at all. For Eros embraces the self-striving, individuation urge which at a pathological level becomes aggression. Sexuality, by contrast, is mainly in the service of the species, the larger whole. Sex is a specific manifestation of the agapaic, integrative tendency, the desire to submit, to merge oneself with the whole and only in connection with an individual's assertive desire, turned pathological, does it become a form of aggression. Ironically, this formulation echoes back to Freud's earliest formulation of the instinctual dualism as that between individual and species survival.

In any case, the idea of a "death instinct," says Becker, can be safely relegated to the dust bin of history" (99). Instead, Becker, standing on the shoulders of Rank and Kierkegaard, calls it Agape. Agape is that self-negating, self-transcending tendency which can be morbid and destructive if left unbalanced, but whose proper role in the heart of man is to shape Eros toward its true End.

Becker's Eros and Agape, cast in the language of depth psychology and the existentialist philosophical tradition, reads as a psychological instance of Koestler's more encompassing theory:

We...introduce a paradox that seems to go right to the heart of organismic life and that is especially sharpened in man. [It] takes the form of two motives or urges that seem to be part of creature consciousness and that point in opposite directions. On the one hand, the creature is impelled by a powerful desire to merge himself with the rest of nature. On the other hand he wants to be unique, to stand out as something different and apart....

We see...the ontological tragedy...so peculiar to man. If he gives in to Agape he risks failing to develop himself, his active contribution to the rest of life. If he expands Eros too much he seeks cutting himself off from natural dependency, from duty to a larger creation; he pulls away from the healing power of gratitude and humility that he must naturally feel for having been created (153-54).

If this is an accurate casting of man's psychological predicament at its most generalized level, then it follows that what is most fruitful and good for man would stem from a life that somehow harmonizes these two motives. Becker, like Ricoeur, argues that the potential for such harmony is available in a life of mature religious faith, though both admit that the religious way is replete with the kind of projective, self-deceptive pitfalls which led Freud to categorically dismiss it as illusion.

For the remainder of the dissertation, we shall be carrying Becker's thesis forward, though we shall be working with a very particular species of religious faith, namely, the contemplative gesture. Indeed, we shall imply that the contemplative gesture is the epitome of religious faith and, as such, holds forth to man the most perfect balance of the ontological motives he can achieve.

c. Man's Psychological Predicament: A Closer View

With our philosophical horizon in place, we may now descend to take a closer look at man's psychological predicament and how the contemplative gestures of attention and intention lead to freedom therefrom. The role of intention, or contemplative will, will be examined in the final section. The remainder of this section will concern itself with attention as a psychotransformative strategy.

The self-assertive motive in nature, so necessary to the individuation of living forms, is in self-conscious, reflective man prey to complication. For it thrusts upon him at birth the difficult project of achieving his own self-esteem. Difficult, because that unavoidable internal sense of being the center of things bequeathed to him in early years demands continuation and expansion in a world where he is decidedly not the center. The inescapable narcissism of the self-assertive tendency forms in the growing child a reflex that will shape the very structure of his consciousness: the denial of contingency. For in order to

fulfil that profound ontological motive he must defend himself against those truths of thought and experience which emphasize his contingency, while playing up those phenomena which support the self-project. By the time he is old enough to take an objective view of the project, he is already hopelessly enmeshed in it, with little chance to escape from its incessant demands. The naked urge for importance unfolds into an egocentric system in which one's beliefs, feelings, perceptions and behaviors are automatically viewed and assessed around his sense of value and worth as an individual.

The assessment process, automatic and barely conscious, is basically simple. Experiences, external and internal, are divided according to whether they expand or diminish us, affirm or negate our being. A whole webwork of likes and dislikes gradually develops, forming the personality in the same way that black and white dots can create the illusion of a face.

We are speaking here of emotive assessments which are distinctly psychological. Parenthetically, however, we may note that this yes/no, on/off reactivity takes place even in the midst of discursive thinking and logical assessment. This basic, reactive flip/flop of the mind, it seems, cuts deep into its structure. Logical assessments, however, seem less automatic and less determined than the emotive assessments. The latter, too, seem to leave deeper tracks, to weave greater numbers of ensnaring strands in the ego-referential web.

Emotive reactions do not appear and disappear in consciousness like snow on the water. They leave traces which are then susceptible to being re-aggravated by ongoing conscious experience which acts to catalyze associational chains. Since this is perhaps a bit abstract, we offer an illustration (in the first person for simplicity's sake) of what we mean. Suppose I were presenting this part of my thesis to a professional audience, full of hope that it would be persuasive and speak well of my intellectual prowess and so forth (thus temporarily "winning" the case for self-esteem). If at the conclusion I received a favorable response, my psyche would note it and be pleased. But it would not stop there. That affirmation of my being would kick off an associational chain, of which I may be only partly aware, which reels off a litany of what a clever and finely appointed fellow I am, painting my inner environment in rather bright colors. Like all highs, however, it would eventually stumble into the limits of the temporal plane and there begin its search for the next affirmation.

Similarly, if I received an unfavorable response, my psyche would have momentarily failed in its constant erotic quest to be somebody. This would result in some degree of existential and emotional pain. But surely the drama would not stop there. The negation or diminishment of my being would ignite its own associational chain and I would be subjected to a command performance by the chorus of my contingencies.

There is nothing wrong of course with emotions as such. They are natural manifestations of real joy and real pain. Zen masters cry (Schlagel:21), and Christian contemplatives burn with love. But our every day imaginary associations prolong emotive experience into a spasm or cramp that afflicts our entire reception of and response to the world. And at our worst we simply move from cramp to cramp.

Under the sway of the self-assertive tendency, then, the functioning of ordinary human consciousness is to a great extent automatically reactive and associative. Its life of incessant emotive assessment--"Am I a somebody?"--results in an endless stream of imaginary elaborations that color and determine one's state of consciousness and thus one's entire sense of the internal and external world.

On the internal side, there constellates what may be called a "self image"--a general sense of self that remains somewhat constant throughout existential episodes. The self-image of course represents but a fraction of the total self, yet we begin to mistake it for the latter because of its ability to hold our attention in thrall. The self-image is like an ongoing abstract of the total imaginary/emotive film which is being spun, beyond our control, around our experiences. The production of this film, we may suppose, requires significant quanta of energy which might otherwise be stored up or more profitably used. What is in fact a drain of energy is experienced by the consciousness habituated to it as the normal state of things. This

chronic self-centeredness and the distance it creates between the person and reality makes it easier to understand the psychological point behind the Christian's insistence on the pervasiveness of sin and the Buddhist's on the deep-rootedness of ignorance.

Moreover, John and Dōgen would have us understand through their similes of light and purity that consciousness, in itself, is a pure, empty reflecting medium. Put in a clumsy quantitative metaphor, consciousness must achieve its own emptiness before "God can fill it" or "Original Mind can be perceived." For consciousness, in its ordinary development, becomes bound up and indistinguishable from the objects which flow upon it. Perhaps the most tragic event in this process is that the abstracted self-image, actually a composite content of consciousness, becomes promoted to the status of that which has and exercises consciousness (Washburn, 1979:74-86). To the eye of the contemplative, this is a very fundamental category mistake. We have created something where there is nothing. The self is consequently unable to see that its erotic completion lies in seeing through itself, and instead is pointed toward the objects of consciousness as those upon which to carry out the self-assertive project. It matters little whether the dominant theme of those objects is intellectual enrichment, scientific discovery, monetary gain or sexual conquest. Their psychological common denominator is the self-assertive project. This project, with its inherent

need to deny contingency, aggravates the reactive, imaginative film in a virtually inescapable cycle. As long as consciousness remains identified with its objects, this self-aggravating system knows no end.

On the external side, our imaginative-emotive film not only incessantly comments on our incoming experience, but superimposes itself upon it, colors it, obscures it. Here, it should be mentioned that there are actually two films in consciousness, the imaginary one we have been describing and the real, imaginal film based on our primary perception of the real present. Neither John nor Dōgen, nor any contemplative with which we are familiar, objects to sensory images or the activity of the senses in general. The two films, however, are closely interwoven in consciousness so that the quality of the imaginary film cannot but affect the real film of primary perception. As a result of our own longing for significance and the emotive reactivity which it spawns, we limit, select, organize, and interpret the data of experience. Each of us is involved, in Castaneda's words, in a "personal construction of reality." Our inner world, then, becomes a representation according to a personal order, an interlocking network of compensations which, says H. Benoit:

is like a special section cut in the volume of the universe.... Every compensation is essentially constituted by an image involving my ego, by an image center around which is organized a multitude of satellite images....

The essential character of a compensation is not that it should be agreeable to me, but that it should represent the universe to me in a perspective such that I am at the center of it (136) /13/.

d. Contemplation: The Strategy of Non-Discursive Attention

Behind John's and Dōgen's talk of purity, emptiness and non-thinking, we want to suggest, is a program to deproject, deautomatize and disassemble the personal, egocentric construction of reality. If this false superimposition is largely a reflex of the self-assertive motive, we now want to propose that the religious impulse in man is essentially a reflex of its complement: the integrative, self-transcending motive.

The self-transcending motive is not without its dangers. Grown cancerous it leads to neurotic masochism--self-naughting gone pathological. It must not stand in absolute opposition to the erotic motive, only complementary to it. Pan-religious testimonies to the insidiousness of pride, however, evidence the ease with which the self-assertive motive undermines its complement and uses it as a mask. For holy acts, religious imaginings and God-talk, however subtle, nevertheless hold out a hook on which man can hang his ego, provide a ground upon which he can stand to claim, if only to himself, his own importance. Many who embrace religious faith succeed only in building another altar to another false God.

It is because the contemplative gesture undermines even this most subtle potential for clinging that we have called it the epitome of religious faith. For it includes the integrative tendency of the religious posture as such, but adds to that a 'fail safe'--a discipline to transform consciousness, to break it of its deeply ingrained habit of identification, attachment and idolatry. The job of the spiritual warrior, says Casteneda's Don Juan, is to "stop the world"--to cut off the self-elaborating imaginary film. And he calls the sine qua non element of that work "stopping the internal dialogue." "All else," says the brujo, "is just padding" (22). Thus from the mouth of this Mexican shaman comes, we think, the universal contemplative credo. The single, all-important gesture of non-discursive attention lies at the heart of the contemplative work. With it the contemplative begins to dismantle the personal construction of reality, bringing its subtle iconoclasm to the innermost altars of the mind.

Let us look more closely at how non-discursive attention works. Above we have suggested that in the course of human development, constellations of emotive structures /14/ are built up by many and complex variations on the themes of affirmation and negation of one's will to be. Our long-term desires, aversions, sore spots and fixations are nodal points in the constellation, yet each nodal point is less like a star than a black hole. We may think of each as automatically drawing psychic energy to itself disintegrating

it into the image-films and commentaries that hold consciousness in thrall (Tart, 1975:21-23). The mental mode which allows this state of affairs to preside is inattention. In a phrase attributed to J. Krishnamurti, "The machine that builds the image is inattention" (Wilber, 1976:319).

It should be self-evident that when the mind is not focused on any particular task or thought, for example, when staring out the window of a train, the image stream flows freely. We are stolen from the present, fascinated. In fact this relaxation of conscious attention in order to experience the spontaneous activity of fantasy is a common technique of therapists interested in getting at primary process, the speech of the emotive structures.

What is less evident, however, is that that which we ordinarily consider attention is still, by contemplative measure, not truly deserving of the name. For example, you are at this moment following my argument, paying close attention to what you are reading. Surely this is attention rather than inattention. The contemplative would agree. But he would add that this attention is discursive, and thus, passive. In this particular case, our words are doing the 'discursing' for your attention. If you turned away from this paper to work out a theological formula or a verse of poetry, you would still do so largely in a mode of passive, discursive attention. You would be engaged in accepting and rejecting and sorting out what the mind presents to you. In less intellectual and concentrative modes

the phenomenon is still clearer. We may feel ourselves to be in attentive control, yet the mind takes us where it pleases. Jaynes has argued, cogently we think, that ordinary thinking requires no attention whatsoever (39ff.). The sea of everyday mind is a busy, choppy one and ordinary attention is passive, discursive, even dispersed. The least bit of introspection will show this to be so. Ordinary attention, then, is hardly a state of acute active vigilance. It is more accurate to say that attention is awakened, conditioned and led by mobilizations of energy in our organism so that when it confronts its objects it is always faced, as it were, by a fait accompli (Benoit:187).

We may note in addition that when the mind is engaged in acutely rational and intellectual processes, imaginative-emotive activity is greatly reduced. This is presumably why Spinoza proposed to think has way into psychological freedom and thus stands in the ranks of the jnana yogins of history. Raj yogins, however, of which John and Dōgen are outstanding examples, want to non-think their way into psychological freedom. John was possessed of a superior creative imagination and Dōgen is considered one of the subtlest philosophical minds that Japan has produced, but each felt that 'prayer' (contemplative, non-discursive attention) was the vivifying source of their creative gifts and the psychotransformative method par excellence for the practitioners within their tradition who wished to win freedom of the spirit.

The mental posture of the contemplative, therefore, is distinct not only from inattention but from ordinary discursive, passive attention as well. It is an act of non-discursive, active attention which is, in fact, quite extraordinary. For there are many of us who in all our uncountable billions of mental moments and in all their variety, have never known a moment of truly active, non-discursive attention. Such a moment curtails the autonomous activities of ordinary psychological activity. If the reader doubts this, he or she may perform a simple experiment (Benoit:191). Take up a 'speak-I-am-listening' attitude of acute attention toward the screen of consciousness standing close guard, as it were, at the place where the contents of consciousness are born. For as long as one is able to hold this posture of intense active attention, the inner dialogue and the flow of images will be stopped. As Benoit proposes:

Our attention, when it functions in the active mode, is pure attention without manifested object. My mobilized energy is not perceptible in itself, but only in the effects of its disintegration, the images. But this disintegration occurs only when my attention operated in the passive mode; active attention forestalls this disintegration...(1959:40).

Active attention is what is called for in the Zen mondo, "Attention, Attention!" (attributed to Ikkyu). Active attention is the substance of John's ceaseless exhortation to "peaceful, loving attention to God...beyond

all thoughts and images." In fact, if we may step outside the proper bounds of our thesis, we can suggest that active attention is the fundamental 'mechanism' behind the various forms of mankind's contemplative methods: the prayer of unknowing (Johnston, 1973); the centering prayer (Keating, 1978); the Jesus prayer of Eastern Orthodox Christianity (Kadloubovsky and Palmer, 1951); Maimonides' practice of the presence of God (1956:384-392); the Muslim's mental dhikr (Schimmel, 1975:72); the tso-wang of the ancient Taoists (Waley, 1958:44ff,116-120); the samatha of the Theravada Buddhists (Thera, 1973,1971:121); the koan concentration of Rinzai Zen and Patanjali's classic definition of Hindu yoga as the "arresting of mental substance" (Mishra, 1973:161). Each of these surround the practice of active, non-discursive attention with various accompaniments, taking it down many paths of many names to variegated ends. Yet this single gesture seems common to these higher forms of contemplation.

Returning to our discussion, we note that for the beginner, and perhaps for a long way down the contemplative path, the gesture, as we have just described it in its purity, is difficult to maintain for any significant duration. Thus, there has evolved a corollary to this gesture, a second movement, as it were. Given the fact that the energy of the emotive structures and its imaginary film will repeatedly overpower a still weak concentrative ability, and assuming that the practitioner will repeatedly

attempt to reestablish active, non-discursive attention, his companion in all of this is impartiality. Images and thoughts arise but their lure is not taken. Disidentification with the contents of consciousness, impartiality in the face of images, choiceless evenness of the mind: this is the correlative gesture. Under the sway of this gesture, associational chains are deprived of a chance to chain-react. Non-reactive awareness directed to the beginnings of the associational process and disidentification with its products tends to undercut its ability to automatically stimulate other associational chains and thus activate emotions. Tart suggests that

non-identification with stimuli prevents mental energy from being caught up in the automatic, habitual processes involved in maintaining the ordinary [state of consciousness]. Thus while awareness remains active, various psychological subsystems tend to drift to lower levels of activity.... If one is successful in practicing non-attachment, the machine of the mind runs when stimulated, but does not automatically grab attention/awareness so readily; attention/awareness remains available for volitional use (1975:44).

The systematic practice of non-discursive attention would thus appear to stem the habitual, automatic flow of energy to emotive structures. Just as Freud compared his investigation of the unconscious to the draining of the Zuider Zee, or a vast reclamation project, we may metaphorize the practice of non-discursive attention as a technique

of starvation. Deprived of nutriment and stimulation, most emotive structures begin to lose their energetic integrity. The fear-and-desire bound natural man begins to wake up. The vagaries of the mind begin to lighten. Those imaginative-emotive processes, once characterized by automatization, begin to become deautomatized--a process Gill and Brennan have defined as

...a shake-up which can be followed by an advance or retreat in the level of organization.... Some manipulation of the attention directed toward the functioning of the apparatus [is necessary] if it is to be deautomatized (1959:178).

Such a shake-up in mental organization under the aegis of the contemplative's will to actualize in his own person the buddhic or christic archetype could gradually render less autonomous the structures that rule the emotive life, leading to a reconstellation of those structures as well as of the other structures whose interaction determines our ordinary mode of consciousness, our entire internal sense of what reality is.

In John's and Dōgen's emptying we have the systematic attempt by a human self to dwell in that attitude of nada, that place of mu, wherein the self, refusing the lure of all images and ideas, disinterested in all objects of consciousness, descends toward freedom from imaginative-emotive bondage. Organismic energy formerly bound in the

maintenance of these psychological constructions is freed for use according to the religio-ethical ideal with which the practitioner aligns himself. Energy formerly bound in emotive spasms, ego defense and fear now becomes the very delight of present-centeredness and a reservoir for compassionate service. As the structures of the old man are deautomatized, new structures are formed in magnetic alignment to the underlying intention of the aspirant. The purification of thought and its consequent deautomatization of psychological structures leads to a new reticulation of those structures and, consequently, to the general traits of consciousness to which they, in interaction, give rise. Man, by gradually emptying himself of the beloved vagaries of his emotional life, finds a new life of internal freedom, spiritual clarity and even sensory richness (Deikman, 1966b: 321-338). The creative possibilities of emptiness show themselves in Ulanov's description of the disidentified ego who becomes

free of unconscious identification with bits and pieces of his own personality and fragmentary parts of his world.... The disidentified ego can enter into any part of life with gusto...but is no longer unconsciously compelled to develop and support particular associations, intrigues, rituals of status...or certifications of possessions.... The disidentified ego can take or leave things, enter into them and yet not be bound by them (188-189).

Contemplative "emptying," like an ecological strategy, may thus be thought of as a revivification and renewal of balance in our internal environment. Through systematic practice of non-discursive attention in periods of contemplation, the mind acquires the new habit of spending less energy on the imaginative elaboration of desire and anxiety that haunt being-in-the-world. Fear, desire and the full range of emotions are still experienced. But the contemplative mind, the emptying mind, is less easily caught up in spasmodic reactions to and reverberations of the actual emotion. The latter begin to be experienced in more or less purity, leaving no tracks, as Zennists are fond of saying.

Benoit, whose lead I have followed at crucial junctures in this chapter, describes the deautomatization of the imaginative-emotive network as a "subtilization of image-material." He proposes that in the slow, steady praxis of contemplative attention

our images lose little by little their
apparent density...their power of causing
our vital energy to well up in emotive
spasms decreases. The whole imaginative-
emotive process loses its intensity...
(36).

This quotation is taken from Benoit's psychological study of Zen, but Carl Albrecht, a German scholar of Christian mysticism, refers to a similar process in that tradition.

He describes the core of the Christian contemplative opus as one of "abating image formation:"

...the character of authenticity is strengthened and the possibility of deception weakened more with every stage of abating image-formation.... The series of decreasing images is equivalent to the degrees of increasing Presence. The series of increasing image-forms is equivalent to the degrees of decreasing Presence (Enomiya-LaSalle, 1974:37).

Here, in Christian dress, is the equation between the emptying mind and increased contact with the formless energy, the actus purus that some men call God.

But as John of the Cross says, we flee from what most suits us. The deautomatization of my imaginative life, that scene of endless delights and pains and all those exquisite self-involvements can only seem like the murder of the inner life. We take a final counsel from Benoit:

In reality the imaginative film is not life. Produced by the disintegration of my energy... [it] is really an abortive process; the birth of what I call my inner world is...the repeated miscarriage of the 'new man.' The suppression of this abortive process is not therefore contrary to my life.... Impartiality in the face of my images, in fulfilling itself, accomplishes the integration of the Self (40,234).

This last is truly an extraordinary utterance. As modern men, our common Freudian inheritance makes us

uncomfortable with the idea that such pervasive factors in mental life as emotive reactivity and non-integrated structures can be beneficially transformed simply by sitting still and paying attention, with one's heart set on an ethical ideal and an inconceivable Absolute Reality /15/. Surely we must do something more subtle, more involved, something along the lines that Freud and Jung suggested: delving into the unconscious, sifting through its contents, integrating them into the domain of the ego's understanding, interpreting them for insight into our unconscious makeup, and so forth. In truth, the contemplative does do more than sit still and pay attention, but even so there is a point here that deserves to be underscored. Contemplative praxis can help 'normal' people become free (or freer) but it is of dubious value in the effort to make ill people well. Because of their generality, contemplative techniques may indeed be the 'ultimate' psychotransformative tools but as Tart warns:

There may be some psychological structures in the personality that have so much energy, are so implicit, or are so heavily defended that they must be dealt with by using specific psychotherapeutic techniques to dismantle them (1975:31).

Nevertheless, in no way do we wish to undercut the psychotransformative value that contemplative praxis holds out to man. Especially arresting in this context is an

opinion rendered by the Jungian, Erich Neumann. Neumann's major works have been learned exercises in Jungian hermeneutics. In both theory and practice he has spent his life crossing the conscious/unconscious bridge, exploring the complex relations between the Self and its images and symbols. In a paper called "The Psyche and Transformation of the Reality Planes," Neumann enters deeply into the subject of individuation, the summum bonum of the Jungian school. He speaks of it as the journey along the ego-Self axis, wherein the personal ego is gradually transformed and liberated 'into' the deeper, wider plane of the archetypal Self. He leads his theme to new and, even for a Jungian, rather bold metaphysical heights. At the paper's end, he feels compelled to return to earth, to say something about the actual human approximation of these lofty psychotransformative visions. Neumann writes:

It seems to me that the unity experienced by centered human beings is seen most distinctly... in Zen...masters...in their behavior and their being, and in their unity of inner and outer, ego and Self.... It...seems...that, by means of a gathered spontaneity of action and being, they achieve a unity of psyche and world which resembles that of the primary unitary field. And the center of this action and being is no longer the ego. Though the ego is not cut off, the activity of the ego-Self axis is so great that it seems to lead even to an identity between ego and Self. The lack of imagery [emphasis mine]...belongs to this experience.... And it is not a regression in the sense of an abaissement du niveau mental [Jung's repeated derogation of Asian psychotransformative technique] but rather a further advance in the direction which has led from field-knowledge

to the knowledge of consciousness and now beyond it.
 ...[In the Zen master] man is revealed as the highest and most significant form of life, and the centered human being appears as the incorporated spontaneity of creativity as one grasping and grasped by numinosity, and also the enlightener and knower, in whom the luminosity of the world apprehends itself...(110-11).

We cannot claim that Neumann would say the same thing about the Christian contemplative. What we wish to emphasize, however, is that in this Jungian's view, "the best that man can be" is reached by a long coursing in a psycho-transformative method which has little to do with the standard depth psychological paradigm. We need not equate zazen and John's contemplation to see that they are vastly more similar to each other than is either of them of the method employed by psychologists of the unconscious.

Needless to say, the mystical experience which we have endeavored to keep in the background, plays, finally, a crucial role in the entire process. Without those quantum leaps of "transforming union" and "kensho" the work can never be called complete. Still, we must remind a final time that the "love" and "enlightenment" toward which the aspirant travels signify existential qualities of the total being, noetic and behavioral wholes which require a total transformation of the personality. As such, they can never be fully accomplished in a momentary experience no matter how extraordinary that experience is. Whether contemplative

praxis is a sine qua non of the mystical experience is, of course, an open question: historical accounts in both Buddhism and Christianity seem to make room for a high order of transformative experience due to no other reasons than a serendipitous ripeness or God's will.

For John and Dōgen, however, contemplative praxis is an all-encompassing mode of being-in-the-world which allows the fruit of gnosis both deep seed and full blossom. In the Shōbōgenzō Zuimonki, Dōgen says:

To do away with mental deliberation and cognition and simply to go on sitting is the method by which the Way is made an intimate part of our lives...(Kim, 1971:45).

Could we not put the following words into the heart of John of the Cross?

To do away with mental deliberation and cognition and simply to go on contemplating God in peaceful, loving attention is the way by which His Grace is made an intimate part of our lives.

Non-discursive attention, we have argued in this chapter, is the radiating core of contemplative praxis. But such praxis is carried out by a human being who lives in the world and thus does more in it than sit or kneel or lie down for a certain period each day to attend to God's Presence, to Thusness. Non-discursive attention is a

gesture within a more encompassing gesture, one that comprehends the whole of human being. We are referring to contemplative intention, the movement of will, of which non-discursive attention is but one, albeit perhaps the most important, manifestation. It is to an understanding of contemplative willing that we now turn.

2. WILL AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Do you do unto others what you will they do unto you--by willing only one thing? For this will is the eternal order that governs all things, that brings you into union with the dead, and with men whom you never see, with foreign people whose language and customs you do not know, with all men upon the whole earth, who are related to each other by blood and eternally related to the Divine by eternity's task of willing only one thing.

Soren Kierkegaard

If our investigation of contemplative method has touched its marrow, we must admit therein the central importance of the phenomenon of will. In the previous section we examined the meaning and power of the will's most circumscribed and concentrated manifestation: the gesture of attention. Here, we shall move to the broader realm of intention in which that gesture is situated.

Intention, it seems, is like a multidimensional field which surrounds the contemplative, magnetically drawing the sum of his sensibilities toward a dimension of being-excellence, adumbrated in the images of his own particular mythos. We might put this statement into the active voice and still retain a part of the truth: Intention is a multidimensional force field with which the contemplative surrounds himself and by which he thrusts the totality of himself toward that dimension of being-excellence. Herein do we see the paradox of the contemplative will: it seems as

much a willful reaching toward as it does a willingness to be drawn. At different times, and sometimes simultaneously, it is both a push and receptivity to a pull. This dual dynamic appears to cut through the various levels of will function, manifesting itself on both the attitudinal macro-level presently to be examined and the micro-level of attention we have just discussed. For the gestures of active attention and non-reactivity describe a movement of the will that is intense yet relaxed, on guard yet surrendered.

The substance of this section will be an attempt to understand the meaning and power of the dual dynamic at work in John's and Dōgen's actualization of the will-as-faith. Under the aegis of contemplation, the will-as-faith, we shall suggest, supports, at an attitudinal level, the deprojecting, disassembling work taking place in consciousness and at the same time provides a restructuring and integrating force which elicits from an increasing inner 'poverty' a new richness and resilience of psychological unity. Through an understanding of the dynamics of the will-as-faith, our effort to describe the psychotransformative dynamic within the contemplative gesture will be completed. We begin by setting our discussion in the context of modern thought.

a. The Crisis of Will in Modern Thought

The will has a long and colorful history in western thought (Assagioli:235-247; Bourke, 1964; Pruyser in Lapsley: chapter one), but those colors laid on top of one another result only in a blur. In 1967 a group of thirty-two philosophers, theologians and psychologists convened for a conference on the subjects of will and willing. The book that arose from that conference, The Concept of Willing (Lapsley, 1967), shows only too clearly the difficulty of arriving at a univocal, consensus definition of will and the Tower of Babel effect in which such an attempt results. Yet the latter part of the book's subtitle, "An Outdated Concept of the Essential Key to Man's Future?" suggests that amid the confusion (it may be of interest to note that in the world of strictly experimental psychology, the nature of volition remains an utter mystery (Jaynes:71)), there remain intimations of a remarkably potent force.

The common-sense notion that there is some kind of intentional force at work within human individuals has never been seriously questioned. What has been questioned by ages of philosophic reflection is whether man has any real choice in the matter, and, of course, whether or not that force has any clear telos or purpose. The difficulty inherent in the word "real" has often led such inquiries, no matter how empiric their starting point, into the land of unverifiable metaphysical presuppositions. Leaving such

debates in the stratosphere, pragmatic and action-minded philosophers have always seemed to return to the fact that if I will to move my pen across this page, I do so, and therefore, along with the general populace, go right on willing. Dr. Johnson's words are enough for most of us: "Sir, we know our will is free and there's an end on't."

With Freud, however, even the practical and psychological notions of willing faced a profound crisis. Under his systematic disclosure of the nature of unconscious processes, individual responsibility and will were threatened with extinction. Describing how (unconscious) "wish" and "drive" move us rather than conscious will, Freud exposed the ego's claim to will-power as a web of rationalization and self-deceit. "The deeply rooted belief in psychic freedom and choice," he wrote, "is quite unscientific and must give ground before the claims of a determinism which governs mental life" (1935:95). The assumption that a single partial aspect of the organism (will-power) could with impunity subdue and defeat other aspects that failed to meet its conscious demands certainly needed tempering. The very persuasiveness of Freud's analysis, however, seems to have carried the devalorization of the existential will too far. So far, in fact, that R. May has called attention to a "crisis of will" in modern psychotherapy (1969:184). "Among the sophisticated," writes Allan Wheelis,

the use of the term "will power" has become perhaps the most unambiguous badge of naivete....

The unconscious is heir to the prestige of will. As one's fate formerly was determined by the will, now it is determined by the repressed mental life. Knowledgeable moderns put their backs to the couch and in so doing may fail to put their shoulders to the wheel. As will has been devalued, so has courage; for courage can exist only in the service of the will.... In our understanding of human nature we have gained determinism, lost determination (Wheelis:256, quoted in May:184).

In the early decades of psychoanalytic thought, no one tried harder to reverse this trend than Otto Rank. He wrote that "the essential problem of psychology is our abolition of will" (1968b:10). In Art and Artist he confesses that "for me the problem of willing...had come to be the central problem of all personality, even of all psychology" (1968a:9). Like Jung, Rank found the determinism that underlay Freud's psychology of the unconscious repellent, and he sought instead to provide a wide-ranging historical and psychological understanding of the purposiveness and creativity inherent in human nature (Progoff:188-253).

For Rank all crippings of the psyche stem from misuse or denial of the will, and all its healing and higher functions depend on the will's proper and unimpeded use. Without sacrificing depth, Rank revolted against the psychology of the unconscious and began to build a theory and practice based on the idea of will as the essence of human being. Rank came to see will as not only a power of the unconscious personality but a supra-individual force with which consciousness could align itself. He defined it as "an

autonomous organizing force in the individual constituting its unique creative expression" (Rank, 1958:50). With the psychology of the unconscious still in its infancy, he abandoned "bringing the unconscious to consciousness" as a therapeutic agent, arguing that such a procedure merely exacerbates the ego's illusion that it could understand or control forces beyond itself. Progoff (206) points out that in its later stages Rank's conception of the will approaches Jung's conception of Self--an inner wholing principle embracing the entire personality and inviting the participation of the ego.

More recently, Rollo May has questioned whether in our concern with the unconscious we have lost touch with the creativity of the will. Resisting the latter's defeat by the "autonomous" powers of the unconscious, May argues that the unconscious derives its meaning solely in contrast to consciousness and is therefore part of a greater whole. It cannot be considered autonomous:

Neither the ego nor the body, nor the unconscious can be "autonomous" but can only exist as parts of a totality. And it is in this totality that will and freedom must have their base.... The compartmentalization of the personality into ego, superego and id is an important part of the reason why the problem of will has remained insoluble within the orthodox psychoanalytic tradition.... This means that autonomy and freedom cannot be the domain of a special part of the organism, but must be the quality of the total self--the thinking-feeling-choosing-acting organism (199).

To distinguish the will-quality of the total self from phenomenal or ego-willing, May uses the term "intentionality." He says that

intentionality is what underlies both conscious and unconscious intention. It refers to a state of being and involves to a greater or lesser degree the totality of the person's orientation to the world at that time...(234).

"Intentionality," he says, "goes with conscious purpose" but also beyond it "to the more total organic, feeling and wishing man" (234-35).

The writings of R. Assagioli are, among those from the discipline of psychology, perhaps the most passionately concerned with the issue of human willing. Assagioli writes that "fundamental among...inner powers, and the one to which priority should be given, is the tremendous unrealized potency of man's own will" (1976:6). He, too, distinguishes phenomenal or superficial willing from that energetic totality properly called will. Assagioli thus perceives man's journey to selfhood as one from having a will to being a will.

In the domain of theological reflection, Ray Hart's study of the function of the religious imagination also involves a revisioning of the will. He calls will "the ordering power or principle of our active being" (136, n.47). Phenomenologically it seems both free and determined ("in its voluntary situating the will has always to reckon with an involuntarily situated base" (loc.cit.)). The will itself,

however, is not merely psychic nor derivative, but ontic and basic: "will is the one ontically active and passive power we grasp from the inside" (132).

Yet perhaps the most fundamental casting of the dual aspect of the human will and the unitive totality which it is at its deepest level comes neither from a psychologist, nor a theologian, but a philosopher. The idea of will as a phenomenon of totality is suggested by Heidegger's analysis of care. In his vocabulary, "will" is a derivative of care, part of care's ontological nature, but not the fulness of care itself. His "will" is what we have been calling superficial or phenomenal willing, a will among wills, a partial aspect of the conscious personality. Heidegger speaks of care in the way we would speak of will proper, a power only potential in ordinary consciousness, a trait of being toward which being-in-the-world moves and in which it finds its authentic nature. Yet even in phenomenal willing, says Heidegger, "the underlying totality of care shows through" (239). When Heidegger seeks to lay bare the "totality of that structural whole [Dasein]...in an existential-ontological manner," he turns to the reality of care. He calls care the "single primordially unitary phenomenon behind Dasein" (226), and speaks of it further as

...a primordial structural totality that lies
'before' every factical attitude and situation....
The phenomenon of care in its totality is
essentially something that cannot be torn
asunder; so any attempt to trace it back to

special acts or drives like willing and wishing or urge and addiction, or to construct it out of these, will be unsuccessful (238).

Urge and drive, says Heidegger, are phenomena in which care has not yet become free, not yet discovered itself in its true nature (240). Mere willing and wishing remain such because of the everydayness of their concerns; they become "tranquilized" by the "actual" (so-called reality) under the dominance of the "they." Under the sway of the idolatrous herd, Dasein--the psyche and its structures--presents possibilities to itself in such a way that they are a mere wishing. The state of wishing is, essentially, a cramp that never leaves the being satisfied with what is "present to hand." The present, the Now, is never enough. This results in a chronic "hankering" after possibilities which, dividing Dasein against itself, vitiates those very possibilities.

For Heidegger the link between conflicting, multiple, phenomenal 'wills' and the integrated unity of authentic care is resoluteness. Resoluteness, it would seem, is merely another will among wills, the voice of will power amid the self's cacophony of motives, desires and wishes. Yet despite the potential for confusion and self-deception in the self's wish to lift itself up by its own bootstraps, unless it begins, somewhere, to will resolutely, it will never be able to come to the experience of its own freedom

and self-transcendence in the knowledge of the "primordially unitary phenomenon" in which it is grounded. Though willing must begin from an inauthentic, even illusory, base (given the fragmented nature of the phenomenal ego), unless it begins somewhere, it will remain so situated. Only by willing is the first step of the thousand-mile journey toward real willing, the actualization of the will-as-care, taken. What this means for our present subject is this: Only by resolute effort can the contemplative aspirant come face to face with the contradictions inherent in his/her own willing, and only in and through that painful confrontation can he/she find releasement into that primordially unitary phenomenon in which his/her willing is grounded. Only when the fragmented "I am," by willing itself toward a dimension of being-excellence, finds both that "I am not" and that "It is," only then does the full reality of the will-as-care and the will-as-faith take possession of the human existent.

The conceptions of will just reviewed are not, of course, interchangeable. For each thinker, the conception has taken shape in a different context and has been elaborated differently. Yet behind them all there seems to lie a common, insistent intuition: the phenomenal will(power), so paltry and poor a thing in itself, is nevertheless the harbinger of an ontic will, releasement into which brings some sort of fulfillment or wholeness to the human existent. Assagioli speaks of the movement from having a will to being

a will; Heidegger speaks of the transition from mere wishing to resoluteness and finally to care or authentic willing. Rank, May and Assagioli seem unanimous in saying that the dynamic behind psychological integration is a willing that gradually becomes less a partial and polarizing force and more a unitive force embracing the whole self, possessed of considerable psychotransformative power and capable even of affecting and 're-aligning' unconscious structures. Let us now look more closely at the dynamics of contemplative willing.

b. The Contemplative Will-As-Faith

Along the more profound reaches of its continuum, faith, as Kierkegaard has said, is no longer the content of an idea, but a form of the will (Lowrie:II,316)/16/. As we shall be speaking of it here, faith is not to be confused with belief in certain propositions or any solely mental act at all--even though that phenomenon may linger in faith's atmosphere. Rather, faith, as we attempted to show in the chapter on contemplative virtue, is an attitude or posture of being, a sustained act of bodymind, an existential mode in which one relates to and constantly engages oneself with a transcendent dimension.

As we prepare to examine the power of the will-as-faith, we should remind ourselves of the demure that runs the full length of the contemplative path, namely, that the aspirant,

in reality, is powerless. Along with constant exhortations to do one's utmost to reach awakening, reminders of the self's powerlessness are everywhere. These two themes, in tension, are signs not of metaphysical confusion but of psychological wisdom. There can be no psychic integration without a task that invites the individual to heroic endeavor. Tribute must be paid to the ontological, self-assertive motive. But the need for self-transcendence and self-forgetfulness must also be respected. The hero is accordingly reminded of his own nothingness. Psychologically, the doctrines of grace and anatta (or, on the positive side, dependent co-origination), serve the same purpose: in the midst of striving for enlightenment the aspirant is reminded that a ripeness, beyond his control, is all. The will to attend and the will to intend are kept delicately balanced by an awareness that neither constraint nor struggle will aid the inner work. Only letting-go, decontraction of the egoic grip and surrender to a higher will can decisively effect the transformation. Precisely this delicate dialectical complementarity gives the will-as-faith its power.

In his recent historical study of the meaning of faith in the world's religious traditions, Wilfred Smith notes that the original meaning of Christianity's credo referred not to belief in propositions but to an all-encompassing self-involvement of the personality. It was, as its etymology suggests, an attitude of the heart--that universal

signifier of man's totality. Credo is a compound of cor, cordis, "heart" plus do "put, place, set," also "give." It is the setting of the heart on something, a giving of one's essential energy.

As such, credo is first cousin to the Indian and Buddhist sraddha. Sraddha is also a compound of srat, "heart" and dha, "to put." Though sraddha appears in a vast variety of contexts, it never signifies the something toward which one is setting one's heart, but rather the very quality of the resolute heart. Sraddha is open-ended, says Smith; no particular object or type of object defines it. Western analyses of sraddha, he argues, have largely fallen victim to our tendency to analyze faith according to its objects. But sraddha primarily refers to a dimension within. "It has to do with man's capacity to become involved: the tendency or quality inherent within each human person to move outside him or herself and to become engaged" (1979:62).

To the intentional thrust of sraddha Smith adds, via Sankhara, an attentional one as well. For Sankhara, the mind in sraddha contrasts with a mind that "is elsewhere." Sraddha is a quality of mind which contrasts with a wandering mind. Conversely, asraddha is equated with diffuseness and irresolution. "The opposite of faith is not disbelief so much as either indifference or scattering of concern: absence of faith is ego-diffusion" (Smith, 1979:63).

Faith's connection to the "heart," to totality and singlemindedness, suggests its psychotransformative potential

a truth not lost on psycholgocially sensitive religious thinkers. "Purity of heart," says Kierkegaard, "is to will one thing" (1938), and that "one thing" can only be the infinite, unpossessable God. Everything less is "double-mindedness." "Willing one thing," Kierkegaard's synonym for mature faith, is alone capable of conquering the double-mindedness whose outcome is despair.

In his work on "faith development theory," contemporary psychologist of religion James Fowler, testifies to faith's ability to unify the self and by reflection, the world in which the self lives. Faith, he writes, is an "activity of knowing and being in which the self makes a bid for relationship to a center of value and power which is adequate to ground, unify and order the force field of life taken as a totality" (Chamberlain, 1979).

Perhaps the boldest vision of faith's transformative potential comes from Tillich. "The disrupting trends of man's consciousness," he says,

are one of the great problems of personal life. If a uniting center is absent, the infinite variety of the encountered world as well as the inner movements of the human mind, is able to produce the complete disintegration of the personality (1957:107).

In this context he proposes that

faith...is an act of the will...the most centered act of the human mind.... It is... embedded in the totality of psychological

processes.... In the act of faith every nerve of...body, every striving of...soul, every function of...spirit participates.... The body, soul and spirit are not three parts...[but] dimensions of being, always within each other; for man is a unity not composed of parts. Faith is the centered movement of the whole personality toward something of ultimate meaning and significance (7,8,106).

The psychological assertions of Tillich and Fowler propel our analysis of John's and Dōgen's willing into a realm wide and deep enough to comprehend and unify their specific Buddhist-Christian differences. For we have argued that John's faith, hope and caritas, as well as Dōgen's and Zen's faith, determination, doubt and karuna, are but nuanced shades of a single thematic unity of intention, and that "faith" is both one of those shades and a symbol which represents the 'force-field' of their unity. Under our analysis, the multiple contemplative virtues and undertakings find their source in a single, seamless unity of the will--a faithing toward awakening. And, as this potential unity becomes actual, to that extent does the contemplative discover the meaning of his/her awakening, released from a selfhood that never was.

We must not, of course, let Tillich's facile portrayal of integral faith blind us to the difficulty and rarity of its realization. In its most profound manifestation faith may indeed accomplish precisely what Tillich describes, but the obstacles to such a maturation are numerous. The

will-as-faith, no less than any other species of the self-assertive tendency, is prey to idolatry. In its youth, the will-as-faith thrives on images of transcendence. Like the analysand who transfers onto the analyst during the psychotherapeutic process of death and rebirth, the religious person, and a fortiori, the contemplative, transfers onto the image of God or of sainthood--and can get stuck there. Images of transcendence, though an integral part of every religious mythos and crucially important to the awakening of will in the contemplative aspirant, nevertheless, like language and concept, conceal as well as reveal. They snag as well as draw.

The will-as-faith constantly faces the threat of getting hung up on one of its phenomenal supports. Guided by the symbols of its tradition and the imaginative participation which ordinary consciousness affords, the will is nevertheless called to know its proper Object in its true nature, to surpass in every instance the particular symbolism upon which it depends and to free itself from those phenomenal supports. The genius of John's and Dōgen's empty willing begins to show through. Therein the mind's last bastion of unchecked self-fascination--consciousness' identification with its objects--is broken. John attempts to follow Eckhart's admonition that one must know God "without semblance...without image" and Dōgen knows, like all Zen practitioners, that the Buddha met on the road must be an impostor. Each aspirant seeks to surpass in

his/her search for the ultimate object of human yearning even the subtlest constructions of the mind.

Contemplative strategy demands that the self leave itself no satisfaction with beyonds that are reachable. Should someone object that "satori" or "enlightenment" are quite reachable, we would ask, "for whom?" suggesting that this is too narrow a view of enlightenment. For the desire to enlighten even the grass is but the Buddhist portrait of the universal ethical horizon against which the evolution of awakening is endlessly pursued (Cook:36). Thus are John's and Dōgen's heroic strivings constantly faced with an infinitude that humbles all the powers of the self. The contemplative will, even at its most acute pitch, is reminded of its emptiness, its interdependent status. Amid John's vigorous "Ascent" and Dōgen's earnest zazen, there lies a similar sense that such gestures are but the heart's consent to a work which can be accomplished only by the Principial Will. Becker proclaims the psychological wisdom behind that integrally willed surrender we call faith:

One should not...circumscribe his life with beyonds that are near at hand, or created by oneself. One should reach for the highest beyond of religion: man should cultivate the passivity of renunciation to the highest powers no matter how difficult it is.... Do Freud and others imagine that surrender to God is masochistic, that to empty oneself is demeaning?....It represents, on the contrary, the fulfillment of the Agape, love-expansion, the achievement of the truly creative type...(1973:174).

Certainly mere surrender and self-abnegation, when left uncomplemented, easily degenerate into neurotic, defensive, masochistic strategies. This aspect of religious behavior met, and deserved, the full force of Freud's critique of idols. By contrast, unbalanced heroic striving leads to rigidity and brittleness of soul, a fact to which J. Hillman has repeatedly called our attention (1972, 1975, 1979). But for John and for Dōgen the will-to-awaken (pure "faithing"), fired by compassion and tempered in the pool of nada, the ocean of sunyata, begins to fuse into a perfect alloy of the self-assertive and self-transcending tendencies. Though working outside the purely contemplative context, Becker's description of the fusion is flawless:

Once the person begins to...refashion his links from those around him to that Ultimate Power, he opens up to himself the horizon of real freedom...to infinity...to the very service of God.... He links his...inner yearning for absolute significance to the very ground of creation. Out of the ruins of the broken cultural self...this invisible mystery at the heart of every creature now attains cosmic significance by affirming its connection with the invisible mystery at the heart of creation.... One goes through it all to arrive at faith...that despite one's true insignificance...one's existence has a meaning in some ultimate sense because it exists within an eternal scheme of things brought about and maintained to some kind of design by some creative force (1973:89-91).

The two ontological motives are both met: the need to surrender oneself...by laying down one's whole existence to some higher meaning; and the need to expand oneself as an individual heroic personality (1973:203).

Becker's analysis, performed in the light of Kierkegaardian faith, is even more applicable in a contemplative context. For Kierkegaard's Eternal, against whose inscrutability faith purifies itself, retains its cosmic status in John and Dōgen, but in addition, becomes the inner, uncarved block against which the very structure of consciousness is emptied and transformed. Dwelling attentively in the inscrutable, coursing in the realm of objectless attention, contemplative consciousness descends to nothingness and, in the Ulanovs' phrase, "carries nothingness into containment" (1975:188). Seeing into its own utter contingency and nevertheless embracing it, contemplative consciousness begins to understand its unbreakable link with and its undying life in the All. As it becomes authentically nothing, it is supported by everything.

The actualization of the integral will-as-faith, which proceeds in direct proportion to the integral devalorization of egocentric life through contemplation, brings to the contemplative gesture its full psychotransformative power. Old automatized structures of consciousness, weakened in their integrity through the discipline of attention, become reformed and realigned under the intentional regime of faith. As the former personal construction of reality is disempowered and dismantled, the ordering power of the will draws formerly conflicted elements of the self into an integrated unity. With every increment of this intensity-of-connectedness the authentic will comes closer to being truly born.

The self becomes less torn by disparate "hankerings," begins to escape the dominance of the "they," sees beyond the "everydayness" of its concern and approaches the authenticity of willing that which is present.

Mysteriously, as if it had been happening all along, the will-as-faith begins to discover itself not as an assertion but as a reception. If faith, as Tillich testifies, can move "every nerve of body, every striving of soul and every function of spirit" it seems clear that such faith has gone beyond the ego-assertive, ego-projective domain of ordinary willing. The latter simply cannot claim this power. What can claim it is the faith that for Dōgen is the "fruit of enlightenment" and that for John is "union with God." This willing is no longer mustered; it is experienced. It is a transpersonal current in which one's being is subsumed and by which every aspect of it is affected. It is in alignment with this transpersonal force that "every nerve, every striving, every function" is shaped.

If this notion seems to smack of the most groundless kind of vitalism, we should remind ourselves of the recent reflections of the biologist Lewis Thomas on the micro-organismic system that comprises the humble termite:

There is an underlying force that drives together the several creatures comprising myxotricha, and then drives the assemblage into union with the termite. If we could understand this tendency, we would catch a

glimpse of the process that brought single cells together for the construction of metazoans, culminating in the invention of roses, dolphins...and ourselves. It might turn out that the same tendency underlies the joining of organisms into communities, communities into ecosystems and ecosystems into the biosphere (1974:33).

If the president of the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Research Center can seriously consider such a biological 'wholing' force, are we not entitled to imagine its psycho-spiritual complement? For contemplative texts seem to indicate a profound sense that the rivulet of contemplative striving somewhere becomes connected to the river of the Transpersonal Will. At a certain level of insight along the Buddhist contemplative path, for example, one is said to have "entered the stream." It is a truly breathtaking image: caught for aeons in the samsaric whirlpool of self-referential striving, the individual, as if by some quantum leap, is released into the Dharmic current. The gravitational pull toward final salvation is now irreversible. At some similar existential juncture, the Christian celebrates the conformation of his will, indeed its engulfment, by the Will of God. The will-as-faith in its deepest dimension is a highly individual and individuating act, whose substance, nevertheless, is a profound surrender to an ontological force. Will is neither fully human nor fully actual until it acknowledges and affirms its transpersonal source. (For this reason, merely psychological

attempts at "growth" and "self-realization," which lack a dimension or religious surrender, are doomed to narcissism and solipsism and are rightly criticized as such (Vitz, 1977).)

This exquisite project for the human will can be seen behind the Buddhist and Christian contemplative's yearning to vanquish "desire" and only a slight twist of our vocabulary is necessary to lay it bare.

As the force of desire is experienced within the human existent, it is usually turned outward as the desire for some objective condition. Religious contemplatives, however, have always sensed that desire--as desire for an objective condition--cannot make ultimate sense. The ephemeral world mocks our attempts to hold it fast, to arrange it according to our liking. Even if that desired objective condition should be the unassailable perfection of the self, reality will at some point insist on presenting a mirror to our broken faces and reminding us of our fundamental dispensability. No, desire for an objective condition must be complemented by, subordinated to, another desire, a desire which does make sense of our endless human longing. This desire is desire for a subjective condition and the name of that subjective condition is will. We desire to will but usually only hanker. Purged of the desire for that which is not, will is a willing of that which is--that which exists, independently, of one's self. Desire is but a full, clamorous and confused willing. But leading itself

beyond itself, desire becomes transformed into empty willing.
 "Union with God" and "Enlightenment" may be understood as
 expressions announcing the dawn of authentic willing, a
 willing now that

seeks, and can receive, no explanation outside
 itself...in terms of something desired. Nor
 is this a question of some inner well-being...
 operating in isolation.... It is precisely
 the oneness of willing with attunement to an
 independent reality that is the substance of
 the delight. In this delight, will is identi-
fied as willing that which independently is,
I am identified as willing that which is. In
 this experience I know myself as self-tran-
 scendent; and this is not a knowing something
about myself; it is a knowing of myself
 (Moore:116).

Moore mars this splendid utterance by claiming its
 Christian particularity. But we wish to share it with all
 his non-Christian brothers. They, too, evidence the de-
 light of attuned willing. They, too, know themselves for
 the first time in the time when they are not. "In those
 privileged moments when the essence of willing is laid bare,"
 says Moore, "I know that all-controlling independent will
 outside of which I have no being" (116). Shall we call it
 Suchness or Dependent Co-origination--that all-controlling
 independent will outside of which Dōgen has no being and in
 whose rhythm he dies to live?

John seeks his life as an instrument of God's will;
 Dōgen his as an embodiment of Tathata. Both employ a method
 whose essential ingredient is the practice of sustained

non-discursive attention, an element which contrasts sharply with the ordinary flow of phenomenal consciousness. But this method, though crucial, takes its place and finds its meaning only in a life whose many aspects are permeated by an intentionality toward Awakening. These two existential gestures or postures--attention and intention--complement, strengthen and amplify one another as the personality of the aspirant is transformed from a riot of desires into a unity of will. That unity is expressed equally well by the words "faith" and "care." From this fundamental transformation of character comes a knowledge, not merely intellectual, which alone deserves the name prajna or wisdom. The content of this wisdom, insofar as it can be expressed, is that one's personal willing is empty vis-a-vis the Transpersonal Will of which one is an expression. In this realization there is delight and freedom and in it John and Dōgen, and perhaps all those we call mystics and contemplatives, find the life they seek.