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# Beyond Mind

## Steps to a Metatranspersonal Psychology

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Many transpersonal psychologists seem to identify sanity with transpersonal experience in general—in some cases, including in this category the “illusory experiences” of previous reincarnations, divine archetypes, and so on. Herein, a psychology is outlined that I call metatranspersonal, insofar as it does not consider access to transpersonal realms per se to be the purpose of therapy. This aim can only be overcoming the delusion that consists of experiencing the relative as absolute, the illusory as real, that which we posit as given, the interdependent as independent, and so forth.

THE IMPRESSION I have of the transpersonal literature<sup>1</sup> is that often transpersonal psychologists do not necessarily distinguish between: (1) what Buddhists call Awakening or Enlightenment, which here I shall designate as Supreme Sanity,<sup>2</sup> and which implies the spontaneous self-liberation of all types of comprehension in terms of thoughts, ideas, or concepts, notwithstanding whether they are (a) coarse or discursive, (b) subtle or intuitive, or (c) “super-subtle”;<sup>3</sup> (2) conditioned experiences of transpersonal realms marked by the basic samsaric<sup>4</sup> delusion that will be discussed later on—and particularly, the experiences of the “Formless realms,” which according to Buddhism are the summit of samsara or conditioned cyclic experience, marked by delusion; and (3) the state wherein neither *samsara* nor *nirvana* are active, which the Dzogchen (Tibetan, *rDzogs-chen*) teachings call “kunzhi” (Tibetan, *kun-gzhi*) (and which, as foreseen by Jigme Lingpa [Tibetan, *Jigs-med gLing-pa*], in our times many yogis would confuse with the *Dharmakaya* or first level of Enlightenment).<sup>5</sup>

The final, optimal, and radical objective of all psychotherapy should be sanity. Though most transpersonal psychologists agree that sanity is not the same as normality (in the sense of functional adaptation free from conflicts to the social pseudoreality), it is important to point out that

sanity does not consist of establishing oneself in whatever transpersonal realm, but rather of achieving a correct apprehension of reality—that is, the absence of delusion.<sup>6</sup> This correct apprehension should not be understood as agreement with the conventional scientific interpretation of reality. In Alfred Korzybski’s (1941) terms, it means that we do not mistake our conceptual maps for the territory of the *given*, nor do we believe that a map is absolutely correct and true while its opposite is absolutely incorrect and false. In other words, true sanity corresponds to the absence of what I will call “delusory valuation” (or “overvaluation of thought”) and which I will consider in greater detail later on.

### • The Delusion at the Root of the Malaise of Civilization •

“DELUSION” MEANS that a person’s perceptions do not correspond to reality, that they distort it. The fact that we have to exclude from our consciousness ego-dystonic contents (i.e., contents that are incompatible with one’s self-image), and that we have to distort our perception of reality in order to maintain our ideologies already implies that we are under delusion. Similarly, to the extent that our acts produce results contrary to those we wish to achieve, we are under delusion—and it is

clear that our attempts to obtain pleasure, happiness, and security constantly result in pain, unhappiness, and insecurity.

An extreme example of the above is the ecological crisis that, according to some scientists, in the absence of immediate, radical change, would put an end to life on the planet (perhaps even before the middle of the twenty-first century)<sup>7</sup>—and which is a direct consequence of our attempts to produce an earthly paradise by technological means and of wanting to put an end to death, pain, and everything we wish to avoid. Our attempts to reach heaven by means of a technological Tower of Babel may have instead produced a hell on earth and placed us at the brink of extinction. We sacrifice all future generations and many members of the present ones in exchange for an apparent comfort that is only accessible to a “privileged” few, but which is unable to provide even these few with true happiness.<sup>8</sup>

Everything seems to suggest that the type of perception at the root of the modern project is marked by delusion. As pointed out by Gregory Bateson (1979) and Anthony Wilden (1972/1980), among others, the theoretical nucleus of delusion consists of “...an essentially religious belief in the (supposedly) real existence of such popular fictions as the ‘autonomous ego,’ closed structures, atomistic individuals and isolable entities...” (Wilden, 1972/1980).

One of the most essential characteristics of our delusion is the fragmentation of a world which, as strongly suggested by present physics, in itself forms a perfectly undivided continuum.<sup>9</sup> This can be illustrated with the Eastern fable in which a group of men in the dark tried to determine the identity of an elephant. Each took hold of a part of the pachyderm, arriving at a different conclusion about it: the one who held the trunk said it was a hose; the one who grasped the ear thought it was a fan; the one who put his hand on the back believed it was a throne; the one who embraced a leg concluded that it was a pillar, and lastly, the one who grabbed the tail threw it away in terror, thinking it was a snake.<sup>10</sup>

The delusion being discussed is the *avidya*, or un-Wisdom, which a *Mahayana*, *Vajrayana* and *Atiyana* version<sup>11</sup> of the Buddhist teaching of the Four Noble Truths regards as the Second Truth. In the version being discussed, the Four Truths are:<sup>12</sup> (1) Normal life is *duhkha*: lack of plenitude, dissatisfaction, frustration, and recurring pain and suffering. (2) There is a cause for *duhkha*, which is *avidya*: the essential delusion I have been

referring to, which involves the lack of nonconceptual holistic Wisdom. (3) It is possible to overcome *duhkha* by reaching what Buddhism calls Awakening or Enlightenment (which I have been referring to herein as Supreme Sanity), consisting of the nonconceptual unveiling of the *given*, which dissolves all illusory fragmentation and, in the long-run, results in the manifestation of a systemic conceptual wisdom. (4) There is a path for going from *duhkha* and *avidya* to the state of plenitude, Wisdom, and Supreme Sanity that Buddhists call Awakening or Enlightenment.

The mechanisms of deception that Sartre called “Bad Faith,” meaning self-deceit, and that Freud<sup>13</sup> interpreted as “repression” or “concealing by the Subconscious,” depend on our fragmentary vision and are at the root of mechanisms such as the “hedonic hue,”<sup>14</sup> and so on. These prevent us from discovering that our usual condition involves dissatisfaction and a lack of plenitude that cannot be overcome as long as the condition in question persists, and the mechanisms of deception bar awareness that this condition generates repeated frustration, reiterated pain, and recurrent suffering. Therefore, in order to overcome delusion, as well as the ensuing *duhkha*, first we must realize that both of them mark the totality of our experience. Shantideva compared *duhkha* to a hair, the normal individual to the palm of a hand, and the *Bodhisattva* (the individual oriented towards Supreme Sanity) to an eyeball, pointing out that in the palm of the hand the hair of *duhkha*, which goes unnoticed, can remain indefinitely, but in the eyeball, where its presence becomes patent and unbearable, it has to be removed immediately.

The delusion called *avidya* makes us worse than the people in the fable about the elephant, as our sensation of being entities inherently separate from and independent of the rest of nature, and, in general, our fragmentary perception of the universe as a group of inherently separate, self-existing and disconnected entities, leads us to develop the technological project aimed at destroying the parts of the world that bother us and appropriating those we wish to use or possess, and thus to disrupt the system of which we are a part and which we depend on for our survival. Unable to grasp the unity of the coin of life, we develop powerful corrosives to destroy the side we consider undesirable—death, disease, pain, discomfort, and so on—and preserve the side we consider desirable—life, health, pleasure, comfort, and so on. When these corrosives are placed on



the side of the coin we want to destroy, a hole bores through, also destroying the other side.

To illustrate the fragmentary and restricted state of consciousness that has been called “small space-time-knowledge” (Tarthang Tulku, 1977),<sup>15</sup> which is inherent to *avidya* or delusion, the Buddha used the example of a frog that, having been confined all its life to the bottom of a well, thought the sky was a small blue circle. As noted by Gregory Bateson (1979), when this type of consciousness perceives an arch, it does not realize that it is part of a circuit; the individual tree in front of us does not allow us to see the forest. Consequently, when an arch bothers us, we direct our powerful technological weapons against it, destroying the circuit of which the arch is a part; trying to burn the tree in front of us, we set fire to the forest, causing our own destruction.

For the concept of delusion to be sufficiently clear, we must define the term “delusory valuation” (or “overvaluation of thought”). It indicates the process whereby a vibratory function that seems to emanate from, or be concentrated in, the center of the chest at the level of the heart, charges thoughts with the illusion of *value* and *truth*, causing us to either confuse them with the territory they interpret and take them to be entities-in-themselves (as occurs, e.g., in sensory perception), or to be the absolute truth—or something absolutely false—about what the thoughts interpret.<sup>16</sup> It is when delusory valuation (or “overvaluation of thought”) becomes more pronounced—so that the sensation in the center of the chest associated with the vibratory function at the root of delusion becomes more perceptible—that it is said that one is being affected by a *passion*.

### ☪ Supreme Sanity as Absence of Delusion ☪

**T**RANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCES are delusory (and thus samsaric) insofar as they are colored by delusively valued (i.e., “overvalued”) thoughts. Therefore, transpersonal perspectives that merely focus on the achievement of transpersonal experiences, and which fail to distinguish between nirvanic, samsaric, and neither-samsaric-nor-nirvanic transpersonal experiences, cannot help guide people towards true sanity. Though broadening the scope of consciousness may give access to the transpersonal realm and the experiences of cosmic unity, and so on, that are

characteristic of it, this does not necessarily amount to the transcendence of ego-delusion. If, rather than identifying with the limited entity indicated by our name, we identify with something much broader—the entire universe, the division-free continuum suggested by the New Physics, God, Buddha-nature, and so on—what we do is but *expand our ego*. And we do this in such a way that our delusory identification with a concept or series of concepts would produce more pleasant results, and, therefore, would be more difficult to recognize as such, and consequently, to overcome.

In Buddhist terms, when one broadens one’s field of consciousness without overcoming the delusory valuation (or “overvaluation”) at the root of the basic human delusion or *avidya*, one enters transpersonal realms and broadens one’s ego rather than overcoming delusion in the state of Supreme Sanity which Buddhists call Awakening or Enlightenment. One also gains access to the “higher realms” of cyclic existence or *samsara*, whose nucleus is the delusion called *avidya*. According to Buddhism, most of our everyday experiences belong to the *kama loka*, *kamadhatu*, or “realm of sensuality,” while the most enjoyable sensual experiences form the “realm of the gods of sensuality.” Some experiences of aesthetic value can give us access to the *rupa loka*, *rupadhatu*, or “realm of form.” The above two realms have in common the usual distinction between figure and ground that results from limiting one’s attention to a segment of one’s sensory field (that is perceived as figure), while the rest of the field is submerged in a kind of “penumbra of attention” (and thus becomes ground). As our attention becomes more panoramic and seems to surpass the above usual distinction, giving us access to transpersonal realms—and, moreover, the knower identifies with the known pseudo-totality—it is said that we have gained access to the *arupa loka*, *arupadhatu*, or “Formless realm.”<sup>17</sup> However, instead of overcoming delusion and *samsara*, the individual who ascends to the Formless realms makes delusion and *samsara* become considerably pleasant—which makes it exceedingly difficult to overcome them.

The ascension to the higher realms through spiritual methods or other activities or circumstances has been compared to an arrow shot upwards. Since the arrow rises by the impulse of the limited energy of the action, and the force of gravity attracts it downwards, sooner or later it will have to fall. Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh writes:<sup>18</sup> “When the force that

thrusts the arrow is spent, it will again fall to the ground and its ascent only will have created adverse karma for future times.”

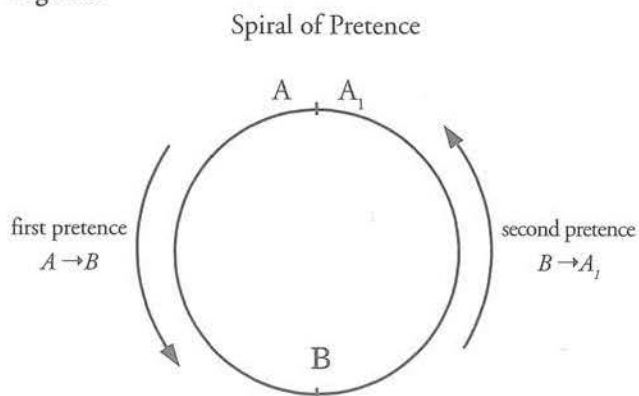
In Tibet, an individual who, by means of spiritual techniques, ascended to the higher realms—and, in particular, to the Formless realms—was compared to a bird taking flight which sooner or later would have to descend. Today we can use an airplane instead of the bird in this example, and compare to the airplane’s shadow our becoming the entity that others see as ourselves and our establishing an ego. The airplane rises and keeps flying as long as fuel feeds its engines (the actions or practices at the root of the healthy habits involved) and as long as certain contributing circumstances are present (e.g., a particularly calm environment, the admiration of disciples, the extent of personal fame, the absence of confrontation with adverse opinions, etc.—and in some cases even objects or substances). As the airplane rises, its shadow broadens and becomes progressively more blurred until, at a given altitude, it seems to disappear. This is similar to what happens to the practitioner who ascends to the summit of conditioned existence (*samsara*), whose sense-of-self expands until it includes the whole universe, and finally gains the illusion of “being someone who has transcended any notion-of-self.” However, the airplane’s shadow (the individual’s sense-of-self), has not disappeared. The machine cannot keep flying indefinitely; the amount of fuel in its tank is limited and favorable contributing conditions at some point will be substituted by unfavorable ones, and sooner or later it will have to descend and meet its shadow once more. The individual who “descends” from the heights is accustomed to the apparently unlimited character of the sky (which here represents the wide scope of consciousness) and therefore is most likely to experience some degree of claustrophobia upon facing his or her “shadow.” This had never disappeared, even though it had remained invisible for some time, and feeling confined to its tight limits once more will make the person reject the whole of his or her experience. Rejection of the experience will transform into pain whatever sensations may manifest, and the higher the individual’s bioenergetic input,<sup>19</sup> the more acute will be the pain. Since in the above situation the individual’s bioenergetic input is bound to be quite high, he or she is very likely to face a hellish experience.

The fuel that sustains the spiritual *high* is the repeated action (Sanskrit: *karma*) that establishes

healthy habits or attitudes. Buddhists designate it with the Sanskrit word *hetu*, which means “main cause,” and compare it to the seed that allows a plant to be produced. Contributing conditions—including the effect of objects or substances, the environment, and so on—are compared to light, humidity, earth, heat, and so on. When the action at the root of the habits involved runs out or the contributing conditions change—in terms of the simile, when the airplane’s fuel runs out or when atmospheric or mechanical conditions make it impossible for it to continue its flight—the individual will have to confront the “shadow” again. Consider Laing’s (1961) diagram of spiral simulations below (Figure 1) and the following comment:

Elusion is a relation in which one pretends oneself away from one’s original self; then pretends oneself back from this pretence so as to appear to have arrived back at the starting point. A double pretence simulates no pretence. The only way to “realize” one’s original state is to forgo the first pretence, but once one adds a second pretence to it, as far as I can see, there is no end to the series of possible pretences. I am. I pretend I am not. I pretend I am. I pretend I am not pretending to be pretending...

Figure 1



The positions A and A<sub>1</sub> on the perimeter of the circle are separated by an impermeable barrier which is thinner and more transparent than one can imagine. Begin at A and move towards B. Instead of going back in a clockwise direction to A, continue in an anti-clockwise direction to point A<sub>1</sub>. A and A<sub>1</sub> are “so near and yet so far.” They are so close that one says: “Is not A<sub>1</sub> just as good as A, if it is indistinguishable from A?” (Laing, 1961, p. 30)

If what we value is the state that Laing represented with point A, we will believe we have reached A, as we will not be able to accept that what we have achieved is but its imitation.



Point A corresponds to our true nature, which is not personal but universal, and which, insofar as it cannot be thought about or conceptualized, Mahayana Buddhists refer to by the term *achintya* or “the Unthinkable.” Chuang-tzu compared the experience of this nature to that of a baby who...

stares all day long without blinking its eyes—it has no preferences in the world of externals. To move without knowing where you are going, to sit at home without knowing what you are doing, traipsing and trailing about with other things, riding along with them on the same wave—this is the basic rule of life-preservation, this and nothing more. (in Watson, 1968, p. 253)

Point B is our usual condition marked by delusion, in which we delusorily value (or overvalue) the concept according to which *we are* the finite and limited entity indicated by our name that we believe to be distinct and separate from the rest of what is represented by point A of the diagram.

Lastly, point  $A_1$  is the *illusion* that one has achieved the unveiling of the condition represented by A—an illusion that corresponds to the Formless realms which, according to Buddhism, are the summit of *samsara* (i.e., of the experience marked by the delusion called *avidya*).

When one arrives at B, one feels at a distance from the plenitude of the universe, and therefore one experiences a powerful sensation of “lack of plenitude” that one attempts to fill by every means possible. However, since one has been conditioned to hold on to one’s separate identity, in one’s attempts to recover totality and plenitude, one will strive to affirm and maintain one’s self as an individual. Consequently, instead of returning to A one will choose to advance to  $A_1$ , identifying with a spurious conceptual totality made possible by a limited panoramification of the focus of conscious attention.

Contrariwise, “returning to A” after having become fully adapted to the social pseudoreality may be explained—after Norman Brown (1968)—as the reestablishment of the oceanic feeling. (This feeling, according to Freud, characterizes the infant, and implies plenitude which, it should be noted, Freud was wrong to characterize negatively.) The feeling may also seem to be reestablished without the loss of the capabilities acquired by the adult, and even with their further development, as the individual has been freed from the self-impediment issuing from delusorily valued self-consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

Access to transpersonal realms and the so-called mental level cannot amount to True Sanity. If we hold on to a condition that seems unlimited and appears to encompass the entire universe, it will be because we cannot overcome the delusory valuation of our experience. In most nontranspersonal states this delusory valuation results in a greater or lesser measure of pain, so we decide to avoid the pain by holding on to the transpersonal realms. This would not occur if we overcame delusory valuation (i.e., overvaluation), in the absence of which no possible experiences would involve suffering, and there would be no idea whatsoever of an ego that should avoid suffering.

In agreement with several Eastern mystical philosophies, Korzybski (1941) suggested that, when we believe our conceptual maps to be the territory of the *given*, or when we take them to be absolutely true or absolutely false representations of it, we are under delusion. True Sanity consists of self-liberation from the confusion of maps with the territory, and from the delusory valuation of conceptual maps in general—and therefore, of self-liberation from the experiences of all realms. No matter what realm of experience we may be in, we should not allow ourselves to be carried away by any delusorily valued thought: neither by discursive thoughts forming a chain that traps us in a circle of confusion, passion, and delusion, nor by the intuitive type of thoughts involved in sensory perception. Upon discovering that one has been deceived by a thought, the practitioner of systems such as Dzogchen looks directly at the thought that is present at the time in order to discover its essential nature, thus setting the conditions for its self-liberation and the concomitant unveiling of *anoic gnosis*<sup>21</sup>—that is, of the unthinkable true nature of thoughts and of all reality. This amounts to the dissolution of delusion in the unveiling of the absolutely true (the state represented by A), which may be compared to the awakening from a dream or to the removal of a veil.<sup>22</sup>

We may delusorily value a thought about our possibilities for the future or any other practical matter; a reasoning about the ultimate nature of reality; the perception of a group of passersby; the apprehension of gods and demons; or the experience of a state of greater space-time-knowledge in terms of concepts such as Being, Oneness, God, Buddha-nature, and so on.<sup>23</sup> No matter what conceptually-tinged experience the individual may face, recognizing an interpretation in terms of thoughts is involved. The individual looks the thought that is present at the moment right in the face and, instead



of becoming hypnotized with its content, sees *what it (is)*<sup>24</sup> in truth—thus creating the conditions for the perception to liberate itself spontaneously together with the subject-object duality and the vibratory activity at the root of delusory valuation.<sup>25</sup> It is then that the absolute condition represented by A is unveiled, beyond the relativity of subject and object, and of concepts defined by their opposites.

Individuals who lack a practice such as this one, upon gaining access to the transpersonal level may remain attached to it, and may likewise get trapped in other levels too—and particularly in states of extreme suffering. Contrariwise, those who free themselves completely from delusory valuation cannot fall into a condition of suffering again. Since they no longer feel separated from the plenitude of the universe, even if they function in nontranspersonal realms they recognize the illusory character of the separateness they experience; their lives are a perennial plenitude without any sense of lack. Moreover, they take care of the whole universe as their own body, and since they do not experience themselves as separate selves, they are free from selfishness and from its ill effects.

Now we can explain the title of this article. The Dzogchen teachings call “mind” the functioning of our psyche in terms of the delusory valuation of thoughts and, in particular, of thought-structures such as the noetic-noematic (subject-object) dichotomy, and counterpose the mind thus conceived to the unveiling of anomic gnosis, corresponding to Supreme Sanity.<sup>26</sup> Metatranspersonal psychology is, then, the one leading beyond mind, so that the unveiling of anomic gnosis may become firmly established.

The term “metatranspersonal” is to “transpersonal” what the adjective “metashamanic” (that I coined in a former paper [Capriles, 1990b]) is “to shamanic.” As will be seen below, metashamanic practice uses seemingly shamanic elements for purposes that go far beyond those characteristic of shamanism as such. Likewise, metatranspersonal psychology acknowledges the need to gain access to transpersonal realms, but does not consider this as its final purpose.<sup>27</sup> According to this metatranspersonal perspective, the aim of therapy is the capacity to transit through all realms of experience without attaching oneself to any of them and to achieve self-liberation from the experiences of all.

Though shamanic cultures had a pan-communicative vision that caused human beings to relate communicatively with natural phenomena

and therefore to preserve the ecological order, shamanism also has serious defects. Michael Harner (1973) pointed out that the South American shaman thinks the reality to which is gained access through shamanic means—that is different from everyday reality and that Western culture would consider supernatural—is the true reality, and that the everyday vision shared with others is a false reality. Information on shamanic cultures from other regions suggests that what Harner says may be applied to shamanism in general: although some shamanic tribes and cultures may attribute a greater or lesser degree of reality to the everyday vision of a normal individual, most of them attribute a higher degree of reality to “supernatural” shamanic experiences that are equally sustained by delusory valuation. It is perhaps the greater scope of the focus of consciousness and the greater intensity of the experience associated with the higher bioenergetic input (*kundalini* or *thig-le*) at the root of such experiences that make these seem more real to shamans than the ones they face in their everyday lives.<sup>28</sup>

In Tibet and its zone of cultural influence, popular culture has preserved important shamanic elements<sup>29</sup> that representatives of the two most important religious systems never tried to discourage. Lamas, Bönpo as well as Buddhist, referred to local spirits and demons as relatively existing entities capable of causing great harm to human beings and social life, and, in general, encouraged the belief in supernatural entities that could harm or help human beings. The reason for this is that as long as the tendency is still present to experience “supernatural” reality as inherently absolutely true, and to become its potential victims, it is of no use to simply tell oneself that the reality in question does not exist. In fact, the bravest and most capable students of Lamas of both systems used to be taught practices (considered very dangerous) that would allow them to experience the “supernatural” reality of their gods and demons and, if all went well, to recognize that it was illusory and thus free themselves from its influence and power. Repetition of the practice resulted in the progressive neutralization of the tendency to experience the supernatural reality accessed by shamanic and yogic means as self-existing, independent of the practitioner’s mental processes, and absolutely true. As they learned not to take seriously visions and experiences that seemed so real, practitioners also learned not to be conditioned by the illusion that



their normal everyday experiences were self-existing, independent of their own mental processes, and absolutely true. Liberating themselves from delusory valuation during shamanic experiences, they were able to free themselves from it, and therefore from delusion in general—in their daily lives as well.

Dzogchen and some other Tibetan spiritual systems regard as delusory *both* our experience of everyday reality and the experience of supernatural reality to which shamans and yogis may have access.<sup>30</sup> This does not mean that they consider both realities as mere hallucinations; they acknowledge the existence of something *given* that, once processed and interpreted by our mental functions, is experienced as the world in which we live, with all its entities. Delusion arises when we fail to recognize that entities do not exist inherently and absolutely; that they depend on other entities and on our own mental processes in order to exist *in the manner that they exist for us*. Thus, delusion is a confusion regarding the mode of existence of entities (including human beings): when we believe that our objects and we ourselves exist inherently and substantially (in the sense of being self-existing and not needing the mind and/or other objects or subjects to exist), that the relative is absolute, we are under delusion. This delusion is a result of the delusory valuation of thought.

Delusion gives rise to a series of emotional responses that produce recurring suffering, dissatisfaction, and frustration. If we believe in the inherent, absolute existence of supernatural reality, we may become the victims of demons and spirits, as has happened to many Tibetans and members of tribal cultures; if we believe in the inherent, absolute truth of the entities, beliefs, and values of normal everyday reality, we will strive to maintain our identities, possessions, and so on, thereby giving rise to: (a) constant discomfort, dissatisfaction, and personal frustration; (b) contradictions and social conflicts; and (c) ultimately, an ecological crisis such as the one we presently face.

To conclude this section, it may be relevant to note that when individuals who have freed themselves from delusion face what others experience as a contradiction and which produces in them emotional responses, they do not value it delusorily and therefore do not perceive it as a contradiction. It is well known that the Zen Buddhist method that the Japanese call *koan* (Chinese: *kung-an*) study, consists of confronting students with what

they perceive as an unsolvable contradiction and requiring that they resolve it. As long as they are under delusion, the students will strive day and night to solve the *koan*. However, sooner or later, their effort to understand in terms of delusorily valued (or overvalued) thoughts will collapse and the students will no longer perceive a contradiction in what they were trying to solve. Then, for a longer or shorter period, they will be in a state of unlimited freedom, beyond the yoke of the delusory valuation of concepts and, therefore, beyond all limits.

Similarly, what Gregory Bateson (1972, Part III) called pathogenic double-bind<sup>31</sup> will produce a pathological effect on the child with corresponding predispositions, but will not produce the same effect in a normal adult—and will not produce any effect whatsoever in the individual who has freed him or herself from delusory valuation.

### • The Mandala, the Descendent Path and Serial Metanoias •

JUNG DISCOVERED that mandalas, which appeared spontaneously to some neurotic patients in dreams or hallucinations, were maps pointing out the path to sanity—which, in its supreme form, is not merely the overcoming of neuroses (which Jung correctly understood to be spontaneous, potentially self-healing processes), but the overcoming of basic human delusion. Jung pointed out that the center of the mandala represents the essential nonduality and nonplurality of both the physical and the psychic universe, while the periphery represents the world of duality and plurality—which, when these two latter characteristics are taken as absolute, self-existing, and given, is a world of deceit and delusion.

In spite of the fact that Jung wrote “psychological commentaries” on the translations of two important, original Dzogchen books (Evans-Wentz, 1927, 1977), he failed to grasp some of the mandala’s levels of meaning, particularly in the Dzogchen teachings. From a standpoint related to the latter, let us consider the three main regions of a mandala:

(1) The periphery represents the normal state in which we are totally immersed in delusion and completely deceived: since we are confused and at the same time confused about the fact that we are confused, we consider our judgments and perceptions to be sound. (2) The four wrathful guardians (*dharmapala*) or *dakini* in the intermediate zone, who guard the gates to the center, represent the dynamics of the transition



between periphery and center. (3) The central figure in *yab-yum* (male-female erotic-mystical union) is the Adi-Buddha or Primordial Buddha, who represents the unveiling of anoic gnosis in its nonduality, its nonplurality, its nakedness (i.e., its being free of the delusory valuation of thought), and its absence of delusion and deceit.

Let us consider these three zones of the mandala as stages in the path to Supreme Sanity. (1) In the periphery, delusion or basic contradiction is active but has not been disclosed as such. (2) In the intermediate zone, represented by the wrathful guardians or *dakinis*, delusion or basic contradiction has been disclosed as such and therefore has turned into extreme conflict. (3) In the center, delusion or basic contradiction has dissolved in the unveiling of anoic gnosis—that is, of the absolute nondual condition free from delusion. The contradiction consisting of basic human delusion and represented by the periphery has to turn into conflict for it to dissolve, if all goes well, in the unveiling of the anoic gnosis corresponding to the true condition of reality.<sup>32</sup>

The principle of the mandala is central to different mystical traditions and appears in the literature and fine arts of many civilizations. In order to explain this fact it is not necessary to establish genetic links among different traditions and civilizations: if Jung's patients could hallucinate mandalas or dream them up and thus obtain spontaneous maps of the process they had to undergo in order to heal, there is little doubt that all true mystics are naturally familiarized with the dynamics represented by mandalas.

Idries Shah has told the story of a disciple of the Sufi Master from Murcia, Ibn El-Arabi, who dreamed that Master Maaruf Kharki was engulfed by fire. Thinking that the great Master was in hell, the man was seized with great tribulation, so he decided to ask El-Arabi for an explanation. The Master told him the fire did not mean that Maaruf was in hell; it represented that which the dreamer had to go through in order to reach the state of Maaruf—a region of experience that Sufis often call the abyss of fire.

The principle of the mandala is also the essence of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and its dynamics correspond very precisely to the structure of the "beyond" in the famous work by the great Florentine poet. Guided by Virgil, Dante leaves the realm of the living—the mandala's periphery—and descends into hell. According to Bateson (1972,

"The Cybernetics of Self: A Theory of Alcoholism"), there is a positive feedback loop at the root of the process of the *reductio ad absurdum* of basic human delusion, which (whether it takes the form of a neurosis, a psychosis, or the first stage in the traditional path to Supreme Sanity) may be what Freud called *Thanatos* or the death instinct. Dante's entrance to hell means that the contradiction that characterizes the periphery of the mandala has turned into conflict, and that the conflict is developing—blindly driven, directed, and catalyzed by *Thanatos*.

Dante's descent through hell towards its lowest circle and the poet's passage to purgatory through the opening at the bottom of hell, describe the development of conflict towards the threshold level at which the unveiling of anoic gnosis redirects the process in a clearly healthy direction, introducing a mechanism of interruption and spontaneous self-liberation from *Thanatic* positive feedback loops. Dante is not yet ready to unite with Beatrice and establish himself in heaven (which in the *Divine Comedy* does not represent the realms of the gods of Sensuality, Form, or Formlessness, but the unveiling of anoic gnosis), because he has to purge or purify his deeply-rooted delusions and wayward passions through the turning of contradiction into conflict each time it manifests itself and the subsequent self-liberation from both conflict and contradiction in the unveiling of anoic gnosis. However, since hell is supposed to be eternal (so there can be no way out of it), this process no longer belongs to hell, but to purgatory: the unveiling of anoic gnosis has already given Dante a glimpse of heaven, and therefore the poet knows that the conflict and suffering he faces are not eternal but transitory, key elements of the purification he has to undergo in order to establish himself in heaven. Henceforth, the process will no longer be catalyzed solely by *Thanatos*; it will be catalyzed also by the holistic Wisdom resulting from the repeated self-liberation from basic contradiction (delusion) and conflict in the unveiling of anoic gnosis.<sup>33</sup>

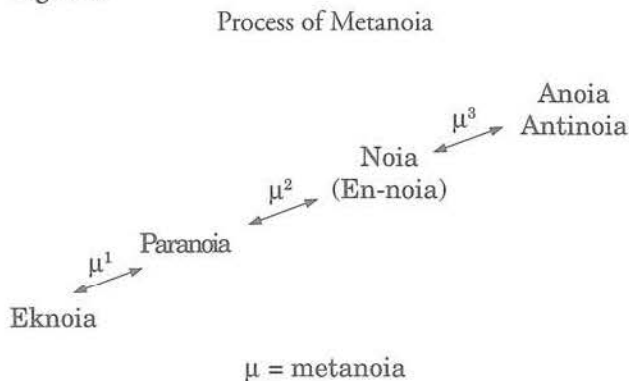
Once delusion has been purged to a considerable degree through its repeated self-liberation in the unveiling of anoic gnosis, Dante ascends through the heavens until he establishes himself in the empyreal—that is to say, at the very center of the mandala.

In the terminology used by David Cooper in *The Death of the Family* (1971),<sup>34</sup> the path to Supreme Sanity is a process of *metanoia*<sup>35</sup> that leads us from



*eknoia* (the normal state of being part of the mass in which individuals are outside their own minds) towards *noia* or *en-noia* (properly centered mind, which has ceased to be part of the mass) and *anoia* (or no-mind).<sup>36</sup> One of the problems I see in Cooper's map is that it sets too rigid a series of successive metanoias and a slightly imprecise order in the succession of steps in the process being discussed. Another problem I see with *The Death of The Family* is that it seems to posit that spontaneous episodes of madness in unprepared individuals—provided that they are not institutionally distorted or aborted—may be sufficient to allow them to achieve the degree of sanity characteristic of a true Master in a genuine (metashamanic, metatranspersonal) Wisdom-tradition. Consider the following diagram from Cooper (1971).<sup>37</sup>

Figure 2



According to *The Death of the Family*, sanity consists of the fluid movement (*metanoia* 3) between *noia* and *anoia*. *Anoia*—like the Chinese term *wu-hsin*, literally meaning no-mind—indicates the overcoming of the core of delusion that the Dzogchen teachings call mind. Thus, although the condition of *anoia* may be regarded as transpersonal, it implies the self-liberation from all thoughts, and therefore it excludes the Formless realms. Since it corresponds to the manifestation of *nirvana*, it excludes the condition the Dzogchen teachings call *kunzhi* (in which, as noted above, neither *samsara* nor *nirvana* are active).

It should also be noted that the consolidation of the absolute dissolution of the illusion of individuality implied by *anoia* may only take place interdependently with the development of an individuation similar to the one conceived by Jung. To survive as a species, the extreme selfishness and blind individualism that have led us to the brink of

destruction will have to dissolve in *anoia*. However, we will have to establish a *noia* also, which implies the overcoming of the impersonal serialization imposed on us by social institutions. The former means that we have to become progressively free from the delusory valuation of the ego that causes us to feel that we are the center of the universe and makes us extremely selfish.<sup>38</sup> The latter means that we have to free ourselves from the power and influence of the internalized others making up our superego, with whom we have become agglutinated and who make it impossible for us to act in a genuinely autonomous manner.

In traveling on the path to Supreme Sanity we stop functioning like robots controlled by others who are robots controlled by others...ad infinitum. This, however, does not mean we become our own masters—nor does it mean we develop a more centered and stronger ego. We must overcome the inner schism between one aspect that controls and another that is controlled, along with the illusion of a central, true ego; this means that, as we free ourselves from the influence of others, we become free from ourselves as well—that is, we overcome the illusion of “ego.”

Though the net of internalized others, which according to Cooper (1971) corresponds to the Freudian superego, is a constellation of *relations*, it functions in terms of the images—expressions, voice inflections, and so on—of significant others in their relations with us or with other others—maybe partly because, as noted by Bateson (1979), images pass through human interfaces with greater ease and economy. Thus, although we must understand human individuals as systems of relations, we must also bear in mind that such relations have a *very personal character*.

### ∞ Existential Psychology, the Humanistic Movement and Janov's Primal Therapy vs. the Purification Described in the *Divine Comedy* ∞

DURING THE 1960s, the humanistic psychology movement helped to prepare the way for the advent of the transpersonal psychology movement. One of the basic ideas common to many figures in the humanistic movement was that sanity did not lie in the perfecting of the defense mechanisms whereby we elude both pain and the contents that psychoanalysts call ego-dystonic, but in dismantling our defense mechanisms, so that we



could be fully in touch with our own pain and be aware of the contents that previously we were compelled to elude.

In the arena of therapy, the purpose of methods such as Janov's (1970, 1972a, 1972b) primal therapy was to allow for the discovery of a primal distress, which one had felt compelled to elude by building the ego and perfecting its defense mechanisms. One of Janov's clients had experienced a deep feeling of anxiety upon witnessing a scene from a play, and Janov advised him to behave as the actor in order to enter fully into that feeling. When the client followed his advice, he experienced the urge to utter a grievous scream. Janov made of this supposed need to utter what he called the primal scream, one of the axioms of his system. His clients had to reach the state where they would feel an irrepressible impulse to scream and freely give way to this impulse: the scream itself would be a liberation.

Janov had recognized the need to face hell, but had not understood that, rather than finding a momentary relief from it by giving way to an emotional outburst, the individual had to go through hell—as Dante in the *Divine Comedy*—to reach heaven and become established therein. If one releases tension through an outburst of emotion, one loses the opportunity to use the tension to recognize and liberate the dual appearance at its root. Tension necessarily implies the appearance of two poles opposing each other and requires that a mental subject feel separate from its object and reject it. When the feeling of tension cannot be withstood any longer, it becomes the sole object of consciousness—and consciousness, believing itself to be an autonomous mental subject, feels different from it and rejects it with ever increasing vigor, exacerbating tension. This is a unique opportunity to search for the mental subject apparently different and separate from the tension, in order to see whether or not such a subject truly exists. On doing this we may discover *beyond concepts* that there is no such subject nor a duality between consciousness and tension—whereby the apparent duality between the illusory subject and its object might eventually dissolve like a feather in a fire. The individual has a first glimpse of the state of Supreme Sanity as the tension instantly self-liberates, loosening up completely. The repeated occurrence of this results in the gradual development of the capacity for the instantaneous self-liberation from duality, tension, and delusion

in daily life, as well as in the development of holistic Wisdom.

Although Janov did not assert that the purpose of his therapy was merely to achieve a partial, momentary release of tension, in practice this was often the outcome—a mere *katharsis* or purification almost as superficial as the one posited in Aristotle's *Poetics*. It may be true that a psychological trauma will only be resolved if the individual reexperiences the traumatic episode at its root; however, the result of therapy will not be optimal if the client merely expresses the emotions that he or she was unable to express and was forced to repress in the original experience. If the client did so, the result would be a temporary and partial relaxation that would not uproot the cause of all tension—which is the delusory valuation of illusory duality; the partial relaxation thus achieved would give way to a new accumulation of tension that the individual would not know how to liberate, and so the client would continue to be at the mercy of everyday life situations. This is why so many of Janov's clients had to submit themselves to his therapy repeatedly in order to reexperience the primal feeling and send forth a new scream.

The only purification that is definitive and irreversible is the one achieved through the process illustrated by the *Divine Comedy* (that was used to illustrate the Dzogchen path, but which applies to all genuine paths), which definitively neutralizes the basic human delusion at the root of all evil, resulting in a radical and irreversible transformation of the individual's experience: uprooting the cause, so that its negative effects cease manifesting. Upon reaching the point of greatest tension we must observe the appearance of duality that gives way to the tension and determine whether or not it is justified. Since at this point tension will depend upon the mental subject's rejection of the unpleasant sensation of tension appearing as object, we must look towards the place where the mental subject seems to be, in order to check whether or not it is in fact an entity separate and distinct from the tension and flow of experience. Upon failing to find such a supposedly separate subject, sooner or later the illusory duality may spontaneously dissolve (i.e., self-liberate) in the manifestation of the anoxic gnosis that reveals the nondual and nonplural nature of reality.

As long as we elude the frustration, dissatisfaction, unhappiness, anguish, fear, and pain that pervade our everyday experience, we will have no



chance to apprehend the illusion of duality at their root—and therefore no way to overcome either the root, the trunk, or the branches. Only when the illusion of duality is disclosed as such and turns into conflict is it possible to overcome it, so that we cease being subject to its negative consequences. Our purpose should not be that of existentialist philosophers who advise us to live in hell, which they consider as authenticity itself, nor that of humanistic psychologists who try to help us rid ourselves of psychological defense mechanisms, yet fail to provide us with the means to overcome the delusion at the root of suffering. Nor should it be that of primal therapy, which amounts to the superficial catharsis achieved through an emotional outburst. The purpose of any genuine therapy should be Supreme Sanity. To achieve it, both a conscientious preparation and the oral instructions of a genuine mystical tradition are required.

Other humanistic approaches to psychotherapy, including some transpersonal ones, have a similar shortcoming. Though an individual is forced to face something that had always been avoided, the client is not given the means to overcome the basic delusion at the root of all suffering. In the best of cases, the clients of such therapies will achieve a superficial catharsis through emotional relief, and may perhaps develop the ability to be more open before others as their need to deceive both others and themselves diminishes. However, clients may pay a price for this success. By exposing themselves “exactly as they are,” they make themselves and other people believe that their true identity, their true being, is what they show others at that moment—but which is actually an *unconscious phantasy*, in this case corresponding to Jung’s shadow.<sup>39</sup> Such belief is, of course, prior to the therapy and, undoubtedly, it is more authentic to show it than to conceal it. The problem is that the therapy has not helped the individual to become free from the delusion at the root of all problems; on the contrary, the treatment has taken delusion for granted, affirmed, and sustained it.

We have to descend into the Labyrinth and face the Minotaur—not to affirm and maintain its illusory existence by believing it to be our true identity—but, on the contrary, to discover it to be a mere illusion and thus deprive it of all power. As we are progressively freed from the grip of unconscious phantasy—that is, from the hold of the shadow—the source of most of the harm that we cause others and ourselves is gradually

neutralized. The key to achieve this lies in the treasure of instructions found in the ancient Wisdom traditions and in the relationship with a true Master holding a genuine lineage.<sup>40</sup> These elements may allow us to spontaneously access Supreme Wisdom, putting an end to delusion and concomitant suffering, and may help us to free ourselves from all neurosis or imbalance. The *Lankavatara Sutra* reads:

*Things are not as they seem to be,  
nor are they otherwise.*

We are not our ego or conscious identity, but we are not our shadow or *unconscious phantasy* either.

### Notes

This essay, along with another paper of mine written in Spanish and entitled “Pasos hacia una fenomenología metaexistencial de los estados de conciencia” (“Steps to a Meta-Existential Phenomenology of Mind”; Maracaibo, Venezuela, *Utopia y praxis latinoamericana*, No. 2; published with serious printing errors), summarize the theoretical nucleus of a book I am preparing to be published under the title *Beyond Mind: Steps to a Metatranspersonal Psychology and a Metaexistential Phenomenology of Mind*—of which a shorter version will appear first, and then a longer one, if I can complete the necessary research (still seeking publishers).

Thanks are due to Vincent Morley for his previous corrections of the language and to Mayda Hocevar for her help with the bibliography. I also acknowledge Helga Ramírez’s help during the process of translation.

1. Both transpersonal psychology and the antipsychiatry movement have made extremely valuable contributions to the study of the human mind and experience, as they have vindicated and validated realms of experience that formerly psychological and psychiatric schools generally had regarded as pathological. Among these lies precisely the condition that, according to the criteria established in this essay, constitutes True Sanity (corresponding to what Buddhists call Awakening or Enlightenment). Therefore, my essay is not intended as a condemnation of transpersonal psychology as a whole, nor of those of its proponents who have labored to communicate its extraordinary value. (Note that, although the term “antipsychiatry” was coined by David Cooper, and R. D. Laing never included himself in the category indicated by the word, I follow the custom—initiated, according to Adrian Laing [1996], by David Cooper in his Introduction [Cooper, 1968]—of including Laing in the term.)

Thus, when I speak of metatranspersonal psychology I am not calling for the birth of a new psychological movement; I am only proposing a shift of emphasis in some expressions of transpersonal psychology so that they may discriminate between delusory transpersonal experiences and the (equally transpersonal) state of Supreme Sanity corresponding to Awakening or Enlightenment.



It must be noted that, although this essay is subtitled “Steps to a Metatranspersonal Psychology,” psychologies of the type that I call “metatranspersonal” have existed as long as there have been genuine Wisdom traditions resulting from the Awakening or Enlightenment of one or another individual—and therefore any steps to it are unnecessary.

Finally, I must state that since 1977 I have been a student of Dzogchen Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who has been my main teacher since 1986. Since this teacher has criticized those who claim that in the West Buddhism has to be transmitted in the language of psychology, it may seem strange to the rest of Rinpoche’s disciples that I write this article. However, I myself do not see any contradiction between Namkhai Norbu’s assertion and my writing this essay, which I produced precisely because I felt that most of those who have tried to express Buddhist psychology and “therapy” in Western terms have to some extent distorted it, and I fear that many people may have been misled by these distortions. The point is that, although I do not think Buddhism has to be taught in terms of Western psychology, I thought it was important to show some of the distortions introduced by those who do; and indicate how those distortions may be corrected. And, in so doing, I availed myself of the opportunity to briefly present the Dzogchen (*rDzogs-chen*) path in a journal whose readers may be among the most likely individuals to benefit from this path.

2. Within transpersonal psychology, Wilber (1977) has referred to the state of Supreme Sanity as Liberation, the Sanskrit equivalents of which (*moksha*; *mukti*) are used in various Hindu traditions to indicate the state of Supreme Sanity. The Tibetan equivalents of Liberation (*thar-pa*; *grol-ba*) refer to the Hinayana Buddhist’s individual liberation from suffering. The Tibetan equivalent of Awakening or Enlightenment (*byang-chub*, corresponding to the Sanskrit *bodhi*, the Chinese *wu*, the Japanese *satori*, etc.), in turn, indicates the realizations of the *Mahayana*, *Vajrayana* and *Atiyana* forms of Buddhism, which imply what the *Yogachara* called omniscience. This, rather than indicating a type of ESP, refers to a more complete form of realization, involving panoramic awareness and special capabilities allowing the individual to effectively help others to go beyond *samsara*. Though in general I use terms such as Awakening or Enlightenment in order to indicate the outcome of true spiritual development, since this essay deals with psychology, it seemed more appropriate to speak of Supreme Sanity.

3. In terms of his division of the psyche into separate, autonomous compartments (already denounced by Herder), Kant situated ideas in Reason, aesthetic and teleological judgments in the Faculty of Judgment, concepts in the Understanding, and sensory intuitions in Sensitiveness or Sensibility—all of which interacted with each other. For example, in what is generally termed recognition, the concepts of the Understanding were applied to the realm of Sensitiveness—and the same occurred in other mental operations with the judgments of the Faculty of Judgment and with the ideas and ideals of Reason). Since all of the above are different types of thoughts (the contents of which are *understood* by a single, unitary psyche), here I have chosen to refer to all of them with the generic noun

“thoughts,” and divide them—as the Dzogchen teachings do—into “coarse” thoughts (which Descartes called “discursive”), “subtle” thoughts (which Descartes called “intuitive”), and “super-subtle” thoughts, such as the “triple projection” which gives rise to the illusion that there is an experience, something experienced, and an experiencer (which Descartes failed to identify as thoughts and wrongly took to be part of the nature of a *given*, substantial reality). In this essay, the term “conceptual” should be understood as including all three types of thought, that is, (a) coarse or discursive, (b) subtle or intuitive, and (c) super-subtle.

Since *definitio fit per genus proximum et differentiam specificam*, all contents of thoughts are *relative*: they are defined by their inclusion in a broader genus and by contrast with those within the same genus which they exclude. The absolute (as base), on the other hand, is the true nature common to all entities and all thoughts. The delusion that many Mahayana Buddhists regard as the Second Noble Truth consists of experiencing the relative as absolute, the dependent as independent, the insubstantial as substantial, that which we posit, as inherent or *given*, and so forth.

In regard to Kant’s theories, in particular, it should be noted that he posited a priori elements in each of the compartments he drew within the human psyche, in an attempt to validate both his own experience and the idiosyncrasies of his society by positing those elements as universal and objective. The existence of a priori forms of Sensitiveness or Sensibility would confirm the supposedly objective existence of the world and of human experience in general; the existence of a priori concepts of the Understanding would validate the scientific and nonscientific knowledge prevailing in his society, justifying the said knowledge’s claim to truth; the existence of a priori aesthetic judgments would validate his society’s tastes, as the objective appreciation of universal beauty; the existence of a priori teleological judgments would explain and to some extent justify the theological endeavor of members of theistic religions; the existence of a priori ideas and ideals of Reason would support the claim to objectiveness and universality of the morality and ethics of his own society.

However, the above would not work in the light of the myth of *lila* (i.e., the cosmic game whereby Universal Cognitiveness, manifesting as restricted human consciousness, eludes its true nature and believes itself to be a separate, autonomous creature thrown into a world of multiplicity). Nor would it work in regard to Heraclitus’ philosophy (according to fr. 123 DK, the Logos/Physis likes to hide; according to fr. 2 DK, though the Logos is common to all, each individual believes he or she has a separate intellect of his or her own; according to fr. 50 DK, those who listen, not to the I, but to the Logos, wisely acknowledge that all is one). In this light, any a priori element determining human experience must be a source of delusion, error, and confusion rather than of truth, beauty, and so on.

Of course *lila* is but a myth; however, the “hard” sciences are no longer Kant’s ally, as in our time they strongly support the ancient vision of the universe as an undivided continuum (including both what we regard as its mental aspects and its physical aspects)—which implies that separateness and multiplicity are but an illusion. Since there can be no source of cognition other than Universal Cognitiveness, the above

implies that—as symbolized by the myth of *lila*—the illusion in question is generated by Universal Cognitiveness, which thus eludes its true nature and believes itself to be a separate, autonomous creature in a world of multiplicity.

4. Samsaric: belonging or pertaining to *samsara* or cyclic existence and thus being marked by *dukkha*—the suffering and dissatisfaction which is the Buddha's First Noble Truth—and by *avidya*—delusion, the Buddha's Second Noble Truth, the cause of the first. The Four Noble Truths are discussed later on.

5. Here the term *kunzhi* (*kun-gzhi*)—in Sanskrit *alaya*—is used independently of *namshe* (*nam-shes*)—in Sanskrit, *viññana*—and should be understood in the Dzogchen (*rDzogs-chen*) sense, in which it indicates a condition in which neither *samsara* nor *nirvana* are active. The first stage in the development of *samsara* is the one called *kunzhi namshe* (*kun-gzhi nam-shes*), which translates into Sanskrit as *alaya viññana*, but is understood in the typical phenomenological Dzogchen sense (that is very different from the metaphysical meaning given it by the *Yogachara*) in which it indicates a disposition to know the totality constituted by *kunzhi* as an object of consciousness.

The condition of *kunzhi* arises in our experience again and again, even though most of us fail to notice it clearly enough to be able to remember it. A typical case of this may be the recurring experience of *kunzhi lungmaten* (*kun-gzhi lung-ma-bstan*) or “neutral base of all”: a mental lapse, lacuna or hiatus—which may be so brief as to be unnoticeable to most people, or long enough to become quite conspicuous—during which the normal samsaric mind is not functioning, yet the mind in question has not dissolved in the manifestation of *nirvana*.

6. The criterion of sanity or mental health as absence of delusion has been common in some trends of phenomenological and existential psychology. However, according to existentialism, authenticity lies in the nonelusion of hell by means of the self-deceit that Sartre called Bad Faith. My criterion may be regarded as metaexistential (Capriles, 1997) insofar as it does not identify sanity with living in hell, but proposes that we go *through* hell—as Dante did in the *Divine Comedy*—in order to become established in heaven—that is, in the anaic gnosis (see note 21 on this term) that unveils the true nondual, nonpluralistic, and nonconceptual nature of reality and which represents true sanity.

In Buddhism, typical examples of illusion are the perception of a falling hair by someone who suffers from a cataract, seeing a shell as yellow while suffering from jaundice, perceiving lights or balls upon closing one's eyes or looking at the sky, seeing something bidimensional as tridimensional, and so forth. Delusion is a confusion of categories or logical types: believing an illusion to be an absolutely true, substantial reality; taking the relative as absolute; thinking the interdependent is independent; taking what we value as inherently valuable; and so forth.

7. Is it correct to state that our scientific and technological project has produced such terrible results? The well-known manifesto, *A Blueprint for Survival* (Editorial Team of the magazine *The Ecologist*, 1971), backed in a Statement of Support by many of the top scientists of the United Kingdom

and by organizations such as the Conservation Society, Friends of the Earth, the Henry Doubleday Research Association, and the Soil Association and Survival International, stated:

An examination of the relevant information available has impressed upon us the extreme gravity of the global situation today. For, if current trends are allowed to persist, the breakdown of society and the irreversible disruption of the life-support systems on this planet...certainly within the lifetimes of our children, are inevitable.

Several decades ago, Michel Bosquet had already warned: “It took humankind thirty centuries to achieve its present momentum; it has thirty years left to stop before reaching the abyss” (Salvat Encyclopaedias, 1973). From the perspective of the year 2000, we know that Arturo Eichler was right when he pointed out that it could be an exaggeration to affirm that human society and/or the planet's life-sustaining systems will be destroyed within the twentieth century; however, he warned that only an *immediate* total transformation could *maybe* allow us to survive beyond the first half of the twenty-first century (personal communication, 1993).

Lester Brown, from the Worldwatch Institute in Washington, DC, affirmed in the Global Forum on the Environment and Development for Survival that was held in Moscow, January 15–19, 1990:

If we do not invert some of the current tendencies in the near future, we run the very real risk that environmental degradation may produce economic ruin, as it has already done in parts of Africa, and that both could begin to reinforce each other, making any future progress extremely difficult...for the year 2030, we will have either produced an environmentally sustainable world economic system or clearly we will have failed, and much before that, environmental degradation and economic ruin, feeding each other, will have led to social disintegration. We will make it by 2030 or clearly we will have failed. (Brown, 1990)

8. Like all other members of the technological civilization, those who live in opulence constantly experience underlying dissatisfaction and anxiety and lack the experiential sense of the worth of life at the root of meaningful existence.

9. See the appendix to “La física refuta el error” in the first of the essays in Capriles (1994).

10. This story first appeared in a Buddhist sutra. Then it reappeared in Sufi poetry: according to the *Hadiqah* by Sanā'ī, the men were blind, while Rumi's *Mathnavi* placed them in the dark. Recently the story has been used by Tibetan Lama Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, as well as in texts on systems theory and in earlier works by the present author.

11. There are different ways of classifying the “vehicles” or levels of Buddhist teaching and practice. In Tibet, the Nyingmapa classify them in nine vehicles, while the Sarmapa divide them into seven. However, both traditions summarize the whole of their vehicles in three main levels,



which nowadays are in general the *Hinayana*, the *Mahayana*, and the *Vajrayana*—but which in some older Nyingmapa texts (such as Nubchen Sangye Yeshe's *Samten Migdrön* and Nub Namkhai Nyungpo's *Kathang Dennga*—both works written towards the end of the first millennium A.D.) were the *Sutrayana* (including *Hinayana* and *Mahayana*), the *Vajrayana*, and the *Atiyana* (i.e., Dzogchen *qua* vehicle). In our times, this older classification has been reintroduced by Lama Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

12. The Second Noble Truth, in particular, is explained in different ways. The one I have used here is the one I deem most essential, since *avidya* is the cause of *trishna*—that is, of the thirst of existence that the Hinayana regards as the Second Noble Truth. On why *avidya* is the cause of *trishna*, see Capriles (1994, third essay; 2000a).

13. Freud opened up a new phase in the Western study of the psyche upon affirming, as a doctor and scientist, and outside of any esoteric circle, that the individual should remember, and in a sense reexperience, the painful, traumatic situations that affected him or her, especially during the individual's early years. Prior to Freud's work, only certain mystical and philosophical traditions insisted on the need to face anguish and pain; as secular society had generally done, science often taught people to elude everything that produced displeasure and to live in a world of illusions.

However, Freud thought that mental health lay in establishing a good ego-function—that is, in achieving an optimal functioning of the “repressive” mechanisms that allow us to evade the pain caused by the dynamics of *samsara*, along with all ego-dystonic contents (aspects of ourselves that contradict our self-image). According to the Viennese doctor, mental health lay in conforming to society, no matter how sick society was; therefore, health amounted to adaptation to a generalized pathology and thus implied contracting the said pathology. Freud's ideal was the achievement of an optimal functioning of the psychological mechanisms allowing us to believe the story we have to believe in order to be motivated by the incentives offered by the Establishment and be like the rest of the well-adapted individuals, without having to face an abnormal level of suffering. Moreover, Freudian analysis increased the individual's self-concern, which is at the root of suffering and of all neuroses.

Thus, Freud took a first step towards the necessary encounter with primordial pain and anxiety, comparable to that taken by Søren Kierkegaard in the field of philosophy—although the former never hinted that, in order to reach a greater degree of authenticity, the individual should cease eluding *Angst* (on the contrary, as we have seen, Freud's ideal was the achievement of an optimal functioning of the mechanics of elusion). The proposal in this essay is not that we perfect the mechanisms whereby we elude anguish and pain, nor that we constantly live with such feelings, but that we *momentarily* face anguish and pain *in order to use them as a springboard to take the Springet (leap) to the state of Supreme Sanity*.

In terms of the Freudian scheme, the *superego* had to control the *id*, restraining the passions and instincts, in order to produce and maintain a well-adapted *ego*. More precisely, the unconscious' preconscious mechanisms (i.e., “the subconscious”) had to place the “unconscious” under

restraint, preventing the latter's “impulses” from conditioning behavior and thus causing the individual to betray his or her aspirations, ideals, and conscious objectives.

In civilized societies, the core of social control is the individual's inner “repression,” which functions on the basis of what Freud called the *superego* and David Cooper (1971) explained as a hierarchic constellation of internalized “others.” The *superego*'s most important other is the original other, who is generally one's mother—though afterward the *opinions and points of view* of others may occupy positions of greater importance than those of the mother or original other. In any case, once the *superego* has been established, we can only see ourselves through the eyes of the internalized other. Shame-inducing looks sculpt and sustain the dark, negative image of ourselves that is a most important aspect of what Jung called the *shadow* and which, based on Freud's concept of unconscious fantasies, Laing (1961) and Cooper (1971) designated as *unconscious phantasy*. In turn, looks of admiration carve a positive ideal self-image which, in the case of normal, well-adapted individuals, corresponds to a greater or lesser degree to socially sanctioned ideals, and which the individuals in question must strive to embody in order to escape the hell they had been thrown into by shame-inducing looks. In our day (partly because of contradictions in what is socially sanctioned), most people fail to embody this ideal image; instead, a majority must content themselves with developing a regular ego, conscious identity, or self-image, as well-adapted to society as possible. This regular ego—located between the extremes represented by the dark and negative self-image and the ideal, positive self-image is closer to one or the other depending on the extent to which one or the other prevails in the way significant others (external or internalized) see the individual.

Insofar as we deny being the dark and negative illusory image and try to become the positive/ideal self-image or the habitual self-image, we affirm ourselves as the (illusory) dark-and-negative-image-that-should-be-denied, thus remaining under the power of the source of evil that is this very image. As Jungian psychology (Jung, 1960) has shown, the more real and powerful source of evil is the need to deny this image in oneself and project it onto others. Since at a conscious level we have to believe ourselves to be our self-image, once we become the dark and negative fantasy, we are compelled to project it outside ourselves, identifying it with other individuals and hating them as though they were the said fantasy. This is the source of some of the worst prevailing evils.

Instead of the Freudian concept of repression by the unconscious, Sartre developed the concept of self-deceit or Bad Faith, according to which the agent of deceit is not an entity alien to the individual's consciousness (such as Freud's subconscious), but consciousness itself. However, this does not mean that our self-deceit is produced independently of the influence of others. When we deceive ourselves in order to *become* the positive, ideal self-image, or even our regular self-image, we do so under the impulse of what I have called normalizing double-binds (see note 31 on double-bind), which consist of the looks, expressions, and words of the others making up our *superego*: the deceit being discussed is carried out by our conscious mind under

the hypnotic pressure of significant others, originally from outside ourselves, but afterwards from inside our own psyche. Consequently, this explanation to some extent conciliates the Freudian concept of repression with the Sartrean concept of Bad Faith or self-deceit.

In regard to Freud's ideas, it is important to bear in mind that the triadic structure of the psyche (*conscious-subconscious-unconscious* or *ego-superego-id*) is not an a priori inherent in the nature of human beings in general, but the result of the repression required by delusory civilization. Thus the unconscious is not an a priori closet for skeletons (Bateson, 1972), but the sum of the contents that we have eluded by means of the self-deceit that Sartre called Bad Faith.

In spite of interpretations of the philosophy produced by the "first Sartre" as the result of the French philosopher's having faced a Basic Perinatal Matrix II (BPM II) during the mescaline trip he recalled in *Psychologie de l'imagination* (1940), his philosophy was successful in showing how, as long as Being-for-Itself (the nucleus of *avidya*) is active, it is impossible to achieve plenitude, satisfaction, and so on. (Note that Grof [1985] defines BPM II as corresponding to the beginning of the biological birth process itself and its first clinical stage, during which the original balance of intrauterine existence is disturbed, firstly due to chemical alarm signals, and afterward to muscular contractions—a process which, once fully developed, causes the fetus to be periodically constrained by uterine spasms while the cervix is still closed and therefore there is no way out of the uterus.) Moreover, since the philosophy in question *excluded* the possibility of *nirvana*—Sartre's *holon*—it could not be used to posit samsaric states as *nirvana*. Contrariwise, the philosophy of the "second Heidegger," which is based *solely* on samsaric experience, has been taken by some interpreters to be a philosophy of Awakening or Enlightenment analogous to one or another Buddhist system, and its terminology has been used to translate the Dzogchen teachings—which has radically distorted the latter's meaning (see Capriles, 1994, 2000b, in press, work in progress 1, work in progress 2). Hence the advantage I see in Sartre's philosophy: if we modify it so that it contemplates the possibility of *nirvana*, the result will be a quite complete system of Buddhist philosophy (see Capriles, 1997, 2000b, work in progress 2); if it is not modified, no one will ever think of using it to express a Buddhist view or it would be distorting the latter.

The discussion in this note refers to works of Kierkegaard (1844/1984, 1941a, 1941b), Sartre (1948a, 1948b, 1957, 1966), and Riedlinger (1982).

14. I am translating the Spanish term *matiz hedónico*, which indicates our ability to remember pleasant events more easily than unpleasant ones—without which we would be unable to keep striving towards samsaric aims, as we would be fully aware of their inherent dissatisfactoriness and pointlessness.

15. The state of small space-time-knowledge associated with a low bioenergetic input (*kundalini* or *thig-le*), implies a restriction of the scope of one's focus of awareness, in such a way that it encompasses only a fragment at a time of the continuum of the *given*, and has limits that are scarcely permeable. This state is the condition of the delusion

corresponding to the Second Noble Truth: without it there could be no fragmentary perception, no illusion of separateness, and no elusion or repression. Nonetheless, in order to overcome delusion, it is not enough merely to expand one's space-time-knowledge: such expansion will only produce illusory experiences of the type designated by the Tibetan Buddhist term *nyam* (*nyams*), the Chinese, *mo-ching*, and the Japanese *makyo*, and which Sufis designate with the Arabic term *hal*—all of which should be reCognized and allowed to self-liberate if we are to overcome delusion.

The bioenergetic input changes interdependently with the brain's biochemistry and may be modified by practices such as *kundalini yoga*, *yantra yoga* and the Tibetan practices of *rtsa/rlung/thig-le*. For reasons already mentioned, this change is not sufficient for overcoming delusion; moreover, in the individual who is not prepared, it may induce psychosis or psychotomimetic experiences. This is because the expansion and permeabilization of consciousness unveil the insubstantiality of one's being and, moreover, allow into one's conscious awareness contents that are ego-dystonic (incompatible with one's self-image)—and thus threaten one's ego-function and sense of identity. This expansion and permeabilization of consciousness may also cause the pain inherent in delusory valuation to be experienced in its fullness, activating positive feedback (i.e., self-catalyzing) loops of discomfort, pain, and anxiety: the stronger the discomfort, the stronger one's rejection of it—which causes discomfort to increase, eliciting further rejection.

Consequently, youth desiring to transform consciousness and society should avoid the psychedelic hedonism typical of the hippies in the 1960s, which in the short-term produced some immediate psychosis and suicides, and in the long-run favored a conservative and repressive dialectic reaction that manifested as the rise of spiritual groups based on control and deceit, as well as the popularization of illegal nonpsychedelic, ego-enhancing drugs, and a political reaction to the right.

16. For a more detailed consideration of the term "delusory valuation," see Capriles (1994, 2000a, 2000b).

17. In Buddhism there has been a great deal of discussion as to whether the *arupa loka* represents a surpassing of the figure/ground distinction (e.g., the *Mahasanghika* affirmed that *arupa* included *rupa* or figure in a subtle sense). It is implicit in Tarthang Tulku (1977), that in the *arupa loka* space/time/knowledge has expanded, but to a limited extent—one has not reached the condition of Total Space-Time-Cognitiveness.

18. He was one of the five spiritual heirs of Hui-neng (Weilang), Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism in China. See Yoka Daishi (Yung-chia Hsüan-chüeh) in Yoka Daishi/Taisen Deshimaru (1981).

19. As explained in note 15, the bioenergetic input is what Indians call *kundalini*, corresponding to one of the two main meanings of the Tibetan word *thig-le*. Its increase is related to modifications of the biochemistry of the brain. For more details, see note 15.



20. This self-hindrance or self-encumbrance is illustrated by the little English poem: "The centipede was happy, quite, until the toad in fun said, 'Pray, which leg goes after which?' This worked his mind to such a pitch, he lay distracted in a ditch, while considering how to run" (Watts, 1957, p. 27).

21. (a) I call this *gnosis* because it is a function of cognitiveness/awareness and because certain Gnostic trends called *gnosis* the cognition of the absolute; (b) I add the adjective *anoic* because in the unveiling of such *gnosis* the mind (*noia*)—implying the noetic-noematic (subject-object) duality, delusory valuation, and other experience-shaping, delusory mechanisms—is disconnected.

22. This is not a universal Dzogchen instruction, and by itself it is absolutely insufficient as a path to Awakening or Enlightenment. In Dzogchen there are three series of teachings, which are the Semde (*sems-sde*), the Longde (*klong-sde*), and the Menngagde (*man-ngag-sde*), each of which has many different types of sets of instructions. At this point I give this instruction as an example, because I deem it to be particularly relevant to illustrate what I have been calling the "descending path," and it may be regarded as paradigmatic of that path.

Moreover, the fact that I provide a Dzogchen instruction to illustrate the "descending path" does not mean that I think the descending path is exclusive to Dzogchen. All genuine Wisdom traditions teach different varieties of the descending path, and all Wisdom traditions differentiate between different types of transpersonal experience—some delusory, some "Awakened," some neither delusory nor Awakened. I provide an instruction belonging to the Dzogchen teachings because those are the teachings I practice and know best, and I use the mandala as a symbol of the path because I deem it most useful to illustrate *all* genuine paths to Awakening—whether or not the paths in question use the mandala as a symbol. The same applies to my explanations in terms of bioenergetic input (*kundalini* or *thig-le*).

For example, when, in Rinzai Zen practice (or in the use of the *koan* by many Soto Masters), the mass of doubt manifests, probably the pupil will not be told to apply instructions such as the ones I am providing in this paper—and yet the experience in question will correspond to that of the intermediate zone of the mandala. Likewise, in *Hinayana* Buddhism, Buddhagosa's *Atthasalini* illustrates the descending path by contrasting those who build a wall with those who destroy it brick after brick as it is built (which does not imply an active endeavor but, in the words of the text, the introduction of "a deficiency in the mechanisms that sustain birth and death"). In Sufism, the descending path was illustrated with the competition between the Chinese painters and the Greek painters (in Sanā'ī the Chinese represented the genuine, descending path and the Greeks represented the spurious ascending one; in Rumi it was the other way around). Other traditions have illustrated the same path with their own images.

Moreover, though (as we shall see later on) in general it is said that the principle of the *Sutrayana* is renunciation, that the principle of the *Vajrayana* is transformation, and that the principle of the *Atiyana* (Dzogchen *qua* vehicle) is self-liberation, this principle of self-liberation is not absolutely exclusive to Dzogchen. To continue with the example of the *koan*, when by means of this method a Zen

student undergoes for the first time the spontaneous collapse of delusion and *samsara* and "experiences" *satori*, this is an instance of self-liberation.

Finally, when I say that a Dzogchen practitioner would recognize as such any conditioned (*samskrita*) state and not be deluded by it, this applies to authentic practitioners of all genuine paths; what perhaps may be particular to Dzogchen are the methods whereby the conditioned state is dissolved in the unveiling of the unconditioned (*asamskrita*): in Dzogchen, the methods in question are always based on the principle of self-liberation.

23. When an increase in the bioenergetic input (*kundalini* or *thig-le*) induces an expansion of the focus of consciousness, states of greater space-time-knowledge may occur. Then the usual impulse to conceptualize the ensuing states and experience them in terms of the concept we applied to them may lead us to understand the states being discussed in terms of delusory valued concepts such as Being, Oneness, God, Buddha-nature, and so on.

24. The term "is" is in parentheses following the usage of parenthesis established by Jean-Paul Sartre for words that are required by a language's grammar, but which contradict the meaning one intends to express: if *Seeing* takes place, the phenomenon of being, corresponding to the most basic delusory appearance of *samsara*, will have dissolved, and so the term "is" will not refer to anything, but merely be a necessary convention of language.

25. For this to function, the practitioner should have obtained what is known as "direct introduction" (which in terms of Zen roughly corresponds to a first *satori*).

On the other hand, this description of self-liberation only refers to its lower level, and is by no means sufficient for undertaking the practice. To do so it would be necessary to approach a Master holding the lineage of an authentic Wisdom tradition. My book (Capriles, 1990a) on the practice of the Dzogchen *upadesha* may be consulted as well.

26. "Mind" is "sem" (*sems*) in Tibetan and "chit" (*chitta*) in Sanskrit. It should be noted that the use of the term mind to indicate the nucleus of the delusion called *avidya* and the ensuing *samsara* is not exclusive to Dzogchen teachings. The *Bodhicharyavatara*, the famous *Mahayana* text by *Madhyamika* philosopher Shantideva, states (IX-2): "It is agreed that there are two truths: the conventional and the ultimate. Ultimate reality is beyond the scope of the mind; the mind (and all that is within its scope) is said to be 'the conventional.'" The meaning of the term *wu-hsin* in Ch'an Buddhism also implies that mind (*hsin*) is the core of delusion (however, in other contexts the same term, *hsin*, means "heart"; in still other contexts it has a meaning similar to that of the Sanskrit words *chittata* and *chitta eva* as used in teachings of *Vajrayana* and *Atiyana* Buddhism—and sometimes it may also refer to the unveiling of this *chittata* or *chitta eva*, thus being roughly a synonym or the Tibetan term *rig-pa*).

27. My insistence upon warning against taking transpersonal experiences as the aim of human life may have given the reader the wrong idea that transpersonal experiences per se are a hindrance. This is by no means the case; actually, Awakening or Enlightenment itself may



be regarded as a transpersonal condition—and I regard Awakening or Enlightenment as the natural (so to say) “purposeless purpose” of life.

Actually, even the transpersonal states of the samsaric *arupa loka* or *arupadhatu* and the neither-samsaric-nor-nirvanic state of *kunzhi* (*kun-gzhi*) are potentially useful. Among other reasons, they may not only be a source of faith for people treading the path “to” Awakening or Enlightenment, but may even serve as a springboard to the Awakened state. (In terms of the Dzogchen teachings, we could compare such states to reflections in a mirror that the prepared individual may use to discover the empty and yet reflecting and luminous essence or nature of the mirror.) They only become hindrances when they are posited as aims in themselves or are mistaken for Awakening or Enlightenment.

Thus, what I am warning against is the danger that people who write works taken by others as guides on the path may *overemphasize* the transpersonal, as though *in itself* the achievement of transpersonal experiences were an aim of spiritual practice and/or therapy. Though I consider transpersonal psychology to be very valuable, its very name seems to lay an exaggerated emphasis on the transpersonal; moreover, many transpersonal psychologists place an exaggerated emphasis on the transpersonal without discriminating among the nirvanic transpersonal, the samsaric transpersonal, and the neither-nirvanic-nor-samsaric transpersonal.

The above implies that, though (as emphasized in this essay) the path to Awakening or Enlightenment is a “descending path,” this path does not exclude “ascending” experiences. For example, in different Buddhist systems (including Dzogchen) pupils are taught the meditations to achieve the experiences of the higher *loka* or *dhatu* (e.g., the various levels of the *arupa loka* or *arupadhatu*)—and the same happens in genuine non-Buddhist paths. However, the pupil is warned against taking experiences of the higher *loka* or *dhatu* (or the state of *kunzhi*, for that matter) to be Awakening itself, or to confuse them with true attainments of some kind. He or she has the means to use the states in question as reflections to discover the nature of the mirror representing absolute cognitiveness/awareness (i.e., what the *Vajrayana* and *Atiyana* teachings of Buddhism indicate by the Sanskrit words *chittata* and *chitta-eva*). Thus the descending path does not exclude the ascending one: it includes it, but as something that is part of the descending path, to which it is subordinated.

28. In Grof’s case (e.g., 1985, among several other texts), there has been a very close relationship between the transpersonal and the shamanic (and therefore, regarding his psychology, my metatranspersonal proposal is closely linked to my former metashamanic one: see Capriles, 1990b). In fact, Grof would regard as equally transpersonal (and therefore would take them to be equally healthy, valuable, and therapeutic), on the one hand, (1) various types of shamanic experience (perception of demons and other supernatural beings and realms, remembrance of “former incarnations,” identification with animals, plants and minerals, etc.), along with the conceptually conditioned, panoramic experiences of oneness with the universe, and on the other hand, (2) the self-liberation of

all delusory valuation (i.e., of “overvaluation”) at the root of Supreme Sanity.

29. To say that Tibetan folk culture has *preserved* shamanic elements seems to imply that the liberating and metashamanic approach of Tibetan spiritual systems is a development based on preexistent shamanic systems. Sufi Master Idries Shah (1975) suggested the opposite of this: that shamanism is a degeneration of the genuinely liberating approach I have called “metashamanic.” Shah’s thesis fits the Tibetan-Indian-Persian-Greek-Roman approach that posits temporal processes called *aions* (Sanskrit: *kalpa*), divided into eras of growing degeneration, as well as the Taoist degenerative conception of human evolution and history.

30. A Jungian explanation based on concepts such as the collective unconscious and synchronicity may seem quite plausible to account for the manifestation of gods, demons, spirits, and other “apparitions.” However, the Dzogchen teachings traditionally have offered a more sophisticated and yet simple explanation of such phenomena, based on the nonexistence of a division between an inside and an outside of the individual, as well as based on three types of manifestation of energy (see Capriles [2000a]).

31. For an explanation of this term, see Bateson (1972), particularly, (a) “Toward a Theory of Schizophrenia,” (b) “The Group Dynamics of Schizophrenia,” (c) “Minimal Requirements for a Theory of Schizophrenia,” and (d) “Double-Bind, 1969.” In an earlier work (Capriles, 1986), I dealt with the concept of the double-bind, distinguishing between pathogenic double-bind, therapeutic double-bind, and normalizing double bind. The latter type, which Bateson and his colleagues did not consider to be a double-bind, is the one in which the person in the position of power, because of a smoother-functioning Bad Faith, is not tormented by guilt. The victim is compelled to assimilate a contradiction, and caused to ignore, by means of Sartrean “Bad Faith,” that a contradiction is being assimilated. Thus no conflict is experienced. This is the type of double-bind that leads children to become “normal” by adapting to a hypocritical and self-contradictory society.

It is worth noting that recent evidence which supposedly would have sustained the genetic and organic theories of what is known as schizophrenia, has not undermined the double-bind hypothesis. The point is that Bateson did not conceive his hypothesis as excluding genetic or organic elements: from the start, he showed how, if there were a genetic basis for the supposed nosological entity thus designated (and the same would apply if an organic basis of schizophrenia were proven to exist), its existence would be compatible with his own hypothesis. In contraposition, Laing did explicitly and radically discard all genetic and organic theories.

32. Normal people who feel that their impression of being a separate and substantial entity is well-founded and absolutely true, experience terror when faced with their own insubstantiality—represented by the center of the mandala. Thus, in the peripheral phase, the guardians of the four gates represent the terror of insubstantiality that prevents people from passing into the center of the mandala—a terror that is expressed etymologically by the word “panic.”



Normality is characterized by a restricted focus of conscious attention that is scarcely permeable—which is the necessary condition for our being able to consider ourselves and other entities as substantial and for our maintaining a habitual self-image and sense-of-self (which, according to the Sartrean theory of Bad Faith, requires us to “intentionally” conceal many facts and occurrences, and according to the Freudian theory, depends on repression, which is exercised by the unconscious’ preconscious aspect). The increase in the bioenergetic input (Tibetan: *thig-le*; Sanskrit: *kundalini*) causes the individual’s focus of conscious attention to expand and become more permeable, but cannot *produce* or *cause* the condition of Supreme Sanity that Buddhists call Awakening or Enlightenment. In the unprepared individual who clings to the illusion of substantiality, instead of resulting in the unveiling of the center of the mandala, this expansion-permeabilization of the focus of conscious attention may induce disturbances, psychotomimetic experiences, or even a psychosis.

The word *panic*, which indicates a powerful and uncontrollable irrational fear, is derived from Pan, the god representing totality. *Pan* may insinuate himself through the *pan*-oramification of consciousness that takes place when the bioenergetic input increases; this would cause our own insubstantiality to become patent and (insofar as we are taught to cling to our supposedly separate identity and to dread the disappearance of this identity, and to the extent that neurosis prevails in our times) possibly unchain experiences of terror. On the other hand, the expansion and permeabilization of the focus of conscious attention may allow ego-dystonic contents into the individual’s conscious awareness—which, as we have seen, are a threat to the ego function and the individual’s self-image. Moreover, the panoramification in question causes the individual to experience any discomfort or pain in its fullness—which may unchain self-catalyzing, positive feedback loops of pain, anxiety, and discomfort.

Thus, in the case of those who find themselves in the periphery of the mandala, the guardians represent the dread of the insubstantiality that is fully unveiled in the state symbolized by the center—that is, they represent *panic* in the etymological sense of the word. Terrified by the guardians (fears) that block the entrance to what they take for a dead end leading to an abyss, beings possessed by delusion cling to delusion—that is, to the periphery. As expressed in a special context by Laing (1967), they think that farther, in the direction of the center, “there is an abyss, there are wild beasts.”

People enter the intermediate zone when they can no longer adapt to socially sanctioned deceit and thus cannot feel comfortable in it. Since delusion involves the tropism to cling to delusion (which may be associated to the infant’s tropism to cling to the mother in case of danger—even when the source of danger is the mother), the discomfort thus experienced causes the individual to cling even more forcefully to the source of discomfort—a reaction that Laing has compared to someone who is leaning on a bus and, when the vehicle begins to move, grabs the handrail, which is the closest but most dangerous object. This tropism is involved in the self-catalyzing process characteristic of the intermediate zone of the mandala,

which leads the individual to a threshold level at which, if all necessary conditions are given—including the knowledge of the instructions and other favorable elements—the tension inherent to delusion spontaneously breaks and he or she “enters” the center.

After “entering” the center, a high bioenergetic input has to be maintained in order to keep the wrathful guardians or dakinis wide awake and alert, so that whenever the individual leaves the center he or she will not fall into the relative tranquility of the periphery (which would allow the person to feel comfortable in delusion): the dynamics represented by the wrathful guardians or dakinis will catch him or her, and the ensuing disturbance will function as a reminder to apply the instructions.

Later on, every time the individual leaves the center, if a high bioenergetic input is feeding the wrathful guardians or dakinis, the dynamics they represent will push the individual spontaneously towards the center.

Finally, upon neutralizing the tendencies to leave the center, the person will not leave it anymore. Then the wrathful guardians or dakinis will represent his or her own actionless, spontaneous activities, which will help others to access the state of Supreme Sanity—even though those others are no longer perceived as sentient, samsaric beings to be helped. Though the mind is not active, the individual’s spontaneous behavior—now symbolized by the wrathful dharmapalas or dakinis—will repel those who are unprepared, causing them to be perceived as outrageous and fearsome—but will attract those who are prepared, creating the conditions for them to swiftly move towards the center. The practitioner will have become a *Lama-heruka*, as shocking as a wrathful deity, and his or her spontaneous activities will correspond to the wrathful dharmapalas or dakinis.

33. Bateson (1972, “The Cybernetics of Self: A Theory of Alcoholism”) explained this process in terms of the relationship between primary process, which is analog and mainly related to the functioning of the brain’s right hemisphere, and secondary process, which is digital and is principally related to the functioning of the left hemisphere.

While earlier computers were analog and worked based on a continuous increase or decrease of quantities (e.g., a continuous increase or reduction of the magnitude of an electric current), present computers are digital and have a binary function based on “yes” (1) and “no” (0) alternatives. Instead, the human brain processes *both* types of signals; the brain hemisphere *normally* situated on the right *mainly* processes analog signals, while the brain hemisphere *normally* located on the left *mainly* processes digital signals. Our experience and our acts are the result of the combination of *both* processes (in addition to the functioning of one or two more regions of our brain and central nervous system); therefore, they cannot be reduced to one or the other.

In terms of the concepts introduced by Sigmund Freud in his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895/1974), the analog function of the human brain is called primary process, and the digital one, secondary process (Wilden, 1972/1980; Bateson, 1972, 1979). As a matter of fact, the characteristics that Freud attributed to primary process correspond to those typical of the processing of analog

signals, and those that he attributed to secondary process correspond to those characteristic of the processing of digital signals. According to Fenichel (1945), primary process does not involve negatives, does not indicate verbal tense and mode, places emphasis on *relationships* rather than on *who is who in them*, and is metaphorical. On the other hand, secondary process involves negatives, specifies verbal tense and mode, places emphasis on who is who in relationships, and is literal.

Nietzsche foreshadowed Freud's distinction between primary and secondary process when he noted that the creative unconscious (a term I am not keen on using) is not critical and that the creator can only criticize his or her creation retrospectively.

Though many of Freud's theories have lost credibility, neurological and behavioral research in the second half of the twentieth century has to some extent substantiated the division into two types of mental process—primary and secondary—established in the *Project* of 1895. Works by Jacques Lacan (1957) and by Gregory Bateson (1972, 1979) and others (Pribram & Gill, 1976; Wilden, 1972/1980) have based themselves on Freud's *Project*.

34. As pointed out by Joseph Berke (Barnes & Berke, 1971), many of the terms coined by Cooper were used frequently by Ronald Laing in conversations with colleagues.

35. This term, used to designate a religious conversion, may be translated as “change of mind” or “transition to a new state of mind.” Cooper does not speak of a process of *metanoia* but of successive *metanoias*.

36. Let us remember the venerable meaning given this term by Desiderius Erasmus in *The Praise of Folly* (*Moriae encomium*) (1970). I am giving it the meaning of the Chinese term *wu-hsin* as used in Ch'an Buddhism (see note 26), which indicates the surpassing of the illusion that there is a separate, autonomous subject of experience and action (as well as of the rest of the connotations of the term *sems* as understood in the Dzogchen teachings).

37. According to Cooper (1971), a first *metanoia* should take us from *eknoia* to *paranoia*; a second *metanoia* should take us from *paranoia* to *noia* (or *en-noia*), and a third, repeated *metanoia* should allow us to freely flow between *noia* (or *en-noia*) and *anoia* (which in this case may be *anti-noia*), until finally we may become established in *anoia*. It must be noted that I am not using the term “paranoia” in the sense of developing persecutory feelings over a long period, but in that of its etymology—that is, to indicate the transformation into conflict of the contradiction inherent to *eknoia*, so that one may use conflict to question one's dualistic experience as explained in this paper's main text (both when considering the mandala and when confronting primal therapy).

38. The dissolution or self-liberation of delusion is *abrupt and instantaneous*; however, the constant repetition or continuity of this self-liberation *progressively* neutralizes delusion, so that its manifestation in daily life progressively dilutes until it finally disappears altogether.

39. The meaning of the term “shadow” in the example illustrating a yogi's ascent to the formless realms should not be confused with the Jungian sense of the term. The airplane's shadow represents our Being-for-Others and our Ego, but in the Jungian sense the term indicates the fantasies about ourselves that we feel compelled to exclude from our ego and to see as the ego of other individuals.

In Capriles (1976, 1986), on the basis of Sartrean categories and of different types of looks bestowed by others, the genesis of the shadow or *unconscious phantasy* was explained as a result of the mother or original other (and other significant others in positions of authority) seeing the infant as a shameful, objectionable object, on the occasions on which the infant exhibits behaviors that she (and/or other significant others) consider unacceptable. The genesis of the ideal identity was explained as the result of the said others' looks of approval and admiration on the occasions when the infant exhibits socially desirable behavior. The genesis of conscious identity was explained as a result of the interaction of the two above types of perception of the infant by significant others—both of which necessarily respond to the individual's *karma* from “previous lifetimes” and function as contributory conditions for one or another set of karmic traits and impulses to become dominant in a given lifetime.

Likewise, the genesis of social deviations was explained (without denying possible genetic and/or prenatal influences) in terms of the extent to which the mother or original other bestows on the infant an approving look—or else denies it, making the child feel compelled to seek approval and admiration from deviant children or adults who admire traits of behavior that society in general rejects (and who project a Jungian shadow that to a large extent may be contrary to the one projected by individuals “well-adapted” to society). All of this necessarily respond to the individual's *karma* from “previous lifetimes,” and function as contributory conditions for one or another set of karmic traits and impulses to prevail.

In Tibetan spiritual traditions, possibly we can distinguish two main methods leading to the reintegration of the shadow or *unconscious phantasy*, and to the overcoming of *all* types of identification (whether it be with the shadow, with the regular self-image or conscious identity, with the ideal identity, or with the pseudototalities of the *arupa-lokas*):

(a) The supreme vehicle, known as Atiyana (Dzogchen *qua* vehicle), is based on the principle of self-liberation. On the first level of self-liberation, one looks at the present thought and reCognizes its essential nature (which is also the essential nature of that which is interpreted by the thought and of the individual interpreting it)—upon which the thought in question instantaneously self-liberates in the unveiling of *anoic* gnosis. On the second level, the thought's true essence is automatically reCognized as the thought begins to arise—and so the latter self-liberates upon arising. Lastly, on the third level, by resting in the unveiling of *anoic* gnosis, which is naturally self-liberating, thoughts liberate themselves spontaneously as they pass—like drawings made on water. As the constant self-liberation of the propensities for delusion to manifest neutralizes our karmic tendencies, progressively we free ourselves from the shadow and the ego, from unconscious phantasy and conscious identity.



(b) In the vehicles immediately “inferior” to Dzogchen—the inner or superior Tantras—the principle is that of transformation: by means of visualization one transforms into a deity. This is often of the opposite sex, in which case it is associated with the *animus/anima* and with the shadow. It embodies and represents various aspects of the shadow or *unconscious phantasy*, and/or of our ideal self-image, but has to be perceived as a manifestation and symbol of our fundamentally pure and self-perfect nature. Visualizing himself or herself in this manner, the individual performs practices with the body’s bioenergetic system in order to increase his or her bioenergetic input (*kundalini* or *thig-le*) and thus expand the scope of consciousness—which, in turn, allows for the possible unveiling of anic gnosis and thus of our empty (fundamentally pure) and self-perfect nature, and therefore reveals the illusory nature of both the ego and the shadow.

(For more detailed explanations of both methods see, especially: Norbu [1986/1997, 1992]; Capriles [2000a].)

In Dzogchen, this unveiling of our true essence or nature in anic gnosis is called Tawa (*lta-ba*) or Vision. What is known as Gompa (*sgom-pa*) or Contemplation consists of remaining in this Vision, so that all arising thoughts self-liberate upon manifesting. This progressively neutralizes our delusory valuation in general and, in particular, our tendency to believe ourselves to be an ego and (by negative implication) a shadow-that-must-be-projected. Spontaneous action in this state of Contemplation is known as Chöpa (*spyod-pa*) or Behavior. Finally, the Fruit or Drabu (*bras-bu*) is the definitive establishment of the egoless state of actionless action, beyond all limitations.

It must be noted that Behavior or Chöpa implies overcoming the impulse to exclusively adopt virtuous and spiritual behavior of which one may be proud (and which thus would project an enormous Jungian shadow). Instead, one manifests different types of behavior, including some of which religious conventionalists would feel deeply ashamed (but which, in spite of being somehow “crazy,” would not be harmful either to other sentient beings or to the natural environment), so that the ensuing negative sensations may help one to reCognize and thus liberate the impulse to *become* what others see as oneself. Among the most eccentric representatives of this Behavior of the “crazy yogi” (the archetype of which is known as Dorje Trolö, an aspect of Guru Padmasambhava), was the Tibetan yogi Drugpa Kunlé, whose biography appeared in Dowman, (1980). The poem “Calling the Lama from Afar” by Dudjom Rinpoche (n.d.), expresses Dzogchen Behavior in the following terms: “The careless craziness of destroying clinging to a style...may this human lifetime be spent in this State of uninhibited, naked ease.”

To conclude, some words must be said in regard to the classification of vehicles into “higher” and “lower” ones. Above it was noted that, according to the Old or Nyingmapa (*rNying-ma-pa*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, the *Atiyana*-Dzogchen was the highest vehicle, based on the principle of self-liberation. The (inner or higher) *Vajrayana* was the middle vehicle, based on the principle of transformation, and the *Sutrayana* was the lower vehicle, based on the principle of renunciation. However, in the *koan* method, belonging to the Sudden *Mahayana* of the *Sutrayana*, *satori* manifested through self-liberation. Moreover, as often noted by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and other

Dzogchen Masters, no vehicle is absolutely “higher” than any other one; which vehicle is superior depends on the capacity of a practitioner at any given moment. Thus, the *Hinayana* may be supreme to some individual, the *Atiyana*-Dzogchen to another one—and one of the others may be supreme to the same individual at different moments, according to what works for him or her at that moment.

40. A Master must have been officially recognized by his or her teacher, who must have been officially recognized by his or her teacher...and so on unto the very source of the teaching he or she holds.

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*Muñeca con ventana*, 1985

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