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## Suffering, Energy of Becoming

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**SUFFERING - ENERGY OF BECOMING**

This thesis establishes a phenomenology of suffering and a pattern of the suffering process based on personal experiences, psychological and theological insights. Aspects of the psychology of Carl Jung, Irvin Yalom and Peter Mudd and of the theology of Karl Rahner and especially of John Dunne, as he expresses it in The Reasons of the Heart, are focused on.

Suffering is seen as an experience of being human, an energy which invites us to a process of becoming who we were meant to be, a process which is in service of a transformation to a higher level of being. The energy of suffering makes it possible to make choices. Therefore, when the courage to be, the hope to become, and the willingness to love and be loved is chosen, evil is opposed.

A conclusion of this thesis is that only a phenomenology which is based on both psychological and theological insights can hope to adequately approach the mystery of suffering.

It is also shown that this phenomenology has direct applications and implications for the pastoral counseling or any therapeutic process in respect to the goals for the clients and the attitudes of the counselor, as the therapeutic process is a process of suffering, a process facilitating the energy of becoming.

**SUFFERING  
ENERGY OF BECOMING**

**BY**

**INGRID POLLER**

A Thesis submitted to Faculty of Graduate School of Loyola  
University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirement for the Degree  
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1991

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## CHAPTER I

### SUFFERING - A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

"AND THE END OF ALL OUR EXPLORING  
WILL BE TO ARRIVE WHERE WE STARTED  
AND KNOW THE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME."  
(T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets)

In this thesis I attempt to integrate the experience of my life with the insights I received especially during the last three years when I revisited my life in therapy and in my inner work here in Chicago.

Yet this thesis is more than a reflection of my own integration, because each story, though unique, reflects universal human experiences and like a myth or parable, catches the underlying meaning of human existence. And "that meaning only lives when we experience it in and through ourselves." (Jung, 1914, C.W. 3, p. 183)

In my early childhood I have witnessed suffering, the extreme horrors of war, when I lived as refugee for three years on the road at the end of World War II. I have seen people shot, tortured, raped and beaten right in front of me. I have seen people, especially the old and the children, being abandoned to die at the roadside. Walking on, running away was the way to survive. Even long after the war had ended I had kept on running, running away most of my life from these memories. During the last three years



I finally stopped. There is hope in me now that I can give testimony of what I have seen, and to pass on what these people have taught me. This thesis is my way of saying thank you that I could meet them in their darkest hours.

Before I came to Chicago, I did everything to forget these people. I wanted to get rid of my nightmares. I wanted to forget the scream of the old man, who while telling me a fairy tale was grabbed and shot in front of me; the face of the mother whose agony was beyond any sound when her baby was torn out of her arm by a soldier and its head smashed against a pole; the distorted figures of men clinging to the barbed wire of Auschwitz's concentration camp; and my own pain when I was brought back to life by a Jewish couple after having been believed dead, only to hear three days later that the woman of that Jewish couple was gassed and to see the man hanging dead from the lamp in the kitchen. He had committed suicide after he had received the news of his wife's death. Only now I start to say "I do not want to forget, because I have witnessed." Only now I have the willingness to adopt the Jewish couple as my second set of parents. Only now I have the willingness to tell the story of suffering and perhaps in this way finish the fairy tale the old man was not able to finish.

This thesis also touches on another realm of truth and suffering in me. It tries to make sense of my wounds inflicted by my parents who rejected my being from the very

beginning and wounds inflicted by a dysfunctional family. Looking back on the journey through the last five years of my life, I recognize a pattern in my process of suffering, which I have seen with variations yet with the same basic pattern also in my clients. Therefore I share my journey here.

Five years ago I had to face the death of my brother who had played a parental role in my life. I became very restless and dissatisfied with my life, particularly with my job. I was teaching mathematics at a university, a career my father had chosen for me. I tried everything to pretend that my inner struggle was not there and attended to what I was doing. Yet it did not work. The yearning to make sense out of my life grew stronger. It became clear to me that if I had chosen a direction for my life it would have been in an area which included psychology and theology, something which I had always pursued, but only "at the side."

In summer 1988 I came to the Institute of Pastoral Studies in Chicago because it offered courses I wanted, and I also started therapy following the advice of a close friend. I had no idea what kind of journey I had embarked upon. I had started therapy to deal with the death of my brother, but I soon realized there were bigger "monsters" I needed to face. Would it help? Could I do it? I decided to do it. The suffering had only started. The deeper I went, the more I realized that major changes in my life had

to be made. I felt I was called to become a pastoral counselor, to be with others on their road of pain. This meant that I had to give up my career, my security. It was a tough decision.

After many sleepless nights I decided to do it. Therefore in 1989 I quit my job, started my M.A. in pastoral counseling and intensified my inner journey in therapy, spiritual direction and also shared my inner struggles and pains with a close friend. I realized that I no longer had to be alone. It was a painful journey. The decision to die so that I could live had to be made over and over again. Old patterns of relating had to be reworked. Projections and complexes (to use Jungian terms) which imprisoned me came like monsters out of their grave of denial one by one. Looking back I can only say that I crawled along inch by inch, at times on my knees, at times even on my belly. During that time I flirted with despair many times. I wanted to give up. Yet the compassion I received helped me to muster up the strength to go through the suffering.

I changed slowly. Finally I came to own my past. I do not need to hide it any more from myself or from others. At one time I even felt a physical shift in my body, and even the sky appeared to be more blue to me afterwards. Joy finally broke through. I am not "finished," never will be. Scars will remain, yet they will help me to be

compassionate. The groundwork is laid, so that I can go on and be and become more and more a pastoral counselor.

I realize that my method of understanding suffering was to go through it, or as John Dunne says, "My method is my journey." (Dunne, 1978, p. 151) "Dunne is saying that life can be construed as a journey and that the journey itself can be a method." (Nilson, 1987, p. 65) If that is true, and I believe it is, then I asked myself, could I come up with a "map" for that journey, a "rough" pattern for the process of suffering? Could I find a phenomenology of suffering which would lead to the discovery of this pattern?

To make sense out of suffering means to me to be truthful to my life's journey and to be responsive to my life's quest, to share this "evaluative knowledge" as Tim O'Connell defines it as a "knowledge...rooted in experience" because "this experience that engenders evaluative knowledge is communal as well as individual." (O'Connell, 1990, p. 62)

To make meaning out of the experiences of my life, to give testimony to the people I have met on the journey of my life and thank them for having met them, to share my evaluative knowledge, that is what Dunne calls "waiting for insight," when he says "it is a waiting on God who is hidden in the darkness...that is found again and again during life whenever one is searching for one's way in life." (Dunne, 1975, p. 50)

And this waiting for insight will go on, hoping that my experience of passio (suffering) will turn into compassio in my pastoral counseling encounters, so that my "waiting for insight continues on into the carrying out of [my] decision." (Dunne, 1975, p. 50)

The purpose of this paper is to develop a phenomenology of suffering based on my personal experiences and theological and psychological resources, and to show that on the basis of this phenomenology only a theoretical and therapeutic framework which includes theological and psychological insights can adequately approach the mystery of suffering. In the last part of my thesis I will draw implications from the insights gained for the counselor and the therapeutic process of counseling.

When a suffering person cries out "why," what does he/she ask for? What kind of answer can help? Explanations may help, theological and psychological insights are valuable. They are like signs and milestones showing the direction on the road to Jerusalem. Yet the answer will arise from walking the way, from experiencing the transformation, from enduring the process. The cross of the suffering person has the name "why," because this "why" expresses the longing for meaning-making, for transformation, and it also expresses "simply" the cry for help, for companionship and compassion. Therefore the phenomenology I present here will contain my insights into

suffering, and will emphasize the major elements of the process of suffering, because I see suffering mainly as a transformation, a process of becoming. Is it possible to see the butterfly in the caterpillar?

Before I can deal with the phenomenology I believe that it is necessary to state briefly some of my basic beliefs on which my phenomenology is based. To use mathematical language, I first need to state three "axioms," basic assumptions, before I can develop my insights into suffering. Some of these statements I will develop further in other chapters in the thesis. These basic assumptions deal with:

- 1) my image of God,
- 2) my image of the human being,
- 3) my view of good and evil and how suffering relates to that.

Ad 1) I believe that God is LOVE. This belief is grounded in my own life experience and is central to the Christian tradition. I experience the belief that God is Love as a process. The meaning of that belief grew in me in my process of suffering. The method of discovering that God is Love was the process of suffering itself, was the journey. In the same way I hope that it will become clearer what is meant by me when I say "I believe that God is Love" in the context of my thesis.

To say that God is Love says two things about God: firstly, that God is a being; secondly, that God is a dynamic being who expresses him/herself in and through love. Therefore he/she is in and is a loving relationship (Trinity), a relational process of self-giving love, in which all three persons share. One of the "actions" which flow out from the "Being Love" is "to create." Creation is the manifestation of the basic energy of a being. And that energy called love can only create what is good. So, God created man and woman in "their" image.

Ad 2) The human being is created by God and carries within him/herself the imago Dei, the imprint of how God intended him/her to be. This belief is basic to the Judeo-Christian tradition and others. It describes the basic connection between God and the human being. How essential it is for the human being to recognize and accept this connection to God will become more evident when following my thesis.

The belief that we are created in God's image follows from the first basic belief that God IS LOVE. If God is being and being good, then it follows that God wants the human being to have "as much" being as possible, i.e., God wants him/her to have life in full. And because God is love, the human being in its "originality" is called to love God, neighbor and self, a love which is the very energy of his being by which he joins in "creating." Therefore the human being is called to have life in full by growing as

much as possible in his/her "three-dimensional" love and so to share God's energy of being.

Ad 3) If God is being, then evil is "non-being." If God is Love, then evil is Hate. God and evil are mysteries. Yet in order to make meaning we have to give to these mysteries a place in our way of thinking. So for me it is logical to explain evil as "non-being," because I experience God as being. And as I believe and experience that God's being manifests itself in Love, the "non-being" of evil has to manifest itself as Hate. Why this third proposition is especially important to me will become clearer at the end of my thesis.

Evil, though it is explained as "non-being", has enormous impact on humans because our mind can only deal with something, not with no-thing. Because of that, evil is the most "alien" (no)-thing to our understanding. Yet to draw the conclusion "because it is beyond the human mind, it is not powerful" leads right into the devil's trap. Evil is a very powerful and threatening mystery, because our best "tool," our mind, which helps us to orient ourselves, is useless when it comes to evil.

From these "three basic beliefs" some conclusions can be drawn. For example, God and evil are the only opposites. Very often the opinion is expressed (also by Jung) that life and death, conscious and unconscious, night and day etc. are opposites like good and evil. I do not agree with that,



because as conscious and unconscious are different in many ways, they have something fundamental in common, they both ARE, i.e., they are not different in essence, only different in their qualities, while good and evil are different in their very essence.

It should be mentioned here that evil explained as "non-being" does not belittle evil or minimize it in any way. On the contrary, I cannot stress enough the reality of the cruelty and the horrors of the war. How something that is non-existent can be aggressive and destructive is puzzling. I can only give two instances which may shed some light on it. First, the fact that the "failure-to-thrive" syndrome, a "non-existence" of care and love can kill is known, and similarly abandonment. Second, it makes sense to me to explain the cruelty and aggression committed by people as Rollo May does, when he says,

When inward life dries up, when feeling decreases and apathy increases,...violence flares up as a daimonic necessity for contact, a mad drive forcing touch in the most direct way possible...To inflict pain and torture at least proves that one can affect somebody. (May, 1969, p. 30-31)

When love is lost, it seems that the creative drive in the human being still functions, yet it is misdirected and blindly turns against "what exists", as if it were its last desperate attempt to prove that something exists, by destroying it.

It seems that in daily life suffering and evil are often mixed up. The logic of "suffering is painful, I do

not like pain, what I do not like is evil, therefore suffering is evil," opens the door to confusion, and therefore to a misunderstanding of both suffering and evil. In the article "Individuation and Submission to God," Andrew Miles points out that the "tree of knowledge of Good and Evil" is often misunderstood because of the misunderstanding of the word "and." The word "and" in this context is collective rather than disjunctive, which sheds a completely different light on the understanding of the "tree of knowledge". Because by using the word "and" in "good and evil" collectively, "the tree of knowledge" becomes a "tree of confusion," a "tree of mix-up." This confusion consists, for example, in the assumption that we need to experience and to know both good and evil in order to discern good from evil. This assumption plants a seed of "goodness" into evil because we acknowledge its "usefulness." In doing so we do not let evil be evil and automatically we dethrone the good. Because if good needs the help of evil in order to be discerned, it is not completely good any more. The result is exactly what the serpent wanted to achieve: confusion and chaos.

On the first glance it looks temptingly logical to accept that "mix-up." Even great thinkers like Jung ended up attributing to God an evil part. This, I believe, is a diabolical trap which can open the door to Satanism. God is God without evil. Man can suffer without being evil. The

prime example for that is Christ himself. The suffering of the innocent has to be distinguished from the cause of it. For example, when Herod ordered the killing of the innocent children, his deed was an evil deed, yet the suffering of the victims was not evil. The chain of cause and effect does not transmit the moral fibre of the cause. This is the confusion of the "tree of mix-up."

To make the distinction between cause and effect and especially between evil and suffering is absolutely essential in order to understand suffering. I experienced and still do how difficult it is to make that distinction. When a child is abused, the child has the tendency to absorb the destructive act into him/herself in the form of shame and guilt. It is vital in therapy to separate suffering from evil. Bradshaw calls this process "reclaiming the inner child." (Bradshaw, 1990, p.55) The sacrament of baptism can be seen as doing the same. Both are attempts to break out of the diabolical mix-up.

Suffering is a process of life. It is as such "neutral," because it can have two very different outcomes: to grow in love or to die to love. The outcome is decided by the one who suffers.

My Phenomenology of Suffering:

1. **A human experience.** Suffering is a process of becoming human. It is a becoming aware of human mortality and spirituality at the same time. It is an experience of death

and resurrection, an experience of the essence of the human nature as "enfleshed spirit." (Westley, 1989, p. 12)

Therefore suffering taps into the "being-energy" of a person (and also of the people around him/her, as no one can be seen in isolation) which gives him/her the possibility and responsibility of joining with that innate energy that needs to "create" foremost and above all his/her own self, his/her own being and by doing so affects the whole human community.

Therefore suffering is a call to life, which means a call to love, to grow in the "three-dimensionality" of loving self, others, and God.

To use an image, suffering can be described as the alchemical process which changes a heart of stone into a heart of flesh. Therefore it can be argued that life is a quest for Love and suffering can be seen as a tool to free us from blocks to love and to being loved, from blocks to become who we were meant to be. It is easily forgotten when in pain that suffering is not a reminder of death, but a reminder of life. To use theological terms, it is easily forgotten that the way of the cross is the "Easter-way." Suffering is the energy of our humanness which calls us to become aware that we are part of the paschal mystery and are called to live it.

**2. The process of suffering.** Suffering bundles the human energy as a looking glass catches the rays of the sun. When

a person suffers, everything else becomes unimportant. When my brother died, the plan to buy a new car, which had excited me up to that point, lost its attraction completely. Suffering focuses the energy on one particular death experience, a loss, a limit experience. This focusing is painful because it arouses fear, fear to face these limits. Most of the time we function "in neutral," i.e., unaware, or half-aware of these limits. Suffering moves us out of the state of "survival." It makes us look at possibilities, unknown experiences, and it directs us to the responsibility to choose.

There are two basic choices to be made:

I. The choice to avoid suffering or to go through it.

Possibilities:

a) No "to love"/opting for survival/choosing denial/no to faith.

To choose to avoid suffering is a denial of reality because it denies the possibility of unknown experiences. At certain times this denial may be necessary in order to survive. For example, as a teenager I had to deny my past. I was not yet able to deal with it. But there is a point in life where denial becomes a refusal to change and to grow. Denial is choosing survival over living. It is a running away from one's cross. It is saying no to one's destiny, no to self and therefore no to God. This means it is a refusal to "be," a yes to non-being, and therefore it is a yes to

evil. (This is not a judgment on a person who is in denial, only a statement about the act of denial).

b) Yes "to love"/opting for life/faith

To choose to accept suffering, to stay with it, to see where it leads, to be open to change, is saying yes to life, yes to possibilities, yes to self, yes to God. It is the decision to accept one's own destiny as Christ did when he accepted his mission after he had been forty days in the desert.

To accept one's destiny, to say yes to life, first seems to lead to something worse. The full impact of the pain of suffering, the terror of darkness seems to break loose. The reward of saying yes to therapy, for example, was pain for me and fear and more pain. At first it seemed to bring about an understanding and experience of the full impact and demand of the crisis and the challenge to change. So the first decision leads to the heart of the matter; it leads to the agony in Gethsemane, where the full truth of the situation becomes clear and the second major decision has to be made. Again it is a matter of choice, a matter of life and death.

II. a) No "to be loved"/opting for despair/choosing death as "dead end."

To choose despair is to choose death of self, a refusal to see the whole picture, which is death/resurrection. It is the choice of the man crucified on the left side of

Christ. Though dying himself he could not give up "control." He mocked Christ. It is choosing the logic: if I cannot help myself, no one can. It is a logic of necessity, not of possibilities. It is Judas' logic. It is a logic of grandiosity which says, if I cannot fix it now, if I am not in control of the good as I see it, then there is no way out. To decide this way means to close the door to the possibility to be loved, to receive grace. Despair is a denial of the human condition of being-in-process by ending prematurely with a no-more. It is a denial of God's being greater than one's own being, a denial of a possibility of Easter. It is a yes to the "flesh," a no to the spirit in us, and therefore a yes to the non-being, a yes to evil.

b) Yes "to be loved"/opting for hope/choosing death as transformation towards resurrection.

To choose hope means to choose life for self. It is an acceptance of one's destiny even if it means that a part of the reality as seen at that time has to die. The person crucified on the right side of Jesus still had hope for a different future. He accepted fully the human condition of "becoming" even to the last moment. He chose hope. In therapy we can experience over and over an ego-death which sets the self free. This is the belief of the man crucified on the right side of Christ. He knew that he could not help himself anymore, yet he believed that Christ could. He

stayed open to be loved, to receive. God is accepted as being God. In that moment everything is possible. A transformation is possible. Hope does not restrict life as despair does; it opens it. Having hope in the face of a death experience becomes a purification, a throwing away of "dead weight." It is a letting go of unessentials, a becoming of oneself, and at the same time a connecting to God and others.

To conclude this introductory chapter I can summarize my thesis as follows:

Suffering is an energy connected to our being. It awakens us and calls us to a fuller life by facing death experiences. This energy makes it possible to make two basic decisions. The first one is to accept the challenge of suffering or to avoid it. If the challenge of suffering is accepted, then a second decision has to be made, which is to accept the death experience, to hope for a transformation through suffering death; or to give up, to opt for despair.

The first decision calls the person to self, to make meaning. It is a call to love. The second decision calls to go beyond the self towards hope, to live the meaning. It is a call to be loved.

The horrors of evil can only be opposed by the energy of being fully human, which is to say: if something matters, there is meaning; if someone matters, there is hope; if hope endures, there is love.



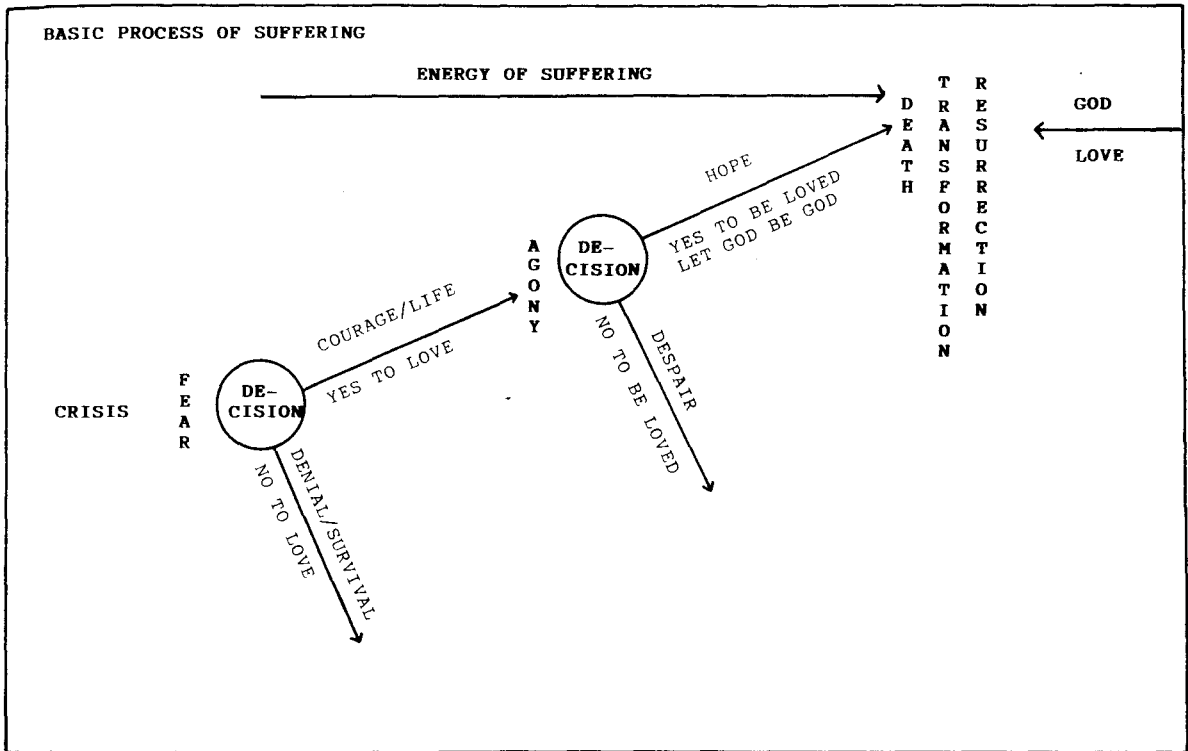


Figure 1

## CHAPTER II

### SUFFERING - ENERGY TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL LIFE OF SELF

One of the greatest obstacles to psychological understanding is the inquisitive desire to know whether the psychological factor adduced is 'true' and 'correct.' If the description of it is not erroneous or false, then the factor is valid in itself and proves its validity by its very existence. (Jung, 1916/1957, C.W. 8, p. 91)

This quote from Jung encourages me to present my psychological view of suffering, which will be based primarily on Jung's psychology, specifically his theory of the transcendent function, and also on Yalom's "Existential Psychotherapy."

Before I can describe the concept of the transcendent function in detail, I will have to give some short descriptions of Jung's concepts of psyche, self and ego.


**1. Psyche.** Jung's quest was to find out as much as possible about the human psyche, by which he means the "totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious." (Jung, 1921, C.W. 6, para 797) Jung at times used the German word "Seele" instead of psyche, a term which is difficult to translate as the translator of the Collected Works points out. (Jung, 1944, C.W. 12, para 9n) "Seele" could be best expressed as the spiritual, lifegiving principle of a being as such (its Dasein) including the

specialness of that particular being (its Sosein) as it connects to self, others, and God and to what was, is, and will be. For example, using the image of Christ as the true vine (John 15:1-8), "Seele" is everything that makes a branch a particular branch, and also that makes it a part of the whole, includes its past, present, and future, a branch nourished by the main stem.

This concept of Jung's psyche makes it clear that his psychology would have to deal with elements far beyond any quantitative empirical research and that it departs from a psychology which deals only with the conscious. Actually the boundaries between psychology, theology, and spirituality seem to become artificial in his approach.

Jung's most basic and far-reaching discovery is the collective unconscious... Through his researches, we know now that the individual psyche is not just a product of personal experience. It also has a pre-personal or transpersonal dimension which is manifested in universal patterns and images such as are found in all world religions and mythologies. (Edinger, 1972, p. 3)

**2. Self.** Every person's psyche according to Jung has a unifying center, or structuring and ordering principle which he calls the self. This self is the central archetype, or archetype of wholeness, where archetype can be described as being a structuring pattern of psychological performance. "The Self is most simply described as the inner empirical deity and is identical with the imago dei." (Edinger, 1972, p. 3) As the self as such is a mystery, it can be best expressed through images, symbols, or themes. In my dreams

I encountered the following recurring symbol in different contexts:  These images, symbols, or themes express union and wholeness.

The axis of the universe, the creative point where God and man meet, the point where transpersonal energies flow into personal life, ...protective structure capable of bringing order out of chaos, the transformation of energy...the central source of life energy, the fountain of our being which is mostly described as God. (Edinger, 1972, p. 4)

Self is the unifying principle of self-actualization of a person, the principle which is mostly "concerned" with our final goal. This final purpose is three-fold:

- a) It is adaptation, which means we can respond appropriately and in the best way possible to what we may encounter.
- b) It is individuation. Individuation is an adaptation which at the same time promotes the goal of the individual self. And the goal of the individual self is to actualize any potentials of the individual so that he/she comes closer to what he/she is meant to be.
- c) It is evolution, which is an individualization that considers the overall collective actualization of the human species, i.e., it is an individualization which also promotes the goal of the collective. Referring back to the image of the vine and the branches, it means that the actualization of a specific branch at the same time promotes the actualization of the whole vine. The self is the principle which is able to focus on the issues which need to

be addressed so that the life and growth of the individual and the community he/she lives in is served in the best way possible.

3. **Ego.** The second vital center within the psyche is the ego, the center of the conscious personality, "that continuous center of consciousness whose presence has made itself felt since the days of childhood." (Jung, 1916/1957, p. 87) The ego relates in size to the self as an inflatable lifeboat to the ocean it swims on. Yet at times the ego can be so "inflated" that it believes itself to be the whole psyche. In spite of its "size" the ego is essential, as it gives us our personal identity, continuity over time, cognition and helps us to test reality. When dealing with reality, the ego reacts in such a way that it tries to avoid pain. It comes up with a structure of rules and principles of how to perform in order to survive. Jung calls this structure persona. It is the mechanism we acquire through our experience in order to cope with reality. It is very important to mention here that the ego has the capability to connect to the self.

For Jung the tension between the conscious and unconscious or the tension between the ego and the self determines the crucial unfolding of life, of adaptation, individuation and evolution. Disruptions and injuries to the connections between the ego and the self are the fundamental causes for suffering, because in that tension

between self and ego, all the "primary conflicts", for example, death/life, isolation/relatedness, meaning/meaninglessness, freedom/responsibility as Yalom names them, are experienced.

This vital connection between the conscious and unconscious, the center of the self and ego, Jung calls the "transcendent function." "The psychological 'transcendent function' arises from the union of the conscious and unconscious content." (Jung, 1916/1957, C.W. 8, p. 69) "It is called 'transcendent' because it makes the transition from one attitude to another organically possible." (Jung, 1916/1957, C.W. 8, 9. 73)

The transcendent function could be described in this system as being the process which engages the energy of both the conscious and unconscious to adapt the ego to the self and by so doing establishes a "third" energy which is the transcendent function itself, a connecting energy between the self and the ego. The transcendent function brings life to ego and self by making conscious what was unconscious and therefore keeps the conscious attuned to its final and collective goal.

When it comes to "ordinary" incidents of daily life, the persona is very helpful, as it gives us enough tools to deal with those instances. Yet when a major crisis happens, when we are confronted with primary conflicts as described above, the persona is "helpless," because the ego does not

know how to deal with that. As the ego does not know how to respond, the unconscious is activated, and from the unconscious meaning-making tools arise in the form of symbols (often in dreams). The crucial point is how the ego reacts to the messages of the unconscious. This is the important part of the process. Here the transcendent function is of vital importance in two ways:

- 1) because it connects the self to the ego and makes the ego listen to the messages of the self, and
- 2) because it is able to emphasize the importance of the message so that it enables the ego to become willing to change the persona accordingly, or even let it die for the sake of following the higher goal which only the self knows.

The adaptation of the ego to the messages of the self "transmitted" by the transcendent function is suffering. Suffering is the energy created in the transcendent function which brings about change and lets the ego grow and expand so that the whole psyche adapts to its destiny, i.e., follows the individuation process. The energy in the transcendent function coming from the self is the hope for change, life, and growth. Yet it is also the cause for suffering, because at times the ego has to let go of its persona, which is a death experience, as the known patterns have to be discarded at times. This can bring about feelings of terror and fear of annihilation.

It is difficult for the ego to receive the messages of the self via the transcendent function, as the unconscious seems to have a "different language" than the ego, because it is not bound to the logical structured system which is dominant in the ego. Especially when the messages of the self are very demanding, it is possible for the ego to build up defenses against them and to block them out. This is denial. And even if the ego has received the messages brought to it by the transcendent function, the willingness to let go of the patterns of the persona, the willingness to die, to let go of its control in order to gain a higher level of being, is demanding. If the will to live more fully is not there, i.e., the ego does not follow the direction of the self, hope is lost and despair is the outcome.



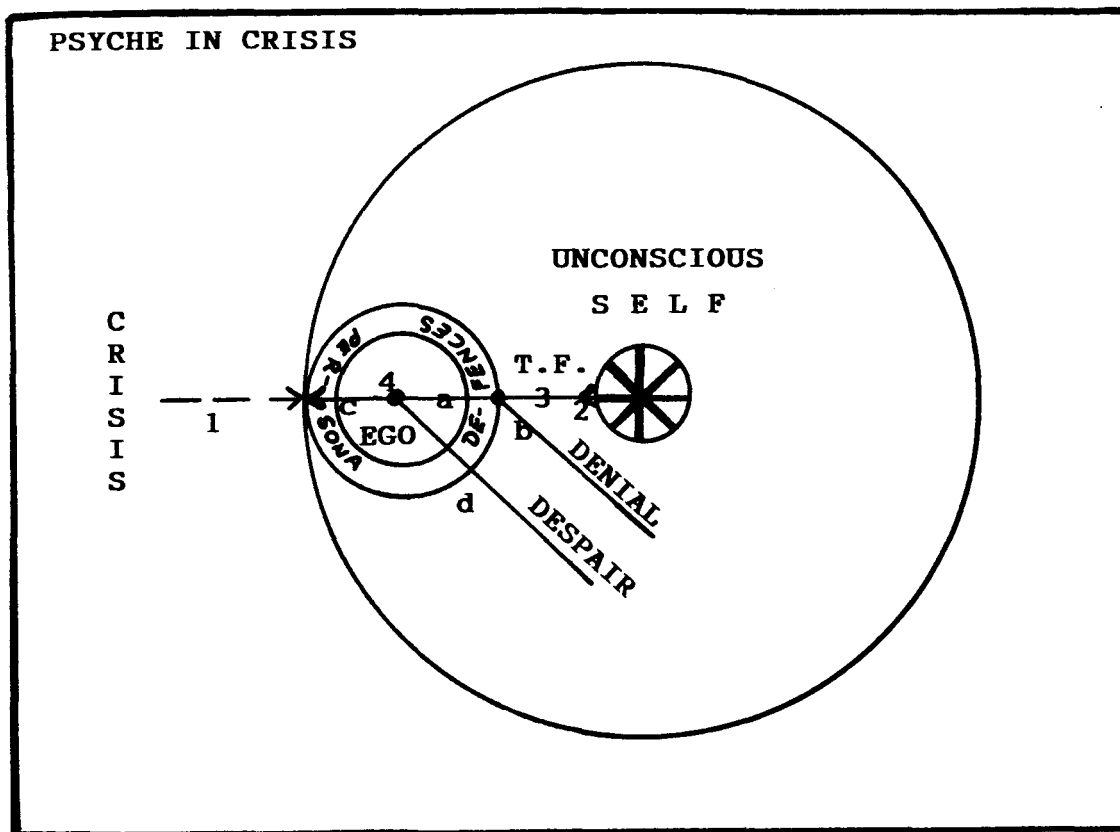


Figure 2

1. Crisis "hits" the psyche
  2. Self Responds with messages
  3. Transcendent Function  
Decision: a) messages of self admitted to ego  
or b) non-admittance of messages (denial)
  4. Ego  
Decision: c) accepts the messages and adapts  
persona  
or d) refuses to change persona (despair)
- points of decision-making

(only those Jungian terms are introduced which are dealt with in my paper)

The above described process is an ongoing process as "adaptation is never achieved once and for all." (Jung, 1916/1957, C.W. 8, p. 73) In this process the unconscious becomes more conscious, and the self more individuated. If the energy of the transcendent function is blocked by denial or "aborted" by despair, the ego and self become estranged, which can lead to a separation of ego and self, which in turn means death of self and ultimately death of the psyche. Only the acceptance of the transcendent function helps to overcome the gap between the ego and the self by "getting rid of the separation between conscious and unconscious." (Jung, 1916/1957, C.W. 8, p. 73)

What is asked from the ego is the acceptance of something which feels like its own extinction. Peter Mudd in his article "The Dark Self: Death as a Transferential Factor," (Mudd, 1990, p. 125-141), an article with which I will deal here in some length because I believe it gives significant insights into the importance of the transcendent function and death experiences, says,

Our commonplace, everyday anxieties concerning any form of risk, failure, need or limitation, all of which inhabit the darker reaches of self, can be traced ultimately to the ego's most dreaded fantasy: its own extinction...Despite the ego's horror in the face of its own mortality, death has tremendous psychological utility. It is in reality the primary catalyst for individuation and offers us the opportunity to enter our own destinies by passing through the ego's illusion into the ineffable essence of human life. (Mudd, 1990, p.125)

suffering in this context means to "undergo a process that will release the ego from the slavery of the self-preservational instinct into a far fuller life." (Mudd, 1990, p.126) The ego has to choose life, give up survival in order to reach "selfhood." The ego is imprisoned by the means it created to survive, which puts it into a state of reduced capability for adaptation. The transcendent function opens up new possibilities. But before that happens, a period of suffering with depressive dreams and emotional and somatic disturbances may have to be lived through, so that the ego may take note of the final goal to which the self tries to direct the person. "In the intensity of the emotional disturbances itself lies the value, the energy which he should have at his disposal in order to remedy the state of reduced adaptation." (Jung, 1916/1957. C.W.8, p.82)

Therefore, suffering is energy activated by a crisis in the self which tries to lead the person to become more him/herself. The process happens through the transcendent function which tries to engage the ego to consciously choose the individuating direction towards the very same goal. The transcendent function therefore is crucial for becoming fully alive.

As we are mortal, death experiences are bound to hit us. Mudd says,

Mortality underlies relations with the self and with others and facilitates often quite

unpleasantly, the psyche's compensatory/self-regulating process which reaches its pinnacle in the capacity which Jung termed transcendent function. I shall propose to you that the transcendent function is built on the prototypical experience of living through the treat of physical death, and is nothing short of the ego's achieved capacity to die repeatedly an ongoing series of conscious voluntary psychological deaths in the service of individuation. (Mudd, 1990, p.3)

So suffering means to go through this compensatory/self-regulating process, or suffering creates the possibility to accept the process of the transcendent function.

The prototypical experience of dying, on which the transcendent function is built, is, according to Mudd, the experience of birth, and is preceded by very important intrauterine experiences. "The interpersonal and intrapsychic dimensions of intrauterine existence...form mirror images of one another,...the relation of the ego to the self in the Jungian sense." (Mudd, 1990, p.127) Here are the crucial stages:

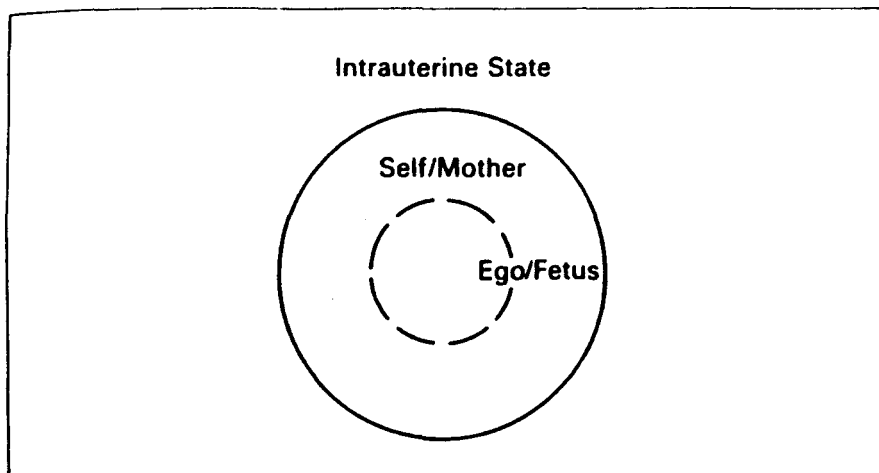


Figure 3 (Mudd, 1990, p. 128)

This stage is a stage of "relative blissfulness, effortlessness and omnipotence, because the distinction between ego and self is nearly non-existent." (Mudd, 1990, p.128) It changes during pregnancy leading towards the birth experience "where the mother and child, the ego and self are propelled apart," and therefore "birth becomes a death experience." (Mudd, 1990, p.128/129)

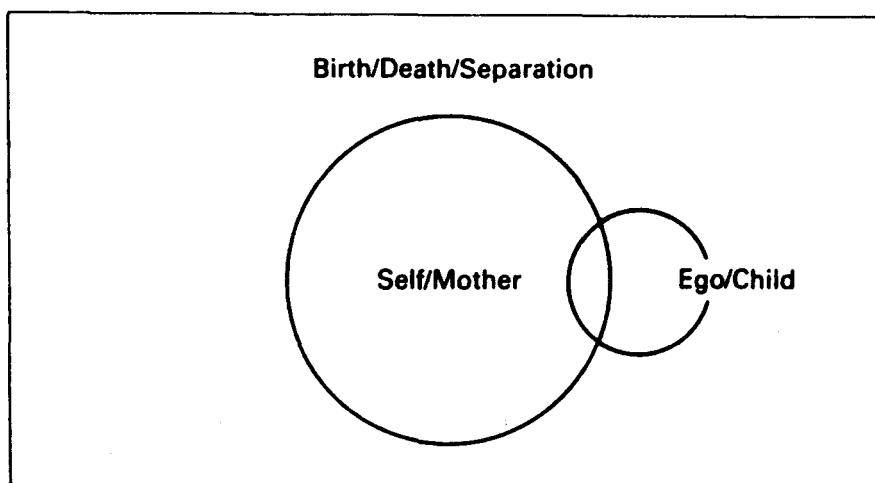


Figure 4 (Mudd, 1990, p. 129)

I believe that this death experience carries with itself two basic gifts. The first one is the experience of facing and surviving the physical threat of death, which forms the basis for the capacity of the ego to let go and hope for life. The other gift is the memory of the intrauterine stage of blissfulness, "the unconscious and predominantly somatic recollection of that immortal stage." (Mudd, 1990, p.130) which is the basis for the longing of the ego to connect to the self, the basis for longing for wholeness and for connection to a transcendent being who offers blissfulness.

The birth trauma, the trauma of separation of ego from self, which a child seems to fully become aware of only at four to eight months of age, "is of the greatest imaginable magnitude, because the ...fantasy of omnipotence is shattered." (Mudd, 1990, p.133)

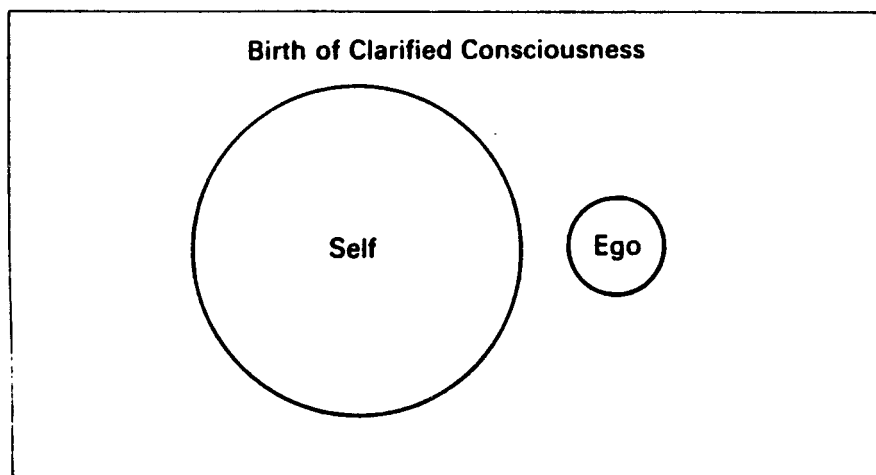


Figure 5 (Mudd, 1990, p. 132)

When the child becomes aware of the separation of ego and self, it tries to re-establish "that omnipotent lost self" (Mudd, 1990, p.133) and does this by projecting the omnipotent aspect of the self on the first caregiver(s). With this "the parents are deified by the projection of the self." (Mudd, 1990, p.133) If there is a good enough caregiver, he/she will through proper mirroring return to the child the part which the self of the child projected on him/her.

If the relationship between child and caregiver is good enough, I believe that the child receives the following gifts:

1) Because the child projects part of self on the caregiver, the self learns to "reach out" to another human being, i.e., the child learns to love. If that is a good experience for the child, which means he/she feels accepted by the caregiver, he/she learns to love other human beings, because the caregiver represents the human species to him/her. At the same time the child also learns to love God because the child deifies the caregiver.

2) If the child has a good enough caregiver who "returns" the part of self projected on him/her, the child learns to be loved by others, and also by God for the same reasons given above.

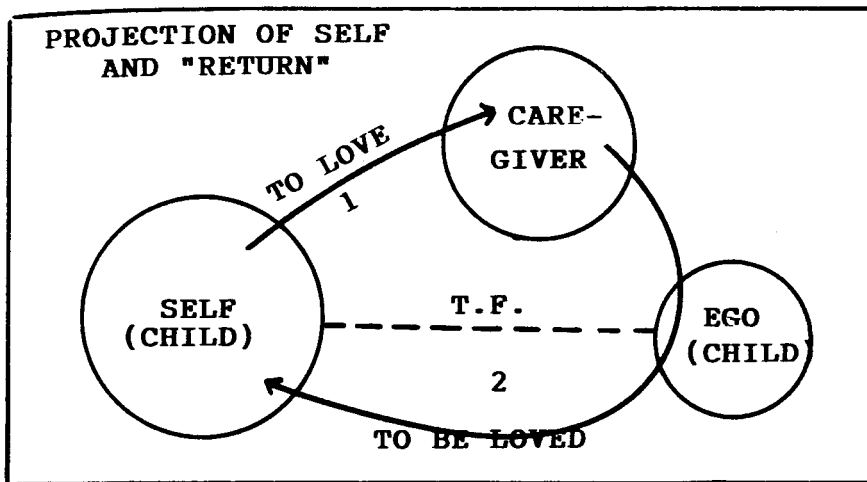


Figure 6

One could summarize that the healthy establishment of the transcendent function is vital for the healthy being of a child as it enables him/her to love and be loved. Here the ground is laid for a healthy "three-dimensionality" of a human being.

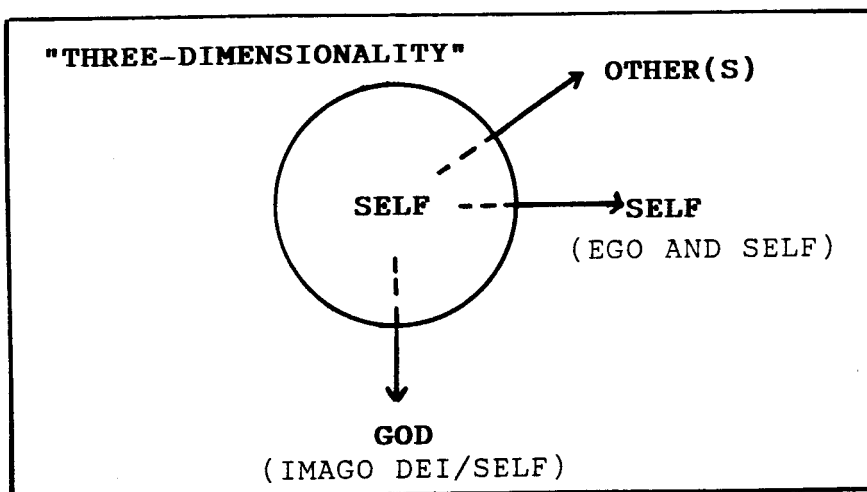


Figure 7



The problem here is that the system can be easily disturbed because it depends greatly on the qualities of the caregiver. Intense suffering is caused when the transcendent function is destroyed, injured or blocked, which leads to a dis-, or mal-connection of ego and self in the child.

A system explaining various pathological behaviors could be developed based on these insights. I would like to give here only two short examples:

a) The "failure-to-thrive-syndrome" occurs when the child tries to project the omnipotent aspect of him/herself on a caregiver and there is no one who receives that necessary projection. Of course, there is no chance that any part of this projection is "fed" back to the child. The outcome is that the transcendent function, the connection between self and ego, is "crumbling." In most cases, death is the result.

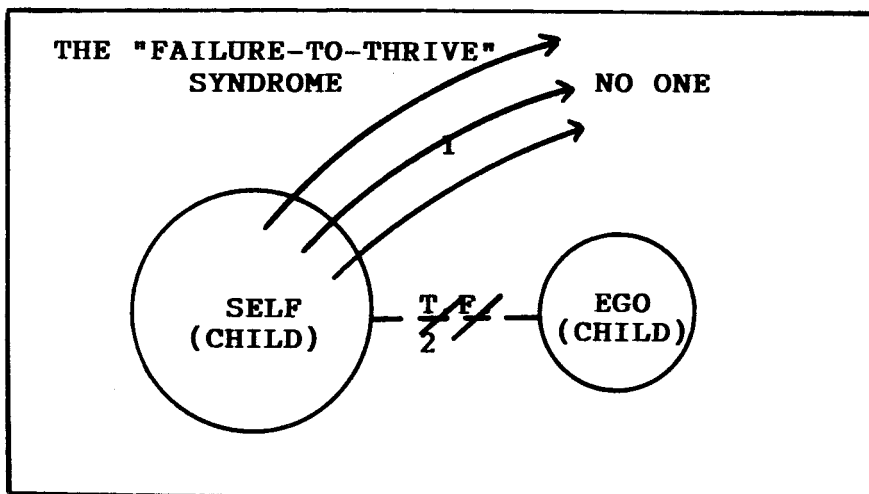


Figure 8

b) There are many possible variations to "block" or "injure" the transcendent function. If, for example, a caregiver is not good enough, i.e., he/she does not return the projected part to the child accordingly, the child learns to live "through" the mother and is taught how to please the caregiver. A rigid persona and defenses around the child's ego are erected. This persona gives the ego the message to connect to the caregiver or to another person instead of connecting to his/her own self even after the child is grown up. The results are co-dependent features in the person and an underdeveloped transcendent function. In this case it is obvious that the self of this person and the ego who follows the messages given by the rigid persona have to be at odds. It will take a lot of suffering for this person to respond to his/her own self appropriately, which means to let the unhealthy part of the persona die and to revive the transcendent function and use it accordingly. It will take another "human relationship which provides the sacred space within which we learn to die and which enables the transcendent function to evolve into an operational, psychological reality." (Mudd, 1990, p.127)

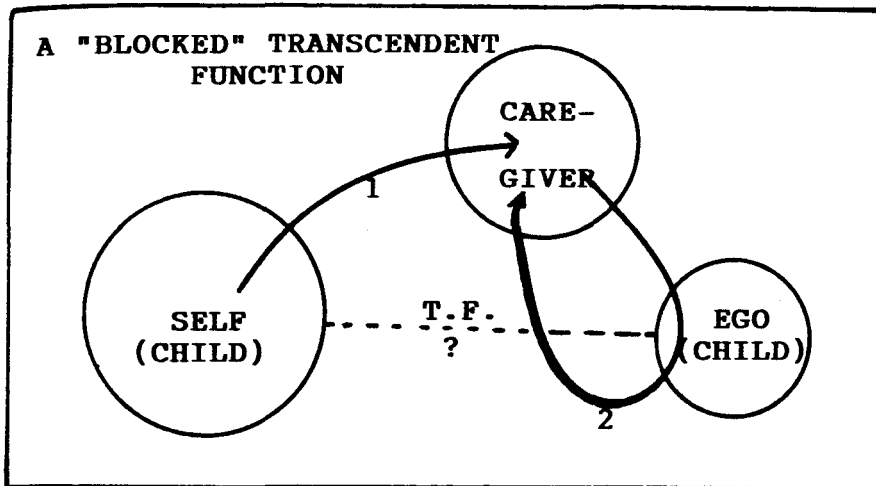


Figure 9

To reconstruct the transcendent function can be called the process of meaning-making. "Constructive treatment of the unconscious, which is the question of meaning and purpose paves the way for the patient's insight into the process which I [Jung] call the transcendent function."

(Jung, 1916/1957, C.W. p.75) Suffering means to undergo the process of dying in order to live more authentically.

In the following I would like to show that the process of suffering and its major elements here presented using mainly Jungian terms can also be found in other psychotherapeutic paradigms. As example I choose Yalom's existential psychotherapy. I choose it for two reasons:

1) because Yalom's psychotherapy gives additional insights especially into the nature of the crises, which he calls "ultimate concerns," (Yalom, 1980, p.8) and

2) because I want to attempt to employ the above established system to connect Yalom's "ultimate concerns" with each

other by interpreting them as major elements of the suffering-process, and so present an application of the above described system.

Yalom's four "ultimate concerns" are: "death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness." (Yalom, 1980, p.8)

**1. Death.** Yalom states clearly that a death experience is a boundary experience,

that propels one into a confrontation with one's existential 'situation' in the world. A confrontation with one's personal death... is the nonpareil boundary situation (which) has the power to provide a massive shift in the way one lives in the world. 'Though the physicality of death destroys an individual, the idea of death can save him.' (Yalom, 1980, p.159) Death is the condition that makes it possible for us to live life in an authentic fashion. (Yalom, 1980, p.31)

The human being comes to personal growth only by suffering through death experiences, i.e., "the fear of death rids us from the fear of life." (Yalom, 1980, p.141). Also in Yalom we find the concept that suffering, living through death experiences, is necessary energy which propels us into life. Death reminds us of our core essence, so that our survival issues, for example, role identifications, become unimportant. I believe that Yalom describes here the same process as Jung does when he speaks of letting the persona die and following the messages of the transcendent function.

**2. Freedom.** Yalom's second ultimate concern is freedom, the individual's freedom to desire, to choose, to act and so to create his/her own life. Freedom is necessary in order to accept responsibility, to be able to respond to a crisis,

and to bring about change through decision and action.

"Decision is the bridge between wishing and action."

(Yalom's, 1980, p.314) Yalom's concept of freedom can be interpreted as describing the decision-making-process of the ego - to use Jungian terms - when it has to decide if it wants to follow the demands of the self via the transcendent function, or if it wants to opt for denial and despair.

**3. Isolation.** Isolation is Yalom's third ultimate concern.

"Interpersonal isolation is generally experienced as loneliness." (Yalom, 1980, p. 352) It "refers to our unbridgeable gulf between oneself and any other being."

(Yalom, 1980, p.355) Here Yalom deals with the capability of human beings to connect with each other, their potentiality to love and be loved, a capability which is developed first by the good enough caregiver to use the language of the above described system. "Though no relationship eliminates isolation," it is a fact "that love compensates for the pain of isolation." (Yalom, 1980, p.363) And if we face our isolation, then we will be able to turn lovingly towards others and form "I-Thou"-relationships. I believe that the transcendent function as Jung describes it does both: connects us to others and helps us to face our isolation.

**4. Meaninglessness.** The quest for meaning-making as Yalom describes it is a philosophical and ultimately spiritual quest. In Western tradition it means "not to settle for a

nonself-transcendent purpose in life." (Yalom, 1980, p.439) Yalom says that we need a higher direction in order to live. If we use theological language, it would mean that we have to take care of our God-dimension in order to be alive. The meaning-making-process as Yalom describes it can be paralleled to the yearning of the human being to connect his/her ego to the self, because only the self knows the final goal of the psyche. That is, it can be compared to the development of the transcendent function in the Jungian system, which gives growth to the "Seele."

Looking at the process of suffering, Yalom's ultimate concerns could be interconnected as follows:

The two ultimate concerns of death and isolation evoke the onset of suffering. The death experience consists in the fear of the non-being of the self, while isolation evokes the fear of the non-existence of the other. Therefore, both concerns are direct confrontation with "non-being," with evil. The process of suffering can be put in motion by either one of them or both.

Yalom's ultimate concern of freedom deals with the response to suffering, which means that the human being is able:

a) to desire, i.e., to imagine possibilities and have wishes, ( which corresponds to the openness towards the unconscious, to use Jungian terms ) and to choose ( which corresponds to the response of the ego to the input of the

unconscious ) and then to accept responsibility for the wishes one lets go and for the one one accepts. To find out what one really wants and then to go for it is important. Not to do so is denial.

b) to change. Yalom stresses the human capability to change, which corresponds to the Jungian concept of adaptability leading to individuation and evolution. Change excludes despair because to opt for change means that something matters. Therefore, it evokes hope.

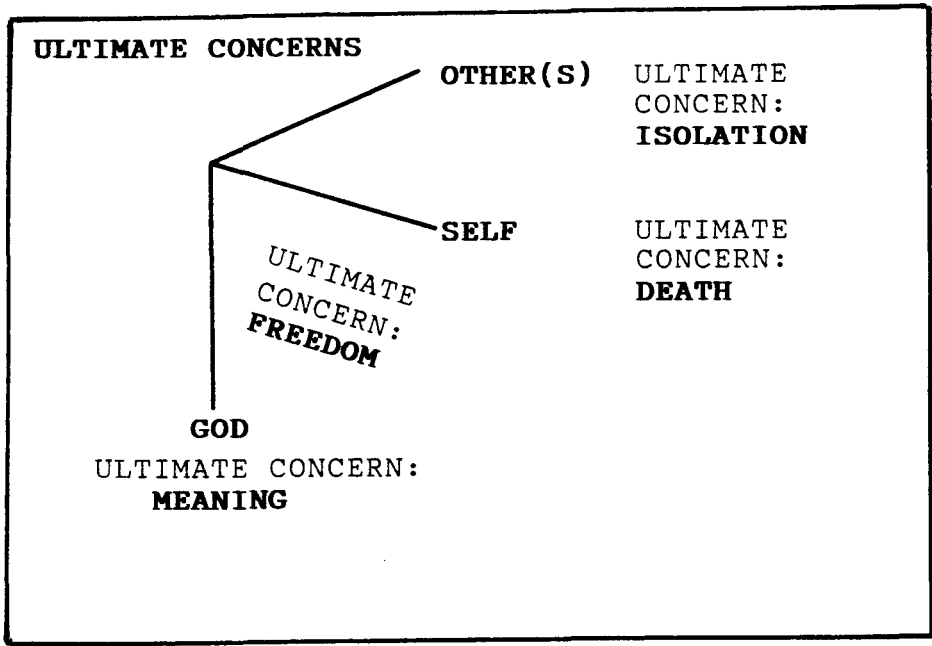


Figure 10

Suffering in Yalom's system means to undergo that process, to respond to experiences of death and isolation by using one's "freedom" responsibly in order to make meaning. I believe that Yalom's psychotherapy promotes the "three-

dimensionality" of the human being, because by making meaning we connect to a transcendent purpose. When we suffer through death experiences, we connect to self and the higher purpose. The process of suffering as Yalom describes it advocates a way of "freedom" towards "meaning".

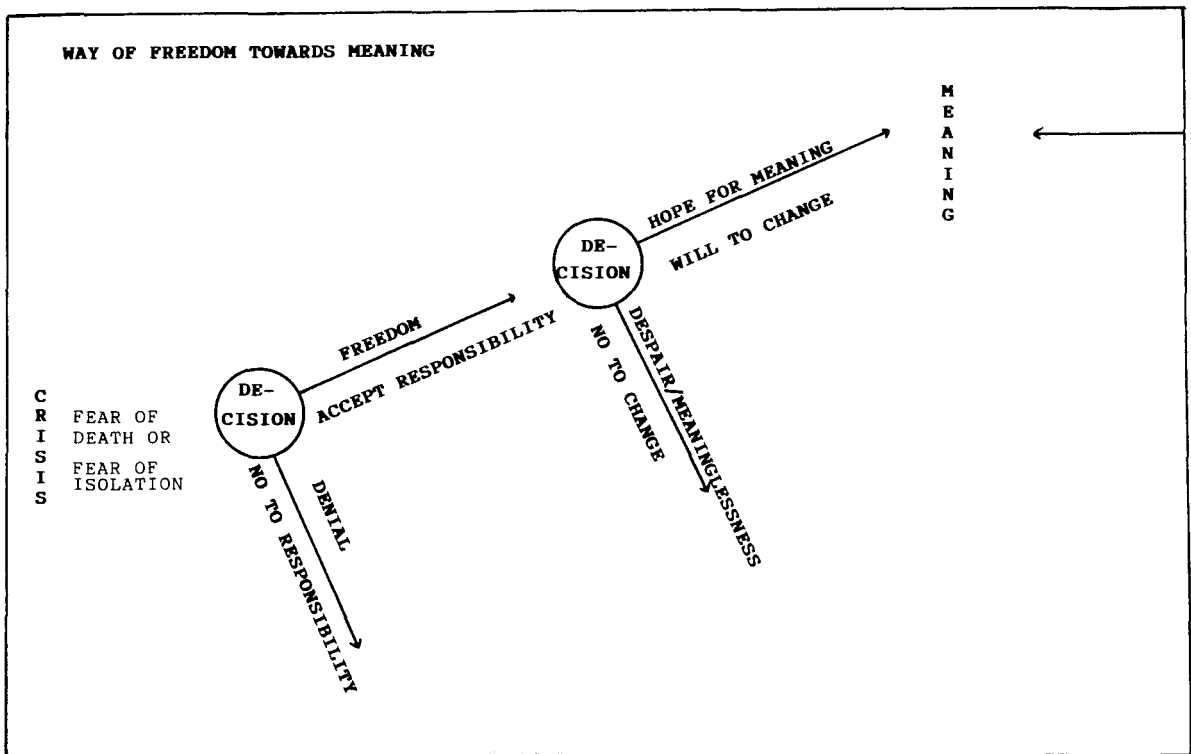


Figure 11



CHAPTER III  
SUFFERING - ENERGY OF THE HEART TOWARDS A  
RESURRECTION

In this chapter I would like to show that suffering is basically a journey, a journey with a basic pattern which I have described in the previous chapters. John Dunne's theological method as pointed out by Jon Nilson (Nilson, 1987) is the journey itself. That means that Dunne's concepts and ideas are not vague or imprecise but that they become clear to the reader in the context of Dunne's writings. That means in order to understand Dunne's ideas clearly one has to walk his journey with him and let the meaning unfold within the context of the journey.

This method makes it rather difficult to analyze Dunne's text. Therefore in order to illuminate the basic concepts pertaining to suffering I interweave explanations and insights given by Rahner. I employ Rahner's insights, so to speak, as lampposts on the road which Dunne describes.

This chapter consists of three parts.

I. In the first part I deal with two gospel stories and my concept of God. Far from attempting to give an exegesis of these scripture passages, I only share here some thoughts in respect to suffering as revealed in these stories. I point

to a psychological dynamic in them which yields new insights for me and at the same time deepens the theological understanding of them.

II. In the second part of this chapter I establish, so to speak, the backdrop for the journey, the process of suffering. I try to clarify basic concepts mainly by juxtaposing Dunne's and Rahner's insights. These insights are:

1. To be human means to be "on the road," which entails making choices.
2. Death belongs to human nature and the particular meaning death has is a choice.
3. Suffering is a confrontation with death that opens us up to the possibility of a new life.
4. Suffering is a journey and various metaphors can be used.
5. Suffering begins with a limit-experience in the hope of transformation and moves towards love beyond the self.
6. Suffering is not "evil", but a human way of being and becoming.

In sum, therefore, if suffering is a journey, it is important to know about its goal of being and loving, its pitfalls of denying and despair, its starting point of a limit-experience, and major points of decision-making along the way.

III. In part three of this chapter I actually follow the path of the man Dunne describes in his book The Reasons of the Heart. And I discover a basic pattern in the process of suffering, of becoming.

I. As a child I disliked most the gospel which tells the story of Christ's betrayal because I have experienced how horrible it is to be betrayed. When at the end of World War II my father and mother hid a Jewish man in a closet in our apartment and a neighbor informed the police of it, the terror which followed when the police searched through the apartment, smashing dishes and furniture and threatening to kill my parents and me will be unforgettable to me. A story of betrayal.

"I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me." (John 13:21) Jesus' disciples stared at one another, at a loss, not knowing whom he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give the piece of bread, when I have dipped it in the dish. Then dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon." (John 13: 21-27)

Three disciples are depicted, characterizing three different responses to suffering. There is the disciple Christ loved. Between Christ and him there seems to be a

deep understanding. Their hearts were connected. This disciple knew that he never could betray Christ. He also seemed to grasp somehow that Christ needed to suffer. He seemed to be able to accept Christ as he was. Then there was Peter, a man who loved Christ but who was fearful. He is the one who could speak words of wisdom but at times also words of misunderstanding. He could not "lean back" into Christ yet. When confronted by suffering he spontaneously yielded to anxiety and denied his association with Christ. This answer, though, came from the top of his head, not from his heart. So as soon as he noticed what he had done, he could change. And then there was Judas. He gave up. He opted for despair because Christ had disappointed him. Judas must have had expectations when he followed Christ. Maybe he had hoped that Christ would fulfill them. Christ seemingly did not. Judas seemed to have been a man who needed to be in control. After he had handed Christ over to the soldiers, he still did not understand. He closed himself off so that he could not be reached by forgiveness, grace, love. He held on to his persona and killed himself.

And at the center there is Christ. He gives his body and blood to all of them. As a child I thought: why would Christ feed his betrayer? How could he! I mixed him up with Sherlock Holmes. Knowing who is the betrayer is not what is important here, but unconditional love. Judas still had a chance after he had handed Christ over to the

soldiers. His ultimate betrayal did not happen when he kissed Christ. It took place only when he killed himself. That was his last no to Christ.

In this gospel we can recognize Christ's attitude towards suffering. It is to be hopeful beyond comprehension, to give oneself unconditionally. To love unconditionally is the core of Christ's identity. Though Judas betrayed Christ, Christ did not betray himself, and so in a way he could not be betrayed, because one can only betray oneself. And Christ did not do that.

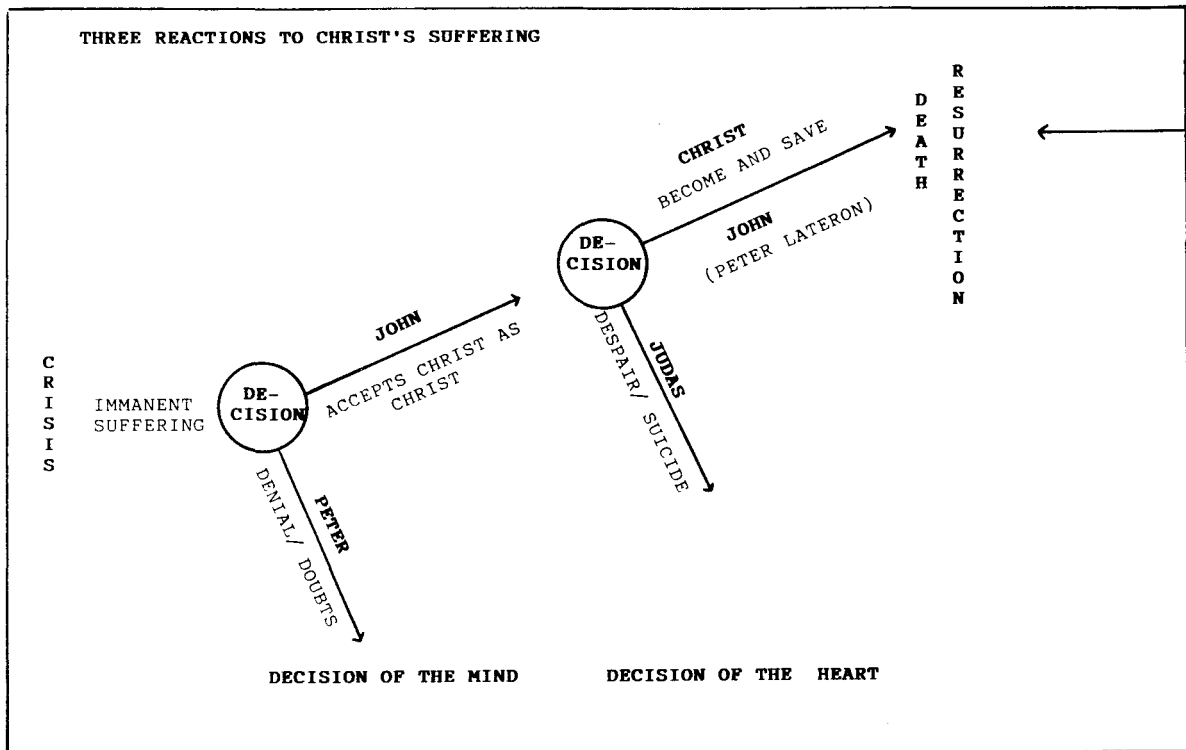


Figure 12

How we respond to suffering depends on how we make meaning out of it, and ultimately on how we relate to God.

Therefore I will give here a more detailed description of my image of God.

For me God is above all unconditional love. God's love is always there no matter what we do or don't do. The manifestation of that Love is Christ. The personification of God's Love is the Spirit. My concept of God is an "Interpersonal We," a "Wir-Gemeinschaft," as Heribert Mühlen presents it in "Die Veränderlichkeit Gottes als Horizont einer zukünftigen Christologie," (Mühlen, 1969)

'The Father and I are one', is not an argument for the unity of the divine substance but rather for the quality of the interpersonal relationship existing between Jesus and the Father... Together they constitute a community, with the Spirit as the bond of union between the Father and the Son ...The Father, accordingly, reveals the divine nature in that he gives up his own Son for our salvation; the Son exhibits his divinity in that he allows himself to be thus delivered up for our salvation; finally, the Spirit, as the personification of the process of self-giving love within the Godhead, communicates this same 'spirit' to human beings at the moment of Christ's death on the cross. Hence Jesus' passion, death and resurrection reveals the mystery of the inner life of God. God is the process of self-giving love; all three divine persons share in that process, although... in different ways. (Bracken, 1978, p.208)

I believe as Mühlen does that personhood in relationship is a higher level of being than the being of an individual substance. Therefore it becomes apparent that God's love is dynamic, is a process which calls us to join. Christ himself is our invitation and he models for us how to do it. The spirit is the guarantor that we can do it. God revealed his/her very nature, his/her identity to us in

Christ's death, while at the same time he/she invited us to follow him into their relationship.

To follow that invitation means to enter into relationship. This relationship is characterized by two qualities, freedom and love. The decision to become oneself in relationship has to be a free decision, a decision of the mind and heart, and it has to be a yes to love which has the two dimensions of giving and of receiving. We find these basic qualities in every meaningful relationship, yet in an imperfect way among humans.

While human beings may choose to terminate their relationship.. without losing their basic personhood in the process, the divine persons cannot dissolve their relationship to one another without ceasing to be God. Yet there is no danger that this would ever happen, since with their perfect knowledge and love of one another the divine persons have given themselves to one another in a union which is morally indissoluble. Perfect freedom and natural necessity thus coincide within the relationship of the divine persons to one another. (Bracken, 1978, p.209)

Freedom and love are the touchstones of any relationship, of the relationship with self, other, and God, and also are the touchstones when responding to suffering.

In Luke's gospel we read the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, which shows that when two are together in suffering, searching for meaning, everything is possible. The event, the crisis from which these two disciples were suffering from the death of Christ, a death experience which deeply impacted them. They did not deny what happened. They seemed to face the fact as best they

could. Their minds were open, because "they talked and discussed the things with each other." (Luke 24:15) They were on their way. They were deeply concerned about the death of Christ and about each other. By telling his and their story they reached out. And so "Jesus himself came up, and walked along with them." (Luke 24:15) What had begun as a search for meaning in their minds had grown toward their hearts. They were no longer alone. Their hearts were kindled. There they received in two stages that for which they were searching. First they received some answers, some explanations. These explanations were a call to awaken to a new reality, to a different kind of thinking, a call to let common logic go and to look at things from a different perspective, a heart's perspective. It was a call to look at things lovingly, a call to love. Yet that was not enough. The two disciples did not really "get it" yet. They seemed to yearn for more. So they urged Christ to stay. They said yes to "stage two". They were hoping, they were ready to be loved and to be transformed. They received the Eucharist, and they were transformed. They saw, and they knew. And they needed to pass the news on because love received cannot be contained. This gospel can be taken as an example of how a death experience can be lived through with Christ.



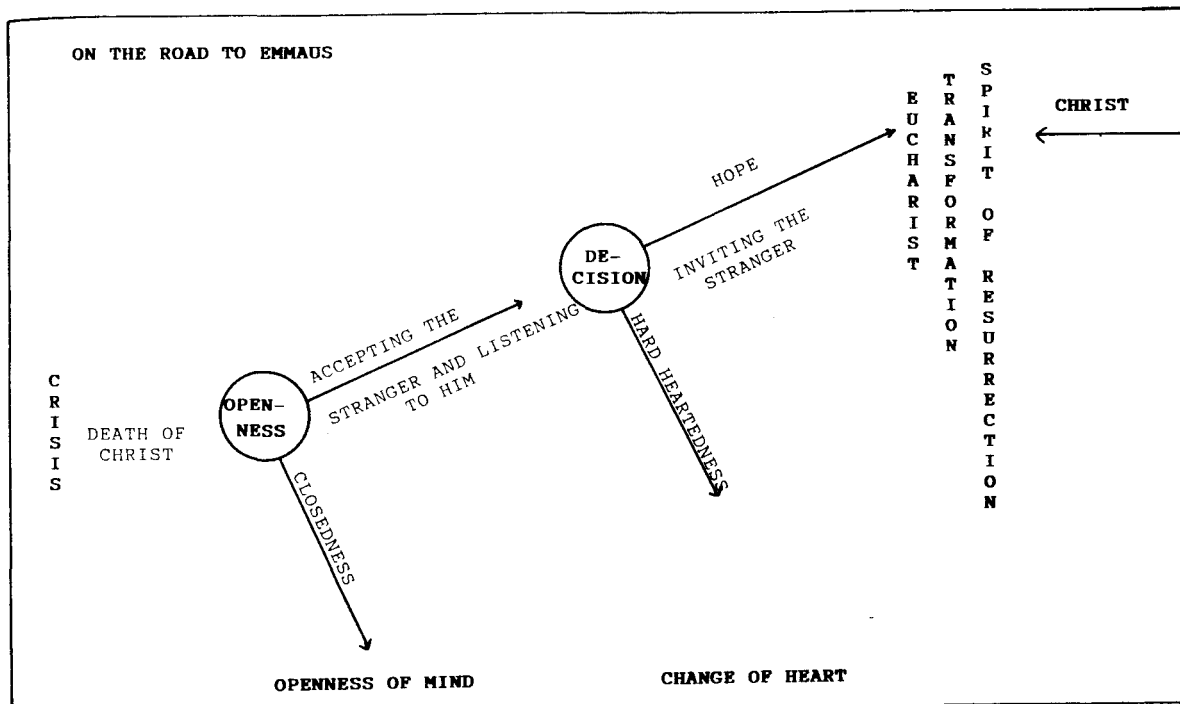


Figure 13

II. 1. Both Rahner and Dunne see the human person as "being on the road." Dunne starts The Reasons of the Heart by saying: "There is a dilemma that arises whenever one chooses a road in life. It is that of the road not taken." (Dunne, 1978, p.IX) These sentences capture the basic human qualities which are the backdrop for suffering. First, it says that the human person is basically a being who is in statu viatoris, a being in becoming, in process. The human being cannot be everything, be everywhere and do everything; is limited; has to make choices. Rahner expresses the same idea when he uses the terms "spatio-temporal being" or "historic being." He says,

[Man] is not simply put on a spatio-temporal stage to act out his life. Spatio-temporality, [his historicity] is his inner make-up which belongs properly to him as man. There is authentic

historicity only where there is the unicity and the imprevisibility of freedom. (Rahner, "Man as an Historical Spirit." 1989, p.54)

Here Rahner points to the dilemma Dunne describes above.

The human person is not only limited and has to make choices but he/she also has to make these choices while not knowing where choices not made would lead to. The freedom to choose has to be exercised in the darkness of the imprevisibility.

The result of these choices will determine the story of each person's life, his/her unique story. A metaphor for this story is his/her life's journey.

2. Which road a person takes, which journey he/she travels is of utter importance. This stems from the fact that

the orientation of human existence as a whole to death is a reality,...[that] this 'being for death' co-determines everything in human life and imparts to the latter its uncertainty, its openness to mystery and its ultimate seriousness. (Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p.227/228)

Confrontation with death, his "being for death," and the man's protest against it, is at the root of all suffering.

"...dying must be recognized as an event though at all times with varying intensity and with a fresh application of a freedom that accepts death in life or protests against it."

(Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p.228) To experience death in life evoked by events which herald death can be taken as Rahner's description of suffering. According to Rahner, this awareness of death brings us to recognize the basic dialectic of our being, the dialectic between freedom and disposability of ourselves, which "is completely radicalized

in death and in such a way that the concreteness of this dialectic is still absolutely hidden from man." (Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p.244) This means that man in death exercises his/her ultimate freedom by accepting his/her radical finality, his/her poverty of his/her spatio-temporal history, his/her powerlessness and by doing so exercises his/her highest form of freedom, to choose what seems to be so utterly beyond his/her nature.

In its fundamental nature freedom is not the ability to do or to omit one thing or another of a categorical nature, but the basic condition of the subject in its transcendentalty, in which it disposes of ITSELF for finality. (Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p. 242)

Yet nevertheless, the human being is capable of making that decision and so exercising that kind of freedom. This is the decision which Dunne calls the decision of the heart. In this decision man achieves his/her self determination, because he/she

decides on an ultimate and definite relationship to God, who makes himself in his most intimate reality and in immediacy the ultimate content of this history of freedom and thus in particular of the finality of this history, this certainly imposes an enormous and ultimate incomprehensible burden on the problem of this unique history of freedom of a spatio-temporal subject of freedom. How can a subject of this kind, with the creaturely finiteness of this freedom and in the poverty of his spatio-temporal history, really and definitely and once and for all decide for or against this infinity of his real life, which is purely and simply God himself? (Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p.243)

This question is the very same cry I heard in my childhood over and over again, it is the why-question of

suffering. The answer Rahner offers is not an answer of the mind, it is an answer of the heart, because he simply says: die with Christ. He suggests acceptance as self-determination,

Death is both man's final self-determination and final irrevocable disposability....He must see it as the event of active finalization of the one act of freedom of his life;...he knows that his freedom must accept his powerlessness while hoping to the very end..[In this way he/she approaches] God's incomprehensible mystery, embracing both the incomprehensibility of his nature and also of his freedom in regard to man, the incomprehensibility becomes definite in its hiddenness. (Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p.247)

Christ is the one who showed us how to do it by his acceptance of death and obedient surrender of the whole person to the incomprehensibility of God in the midst of desolation and loneliness. When the human person decides in freedom to follow Christ in death, then,

Dying is LOVE of God insofar as this renunciation in freedom required in death is brought about as the effect of love in which God himself is loved for his own sake and consequently the person never recovers himself. (Rahner, 1983, T.I. 18, p.256)

The self-determination is completed; the relationship to God is established, the name of that relationship is love.

3. Following Rahner's train of thought, suffering can be described as confrontation with death. In his theology we find the fundamental components of the dynamic of suffering. The freedom of the human person in the decision-making is basic. These choices of self-determination are serious,

especially the choice made at the very end of our lives, because it is a choice made once and for all.

4. Dunne's ingenuity consists in that he describes in detail the journey of suffering, highlighting the basic stages of decision making. Dunne's emphasis is on the process. The man he describes in The Reasons of the Heart takes the journey step by step so that he may become whole through suffering. Dunne does not claim that this man's journey is the only way possible. When he at the end introduces a woman, it becomes clear that there are variations to the journey as he describes it. Yet to follow this man's journey helps in my view to gain insight into the dynamic of suffering as such because when it becomes apparent how the building blocks fit together, the meaning of suffering becomes clearer.

The difference in Dunne's and Rahner's approach to suffering manifests itself clearly in the different metaphors they use. While Rahner speaks of Christ's death and so invokes the image of the cross, an image of something which is exterior to a human being, Dunne tells an "inside" story, the story of what may go on "in the mind and heart" of a person who accepts his suffering and his journey. Therefore his major metaphor comes from the inside of the human being and is the heart. Dunne does not explain what that metaphor means, nor would he want to as that would not be his style, but he describes what it does. He says

God is like a heart. The languishing is like the exhausted blood that flows through the veins to the heart to be renewed, and the love is like the renewed blood that flows from the heart through the arteries back into the body. The discovery of God takes place when the languishing becomes the love, when the power of the love is felt, when the exhausted life is renewed in the heart. (Dunne, 1978, p.7)

This is an image of an inner transformation.

One of the most profound explanations of the metaphor "heart" is in turn given by Rahner, who states that the word "heart" is an "Urwort," a primordial word, which has numerous meanings touching us deeply. He says,

Heart as total-human primordial word of this kind denoted the core of the human person which is original and inmost with respect to everything else in the human person, in which the whole concrete being of man, as it is brought forth and unfolded and flows away in soul, body and spirit...is taken and grasped...as one, as though knotted and fastened at its mid-point..., at which therefore man is originally and wholly related to other persons and above all also to God, who is interested in the person as a whole and whose action in giving grace or guidance is therefore aimed at this heart-center of man. (Rahner, 1974, T.I. 3, p.332)

5. As for Rahner the cause for suffering is the awareness of death in life, for Dunne it is the deeply felt loneliness of the human condition. Again we have, so to speak, the outside and inside view of the cause of suffering or maybe the story of the cause as seen by the mind which is aware of what happens and the story of the cause as felt by the heart responding to this awareness, which is poignantly expressed

in Mark 15:33-37, when the dying Christ cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Therefore, for Dunne the starting point of his story of the suffering person is the felt loneliness originating in man's freedom to choose, which simultaneously brings him/her face to face with his/her limits, as he/she can only go one road and not every road possible. "Our starting point will be the loneliness of the human condition, the loneliness which is felt when one is choosing a road in life." (Dunne, 1978, p.X) These boundary situations, "outer events," death situations, crises, bring about the necessity of these decisions. The energy is focused, and it evokes what Dunne calls a longing or the heart's desire. "There is a longing in that loneliness, that I will call the heart's desire." (Dunne, 1978, p.X) While the cause of the suffering is the deeply felt loneliness, the suffering itself is the longing or the heart's desire. This heart's desire is the energy which drives us to follow a road leaving others behind. It is the energy which lets us grasp our freedom of choice and overcomes the hurdle of fear of the loss of the choices not realized.

6. When Dunne chooses the term "heart's desire" or longing instead of suffering, it becomes obvious that he speaks about something that as such does not evoke an image which could be connected to evil. Also Rahner does not connect suffering, i.e., the awareness of death, with evil, because

he does not see death as merely a consequence of the original sin.

Death could not be merely a consequence of man's guilt, a notion without positive meaning...It is in fact a doctrine of faith that death is also a natural event, that is, it is a necessary consequence of the constitution of man as body and spirit...The decisive theological reason,...is that death shall not only be a consequence, an expression, and a punishment for sin, but also,...a dying with Christ, the participation in and appropriation of his redemptive death. Since death is also to be very opposite of sin,...then death must have a proper natural essence, which contains the potentiality of dying in both directions...the death of Adam or the death of Christ. (Rahner, 1961, p.43/44)

Both Rahner and Dunne agree that suffering as such is a human way of "being," characterized by a heightened awareness of death in life and/or an intensified experience of the heart's desire open to different outcomes and therefore neutral as such. And the purpose of suffering seems to be to choose the outcome, to make a decision in respect to which road to take.

This leads immediately to the next question: is there a right or wrong road? Or to phrase this question less dualistically: is there a basic dynamic of suffering which when followed leads to a wholesome outcome? Is there an overall pattern which captures the process so that we even may be able to map ourselves within the process, recognizing how far we have come and where we may have to go from there? I believe Dunne suggests an answer. Dunne describes the dynamic of suffering as having basically two steps. One is



to follow the heart's desire, which means "to come to know the human heart...we must go out to meet our loneliness in solitude." (Dunne, 1978, p.X) The other one is "we must come back again to meet it (the heart) in the human circle." (Dunne, 1978, p.X)

"So our journey into the human heart will be a withdrawal and a return,..., as in fairy tales, a journey into solitude and back again into the human circle." (Dunne, 1978, p.X) In order to understand that dynamic better, it is helpful to look again at the goal of suffering, at the goal of the man's journey described by Dunne. It seems that the goal of suffering and the man's journey is a transformation-experience, a resurrection-experience characterized by the fulfillment of hope expressed in "though I die, yet I shall live." (Dunne, 1978, p. 121) But before we can get there, there are two experiences we have to assimilate, one is the "I am"-experience, the experience of the awareness of existence, an experience of the mind of self, and the other is the "I will die" experience, the experience of the finiteness, an experience of the body of self. And only after a person "becomes each of these selves in turn in the course of the spiritual adventure" (Dunne, 1978, p. 121), then the self fully awakened, bestowed with soul can have the "yet I shall live" experience. (Dunne, 1978, p. 121) As Dunne outlines it, the spiritual adventure is the "I am"-experience. On this part

of the journey, I find something to live for. I write my story and find out "who I am." The "I will die" experience I get when I find someone to live for, when I find a new life in another person and accept "that I will have to pass through death to enter into the life of the other." (Dunne, 1978, p. 121) Only then I can become the transformed self, the self with heart and soul which is able to live with heart, soul, and body, and so opens and finds an "I and thou" relatedness (Dunne, 1978, p. 145) with God.

If one goes on a journey, it is good to know what to watch out for, which pitfalls to avoid. So the question arises, are there specific dangers on our life's journey towards the death/resurrection experience? Rahner basically names two dangers. One is despair, where

the darkness of death makes the whole essence of man so precarious...so absolute, that man, relying on himself, does not see any chance of unveiling death's dark mystery, and is unwilling to seek help in doing so from any other source. (Rahner, 1961, p. 52)

The other danger is that man simply denies "that death is dark and precarious at all" (Rahner, 1961, p. 52), where the human person tries to find a "positive existential understanding of his own essence...[a] kind of sinful attempt at an autonomous interpretation of death." (Rahner, 1961, 52/53) This in turn can be done by a spiritual aberration, where death is interpreted as a setting free of the enslaved spiritual principle from the body of the human person, or is interpreted as a natural process, where "death

is a return home, back to the world of the material, eternally abiding nature." (Rahner, 1961, p. 54) Both dangers have one thing in common: the human being wants to make it by him/herself, wants to stay in control. In despair and denial he/she is unwilling to open up to God.

When we follow Dunne's process of suffering, we will come to two basic ways of decision-making, too, and though at first glance the questions which are asked in the decision making process may appear different, the same two dangers are encountered.

III. Dunne in The Reasons of the Heart introduces us to a man and follows his journey. The journey is described in the form of a case study, yet leaving out all particulars. The man's case is taken as a model. Or one could say, the model is made into a case in order to follow the process and the inner dynamic of the process of becoming "whole-hearted." One could even say that Dunne makes an attempt to describe to us the process a person has to go through to become healthy; to become fully human; to integrate spirit, heart, body and soul.

In the following I attempt to give an overview of the process the man undergoes while following his heart's desire because I believe that Dunne describes here the basic process of suffering of the human person. Dunne, I believe, tries to illuminate the different steps of this process from

different angles at the same time, yet I will try to just follow the main steps.

Dunne sees the human being as a person who can go "inside" towards himself, into solitude, and who can reach out towards other human beings. And in order to become whole-hearted, i.e., to live life fully, the human person has to pursue both paths at one time or another in his/her life. This capability of the double-directness of the human being is a gift and a responsibility and the basis for Dunne's "case study." Yet the double directedness of the human person only leads to human fulfillment, i.e., salvation, if the road towards the inside and the road towards the human circle lead to God, i.e., if the double-directedness of the human person becomes a triple-directed. This third dimension, this God-dimension is what sets us free and lets us have a new perspective (insight) or a new attitude (transformed relatedness) towards the other two dimensions. At the end of each "road" we meet God. We meet God twice, maybe in a different way, but God is the goal whatever road we are on. The journey inside leads us to where we find the self, the journey outside to where we go beyond ourselves and find the other. Yet, and that is the important outcome, if we endure and find God, we will at the end be able to fulfill God's commandment, because we will be able to love self, the other, and God, and so have fulfilled our three-dimensionality of self-, other-, and God-

directedness. Very often the human person forgets the God-dimension, and therefore lives in "flatland," (cf. Abbott, 1981) where suffering has to become unbearable. This is what happened for example to Judas after he had handed Jesus over to the soldiers. In his despair he cut himself off from God. He could not find any way out in "flatland," in a world without God. Only God could have helped him even then. But he seemed to have imprisoned himself to "flatland". So he hung himself.

In this context I would like to come back to the question of what was the "evil act" the first human being committed which we call original sin. Going back to the story of creation, we read: "God created man in His image. In the image of God He created them." (Gen 1:27) And it was good. If that was good, the original sin must consist in the destruction or major deformation of God's image in the human being. According to the image of God I presented earlier, God is love and a relationship. So man must have become unloving, destroyed the core of his/her relationship to each other, to self, and to God. He/she destroyed his/her three-dimensionality. That is the core of the original sin.

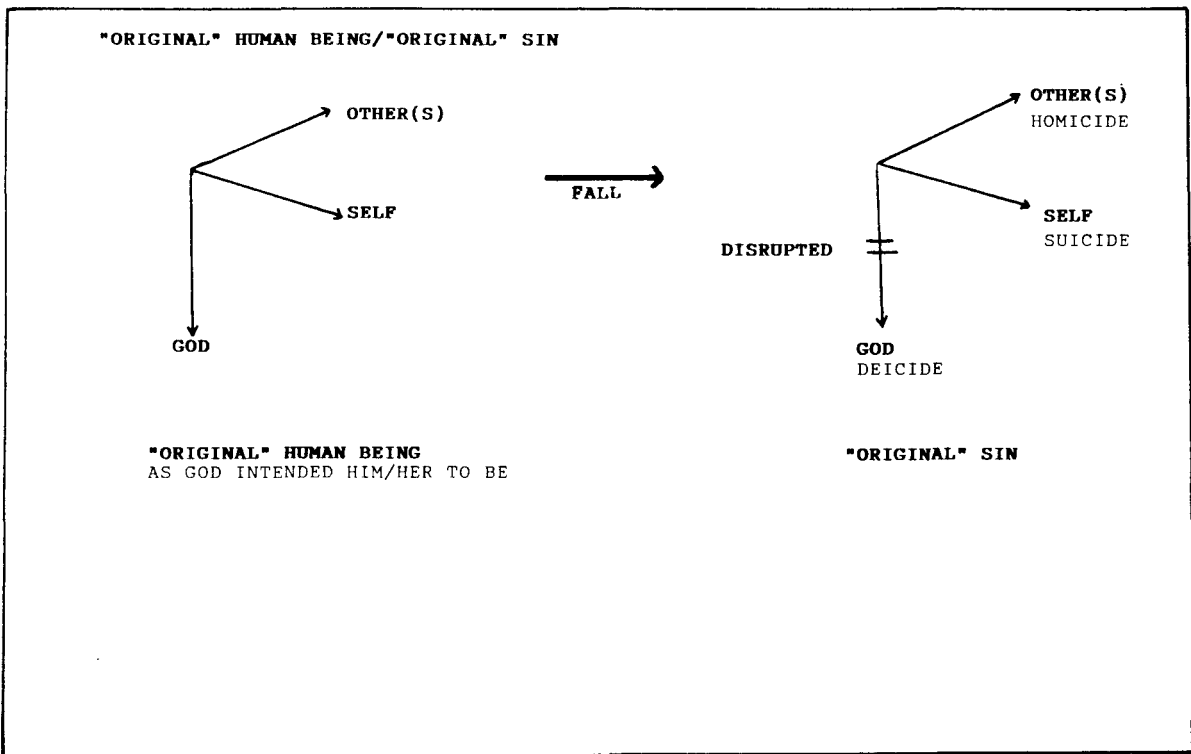


Figure 14

Christ's main commandment to love self, neighbor, and God also supports this view, because the commandment is given so that God's image in the human being, his/her "originality" may be restored.

The story of the "fall of man", I believe, tells us more about the behavior of Adam and Eve after the fall than about "the fall" itself. Here we see the two typical reactions of human beings who want to get away from consequences of a deed, from a crisis, from suffering, i.e., denial and despair. Denial occurs when responsibility for consequences is avoided. Adam and Eve put the blame on the

serpent. Despair occurs when a person runs away and hides after being aware of what had happened. Adam and Even ran away and hid behind a bush. They were enslaved by denial and bound by despair.

When Adam and Eve turned away from God they "blocked" the God-dimension of the human beings and tried to live in "flatland," the land of survival, not of life. Therefore to restore the "God-dimension" and connect it to the "dimension of self" and to the "dimension of other" means to restore the image of God in the human being and makes the human being whole. This restoration is the goal of the process of suffering. This is the journey Dunne describes.

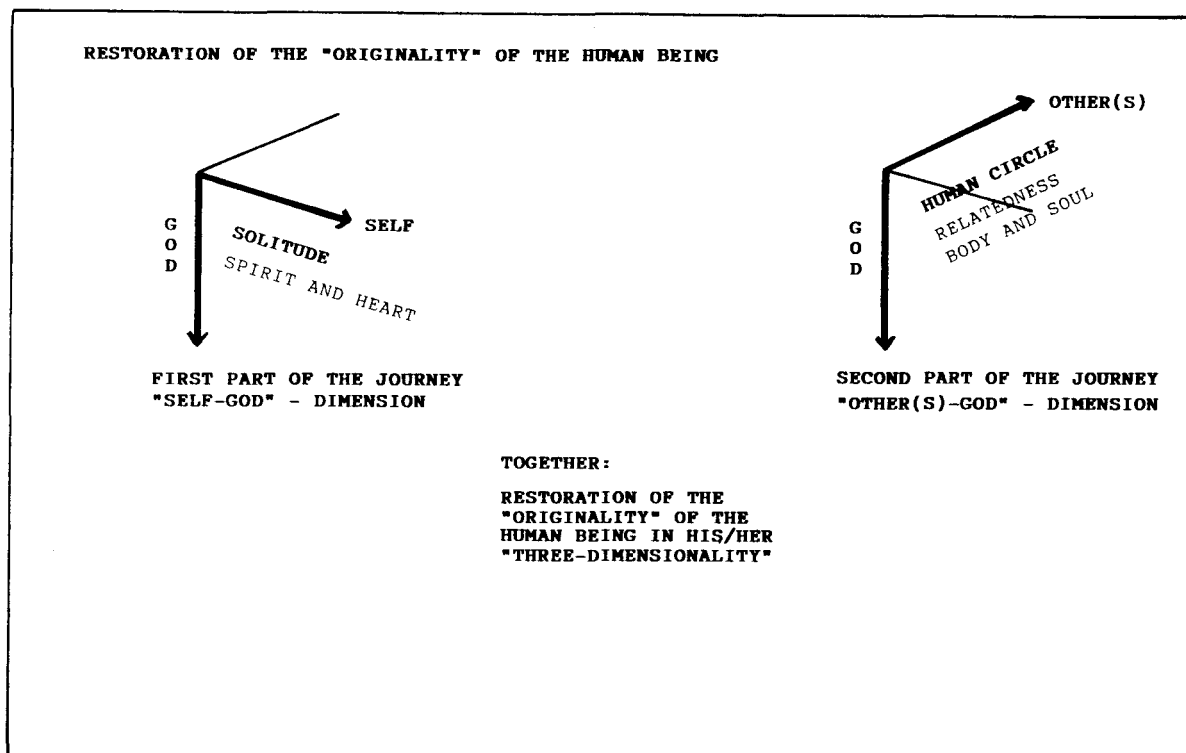


Figure 15

In Dunne's "case study" the man first chooses to go inwards. "Let us imagine a man setting out on a journey to the source of his being." (Dunne, 1978, p. 4) The reason for crisis at the start of the man's journey is the experienced loneliness of the human condition. What kind of concrete crisis the man is experiencing is unimportant. Yet he must be hit hard, because this describes the inner core of any crisis situation. In this loneliness man experiences a longing. The loneliness is the fact, the experiencing of loneliness creates a longing in the person. This longing is suffering. At this point the first decision is to be made, the decision to let oneself experience that longing or to deny it. The man in Dunne's story does not deny it. His choice is to listen to that longing. So he withdraws from others, goes into solitude. He goes into his self. He chooses the journey inward "to the source of [his] being." (Dunne, 1978, p. 3) By this decision he transforms his suffering into something "to live for." (Dunne, 1978, p. 5) It becomes apparent that this longing is an energy which is already transformed into hope in the moment he sets out on the journey, because by starting a meaning-making process, the person has already found a goal, an interest, something to live for. Hope has entered his life. The longing, the bundled energy of suffering, has dissolved the dead-lock of nothingness when the decision is made to go on a journey.



This energy received in suffering changes the man's life, because the anticipation that something may happen has already changed his life. "God's will is no longer simply what happens to him. It is rather an adventure that he is to undertake." (Dunne, 1978, p. 5) The man is entering into God's will. Here at the very outset of the man's journey, it becomes clear that the search for self is intertwined with the search for God. By making the decision to enter into the process of journeying, the person opens himself to possibilities, and so prepares himself to be met by God. Denial is a "closing-up," a no to possibilities. Therefore, it is deadly because it denies "being."

The next danger the man has to watch out for is that he can become "trapped in the self" (Dunne, 1978, p. 5), i.e., he can become stuck somewhere on the road. To get stuck means to give up hope that someone exists who can understand him. This is despair, which tempts him to give up his adventure.

Right from the outset Dunne shows the basic dynamic of suffering which we encounter within each step over and over again. There is a crisis (an experience of loneliness), followed by suffering (an experience of longing). This calls forth a decision either to try to make meaning out of it or to deny it. If the decision is made to make meaning out of it, the process of transformation has begun, the journey has started, one is on the way to "do" the will of

God. On the journey we encounter the second basic danger which is the danger of "giving up," of not enduring, the danger of turning around when the going gets rough, or to forget to go on and to end the journey prematurely. This can happen for example when a place lures one to stay for rest indefinitely, and by following that invitation to stay, the final goal is forgotten. The result is that one becomes trapped in suspension, which leads ultimately to despair, to a cut-off from God.

In Dunne's case study the man endures in his adventure, and so his "languishing becomes love. It...becomes powerful." (Dunne, 1978, p. 7) He finds in himself the way to the heart, he encounters God. He has the sense of doing the will of God and of being in touch with God.

The man...has already passed from the common notion of God to that of a God who leads one on the spiritual adventure...To enter into the great circulation of God, to let oneself be carried by the love is to let oneself be led by God, it is 'to know for certain that you are fulfilling the will of God.' (Dunne, 1978, p. 7/8)

In his spiritual adventure the man experiences:

a) **Who he is**, because the spiritual adventure gives him his story. Here he receives the message,

of what he has to communicate to others, his insight into his experience. In its most inward form, as that of a spiritual adventure, it is the story of the meaning he embodies in his life and death, the story of what he incarnates. (Dunne, 1978, p. 12)

b) **What God is**. The man recognizes that God is spirit, because his experience takes place in the realm of the human

spirit. "It is the experience of a God who kindles his heart and illuminates his mind, who leads him on a spiritual adventure." (Dunne, 1978, p. 31)

c) On this journey the man finds out that he can UNDERSTAND and LOVE. His longing turned to love, the love which "is the excitement of the spiritual adventure,...the excitement of understanding and loving." (Dunne, 1978, p. 8)

d) The man receives INSIGHT. The treasure the man brings back from this journey is insight. It is the true mind's vision after the loneliness in his heart has been transformed into love. It is as if the man sees everything with different eyes. Or one may say that he has won a different perspective, because he went beyond "flatland" guided by the energy of suffering. In a two dimensional world, in "flatland," jumping is an unthinkable movement, yet in a three-dimensional one it is a simply ordinary motion. In "flatland," two two-dimensional creatures can be separated by a line which they could jump in the three-dimensional world. In the three-dimensional world things can be "over"-come or "under"-stood, because there exists an "over" and "under," while there is no "over" and "under" in "flatland." If we see "flatland" as living on the "surface," or as living in "survival-mode," we may understand what suffering does. Suffering is the energy which helps us go into the life-space, away from the surface.

This is what insight is all about here on this part of the journey into the self. When the man found insight he saw things differently. Not that things changed; his vision changed. For a person who is without insight, "God is how things stand" and "How things stand is God." (Dunne, 1979, p. 21) It is as if one would say that a line cannot be jumped, forgetting to mention that this is so only in "flatland." For example, in a crisis, a person without insight may say that God wanted it that way. (Dunne, 1978, p. 26) Here the tree of "mix-up" has its roots and the serpent is believed. This is the world of despair, the world of absurdity. God becomes "domesticated." (Dunne, 1978, p. 21) For the man with insight everything looks different.

"Every facet of the human condition is transformed by being in touch with God." (Dunne, 1978, p. 21)

It amounts to saying that the will of God cannot be simply read off from facts or events but must be discerned, must be found through insight, through the kindling of the heart and the illumining of the mind that occurs on the spiritual adventure. (Dunne, 1978, p. 21)

To find that new dimension in oneself is a long process. One has to face the terror and anguish of the loneliness over and over again, and one has to wait until it is transformed into love. It is a process of going out and being met by God, a process of longing for insight and receiving it, of loving and being loved by God as spirit. Insight happens by suffering it through. At the end the man

sees his own death as holding some "ultimate insight." The process of getting insight is,

going through the experience of suffering by accepting the pain and the sense of loss and emerging for it by letting it purify the heart, ...going through the experience of situatedness by accepting the circumstances of one's life and emerging from it by coming to a new relationship with one's circumstances. (Dunne, 1978, p. 26)

The outcome is the insight: "All things are possible." (Dunne, 1978, p. 28) To get there is not easy. It means that conflicts and circumstances will have to be suffered through. Yet the heart's desire is transformed in the end into a joy that is deeper than agony.

Dunne speaks in this context of "passion." This passion is the willingness to go through, is the energy of suffering which knows that it is fulfilling the will of God, resulting in the joy, a feeling of being loved and understood by God. This is the man's gift that he experiences to be known and loved by God and with this his loneliness is changed into love, i.e., "the kindling and the illumining of the heart is a human experience of God's love." (Dunne, 1978, p. 50)

We come to an unexpected turning point. The man who decided to go out into solitude finds God. Yet he experiences that this God is not a solitary God. As the man finds out that God is love, he also finds out that love cannot be contained. At this point in his journey he is reminded of the other road he left behind. He is reminded

that he is not only a solitary person. He is also a social being, a person who is meant to be intimate with another human person. The man in Dunne's case study experiences at the end of his solitary road a relational God: "The love coming 'from God' is the human experience of the Father, going 'towards God' is the human experience of the Son, and being 'of God' is the human experience of the Holy Spirit." (Dunne, 1978, p. 51)

The man recognizes that though it is very tempting to stay, there is a second part to his journey he has to travel, the journey "back again into the human circle." (Dunne, 1978, subtitle of The Reasons of the Heart) The man has come to being known and loved by God, yet he is "veiled from himself" (Dunne, 1978, p. 57), because his longing for intimacy has not yet been fulfilled. He is now able to do so with God as "his undestructible foundation." (Dunne, 1978, p. 63) If he wants to become whole, experience the total life, he has to go on. So far he only knows the life of a solitary man; now he is attracted by the unknown life within the human circle. This new life is like a fear of death for him, "for the unknown life is seen as the end of the life he knows." (Dunne, 1978, p. 85) The man encounters here the great danger of being trapped in the life of self, which does not want to make the jump and embrace total life. It is the danger of denial, of closing up, of saying no to hope and no to possibilities. The solitary man can find out

about his neediness only when he re-enters the human circle. The willingness to walk alone enables the man to walk the way into solitude; the willingness to admit his neediness to another human being enables him to take the way back into the human circle.

As the longing changed into love, so here in this part of the journey the willingness to be in need changes into hope for fulfillment. The first decision to go into solitude can be compared to Jesus' decision to go into the desert and find God there. The second decision to go back into the human circle can be compared to the decision Jesus had to make in Gethsemane.

In Dunne's case the man risks the next part of the journey and finds another person, a woman. I do not want to go into the story of the woman. She also seems to be a person in search for meaning. She also has to face all decisions and dangers the man does, yet the order is different. The story of the woman tells us that there can be variations in the order of how the parts of the journey are travelled through, yet the parts are the same.

In the second part of the journey, the man finds his soul. He has to experience loss before his relationship is transformed. He himself becomes whole and finally is able to enter into an "I and "thou"- relationship with God, "When I find a new life in another person, I begin to

reverse the whole history of separation." (Dunne, 1978, p. 140) In the second part of the journey the man experiences:

- a) **Who is God**, because the relationship with another person is more apt to tell him who God is than what God is. He finds an "I and thou"- relationship with God.
- b) **What He is**, because in the relationship with another person he finds out about his needs and his neediness,
- c) The man finds out about LETTING GO, about a DEATH before death. This letting go is the process of integrating his heart's desire with his love for the other person. So he has to pass through the extreme loneliness which occurs when he loses that person in order to come to a new relatedness with that person himself and with God. This can only happen when he lets go, when his relationship with the other person is not "flat," is not possessive, is not superficial, but is an intimate relationship of letting go, but not letting down. "If I do let go, I become heart-free and heart-whole" (Dunne, 1978, p. 140). Yet this letting go is done in hope.

I let go in hope of recovery. I am like a sick man on his deathbed who is willing to die and yet hopes to live. I am willing to let go of the person and live the life. Instead of giving up in despair or fighting on in desperation I am letting go in hope. (Dunne, 1978, p. 141)

The journey is complete. The basic capabilities of the human person have been integrated, the one to be alone, the other to be with others. Both roads have finally led to God by going through suffering and learning how to die in various ways, by choosing hope and not falling into



the pitfalls of denial and of despair. The outcome is threefold:

1) The man's heart has become whole.

2) He is now ready to enter into the relationship of the person he has lost. "There is a healing joy in the hope of recovering that person and the new life." (Dunne, 1978, p. 142)

3) Now he is able to give his

heart entirely to the journey with God. I give my heart to the journey with God in solitude...and then also to the journey with God in the human circle. I relate to God through my relationship with myself...then also through my relationship with others. (Dunne, 1978, p. 142/142)

And he enters into the "I and thou" with God through suffering by accepting and enduring his journey. "I pass with Jesus through death to life when I come to terms with the basic...certainty, 'I will die' when I let it stand too within the eternal 'I and thou'." (Dunne, 1978, p. 142)

Here, as in the first part of the journey, by going through death, a different perspective of the human relationship is won, a new dimension is gained. The relationship with God gives man the proper attitude, the "whole-heartedness" to relate in a life-giving way. The man Dunne describes has become a man of Easter. "For I have the experience of being heart-free and heart-whole in the human circle only in relationship with God, only in an 'I and thou' with God." (Dunne, 1978, p. 143)

The man at the end is a human being with insight and an "I and thou"-relatedness to God who has used the energy of suffering to become whole by following his journey into solitude and into the human circle.

If I follow my heart's desire, it will lead me into solitude, into a relatedness with myself, and it will lead me into the human circle, into relatedness with others, but it will lead me ultimately, both in solitude, and in the human circle into a relatedness with God. (Dunne, 1978, p. 144)

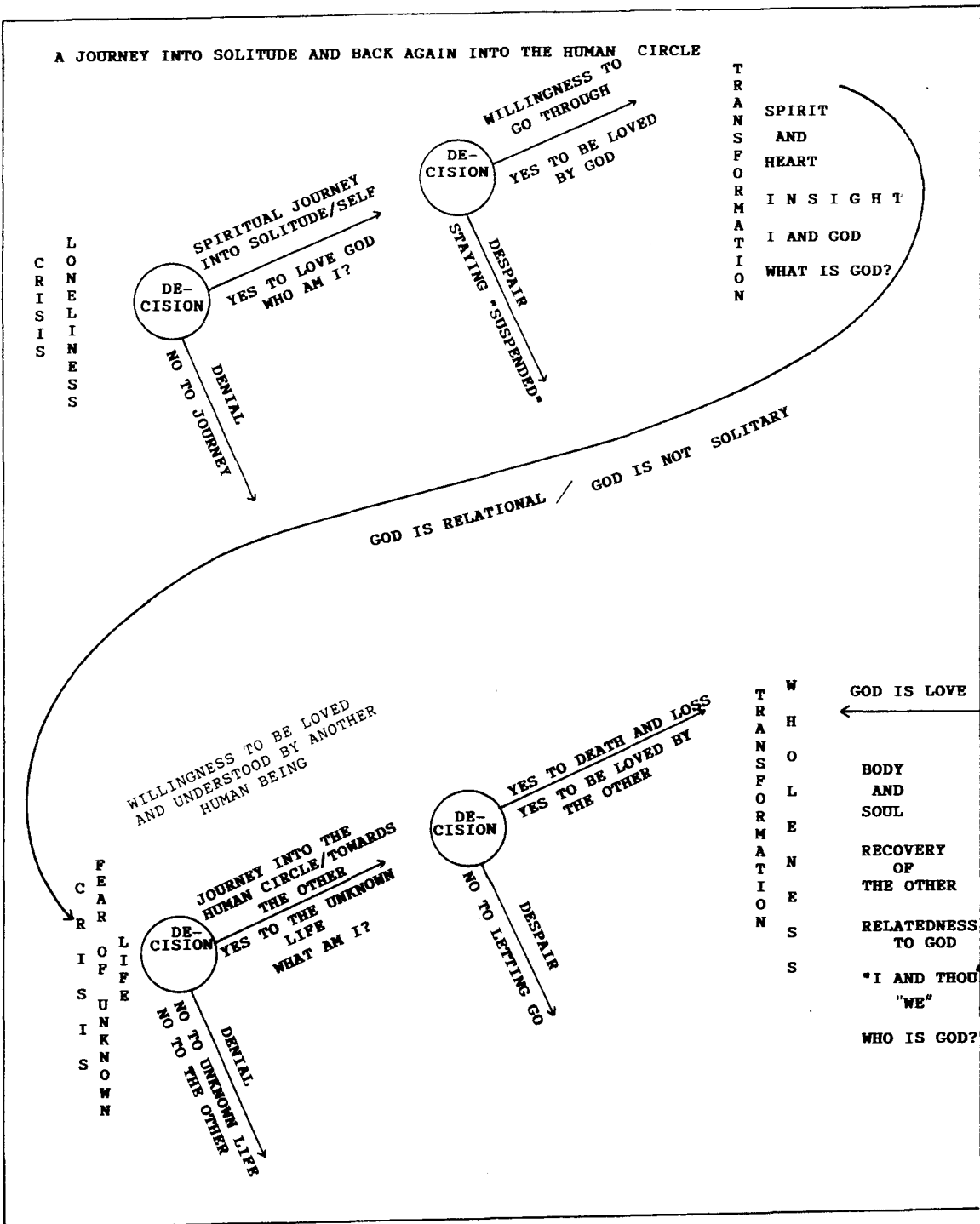


Figure 16

CHAPTER IV  
SUFFERING- ENERGY TOWARDS BECOMING  
A TRANSFORMED BEING

In this chapter I will restate my thesis, explore it in the psychological and theological views presented in my paper, and will try to find an integrated view.

My thesis could be summarized as:

SUFFERING IS:

- 1) an experience which makes us aware of our essence of BEING; therefore it is an energy which gives us the courage to BE;
- 2) a process of BECOMING; therefore it is an energy which directs us to become who we were meant to be, an energy of hope;
- 3) a process in service of transformation; therefore an energy which directs us beyond our limits towards love.

Ad 1) Suffering brings us in touch with our boundaries as humans. The psychological paradigms I described see suffering as catalyst, necessary confrontation, tension between ego and self out of which the opportunity for individuation, a higher level of being arises, an opportunity which releases the ego from slavery, activates

the self, provides the condition to live in a more authentic fashion and opens the possibility to go for "selfhood."

The theological views here presented stress that suffering brings us to life through the awareness of death and boundary situations, or as Dunne puts it, makes us aware of the dilemma of choice and lets us feel our loneliness. Both the psychological and theological views express that the crisis or experience of the human being's situation of suffering as such is "positive" because it brings us in touch with the basic truth of our being. It is an awakening to how things are. The difficulty consists in that it challenges us to leave known territory behind and to go and follow a road we do not know because safety and comfort turn to fear when we do not know what to expect. Therefore fear is the natural response at the onset of a crisis and courage is needed to go the road of suffering.

Ad 2) Going through the process of suffering is the most important part of suffering, as it determines what and who we become. We do not have any influence on the happening of a crisis or its intensity, yet the response to it is determined by us. The response, not the crisis, determines our destiny, a fact which is often forgotten. The one who suffers, not the event which caused the suffering, decides his/her destiny. Individuation or stagnation, life or denial, hope or despair are the choices of the sufferer. Both psychology and theology agree on that. The process to

follow the cues of the self given via the transcendent function hand the responsibility over to the sufferer. To consciously choose the self-regulating process of the psyche, to trust the self, to go through death experiences of the ego is a process of self-determination. Suffering is an active process. It is not a process of becoming-a-victim of a crisis. Therefore, human beings are meant to become free through suffering, not victims to unpredictable events.

The process of suffering is an interior process, not to be judged by the outer appearance of the event. Suffering as active process can be avoided (denial) and/or aborted (despair) but not without seriously harming the human being involved and the community around him/her. The paschal mystery and the human condition, the process of adaptation and evolution, are intrinsically part of our humanness.

The "theological model" of how to go through the suffering process is Christ. His life's journey, his being on the road, his mission and his way of the cross toward his death and resurrection can be seen as an example of active becoming. Yet Christ's suffering stresses another goal of the suffering process, which is suffering for others, "suffering in relationship", redemptive suffering. This points to the deep connection of suffering and love and its link to the "three-dimensionality" of the human being, because in the case of redemptive suffering, love of self, others, and God merge. In Dunne's "model" of the process of

suffering, we find the connection of suffering to love, the connection to the "three-dimensionality" of the human being, and therefore "suffering in relationship" becomes a vital part of that process. On the road of becoming many choices are to be made. These choices are to be taken seriously, as Rahner says, because each choice determines the kind of death we die, our ultimate choice. Dunne emphasizes the importance of the process of suffering by leading us through the stages. He describes the hardships to be endured to gain insight and relatedness to self, others, and God.

Ad 3) Suffering is a goal-directed process, yet the goal is hidden from us in the sense that it can be experienced only after the process has been completed.

In psychology the goal can be called individuation, evolution, selfhood, making conscious what was unconscious before, making meaning. The goal is a transcendent purpose in life. The yearning for that goal is planted in us, as Mudd says, by an early experience of blissfulness, when ego and self were united. It is a yearning for wholeness, for unification.

Theology describes that goal as transformation through resurrection, a re-establishing of our "three-dimensionality" of love, which is love of self, others, and God. This transformation is an invitation to enter into an "I and thou"-relationship with God, which then can be transformed into a "Wir-Gemeinschaft" (cf. Muhlen, 1969), a

"WE" with God. This we can do only, as Dunne says, after we have gained insight and let ourselves be transformed by the heart.

It is obvious that psychology and theology are distinct disciplines, which

represent two language worlds that interpret human experience from quite different core images. [The theological paradigm] conceives of a theistic world grounded in a personal God, a relationship with whom is the purpose of human life. The behavioral sciences hold a humanistic world view lacking that theistic end goal. (Anderson, 1987, p. 24)

Yet I believe that this distinction, if it leads to a separation, is harmful, especially when it comes to topics like "suffering," a limit experience of the human being. If we want to have a chance to even try to understand, for example, suffering, the wisdom of both disciplines are needed.

Rahner builds a bridge between psychological and theological concepts in his articles "Anonymous Christians" (Rahner, 1974, T.I. 6) and "Anonymous and Explicit Faith." (Rahner, 1979, T.I. 16) He develops a theory around the concept of "anonymous faith." He defines it "as a faith that is necessary and effective for salvation, but which occurs without an explicit and conscious relationship to the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Pembroke, 1990, p. 71) This concept is an extension of Rahner's "supernatural existential factor," which says, that,



Humans do not operate on two distinct drives- one towards purely natural fulfillment and the other towards the vision of God. Rather, human existence is graced existence...The fact of the supernatural existential means that there is no aspect of human action in which God's grace is not communicated to us...God's grace is involved in every human act of knowledge and freedom.  
(Pembroke, 1990, p. 71)

Rahner's concept points to the fact that psychology and theology deal with one and the same experience, although they ask different questions. It is crucial to ask all important questions, especially when faced with a story of human suffering. When it comes to crisis situations, the transcendent dimension of a human being is touched and cannot be left out because by the very dynamic of suffering, the deepest self, the meaning of life, the question about God is stirred up. A psychology which denies that does not deal with the core of suffering. A theology which does not recognize that a person who struggles through suffering to become him/herself is dealing with his/her relationship to God is blind to important manifestations of God's grace. It is important to see "that in completely accepting oneself and in becoming conscious of one's unlimited transcendence- even though this conscious is nonthematic- one is accepting God." (Pembroke, 1990, p. 72)

Courage is a word often used in psychology, faith a word used in theology. Yet the distinction between courage and faith is impossible when it comes to death experiences. "If the whole person is involved in the courageous act of

facing up to the challenge of self-realization" (Pembroke, 1990, p. 73), and he/she takes the risk to go for that "final goal of life,...then what we call faith, in theological terms, is already present." (Rahner, 1979, T.I. 16, p. 23)

Therefore we come to the conclusion that it is not only possible to go "back and forth" between the psychological and theological paradigms but that this is necessary if we want to come to a deeper understanding of limit experiences of the human being.

I believe that Dunne's model of the process of suffering is the most inclusive and universal one, because it contains and weaves together many different insights and links different concepts. Some of them are:

- 1) Suffering is a basic process of becoming, which is universal. The man Dunne describes has no name, i.e., he represents "everyone," and he is a man who follows his heart's desire.
- 2) Suffering is a psychological and spiritual process. Dunne links psychological and theological concepts. The search for self, for meaning and for God is the same quest.
- 3) Suffering activates gifts of the mind and heart (insights and emotions),
- 4) Suffering has a basic pattern. (It starts with a crisis, followed by a decision to deal with it or not. If denial is

excluded the suffering process begins. Then another decision follows, the decision to endure or to give up. When despair is excluded, a death experience follows which finally leads to transformation.)

5) The process of suffering is a process we have to go through over and over again. In every process the energy of suffering can lead us into two different directions, into ourselves and towards others. Therefore in the overall pattern of suffering one can discern two substages, which are determined by the direction the energy of suffering was followed. Though the pattern in each substage seems to be the same, suffering manifests itself differently in the two substages. It takes on a different quality.

There is the suffering in solitude, where the man connects to his self and God, and then there is the "suffering in relationship," where the man connects to "the other" and to God. Both parts, though different, have the basic pattern of the suffering process, which means that suffering originates from two different ultimate concerns, the death and the isolation experience. That is, suffering can occur in solitude or in relationship.

6) The connection between the two different parts of the suffering process is "God's character," because in solitude the man finds God; he finds out "what God is." But God is a relational God. So the man is "propelled" into relationship

because he realizes that only in relationship can he find out "who God is."

7) Suffering is a quest for love, because it starts with a yearning for love and ends with the gift of love.

8) Suffering restores the human "three-dimensionality" because by enduring the journey the connection to self, other, and God is restored. That is, both parts of the journey have to be completed before we become whole.

9) Suffering is the way to become "whole" and to find God and these two goals are the same.

My integrated view of the process of suffering is primarily based on Dunne's model of the process of suffering because it can be seen as inclusive of the other models. I believe that it is important to recognize the basic pattern of the suffering process, but I also believe that it is important to see that our journey to become ourselves and to find God has two basic components. This fact is also expressed in the psychological systems here presented. For example, Jung addresses this fact when he states that individuation happens by relating to others, and Yalom does when he names isolation as an ultimate concern. Dunne stresses the importance of this kind of suffering when he follows the man in detail in the second part of his journey. Suffering from and with others is as important as suffering in solitude. In reality both "kinds" of sufferings are interwoven and go hand in hand.

One could say that Dunne in his description of the process of suffering draws a map for us so that we can place ourselves where we are in the process of becoming. In reality the two parts of the journey may happen at the same time or in different variations, yet follow the basic map.

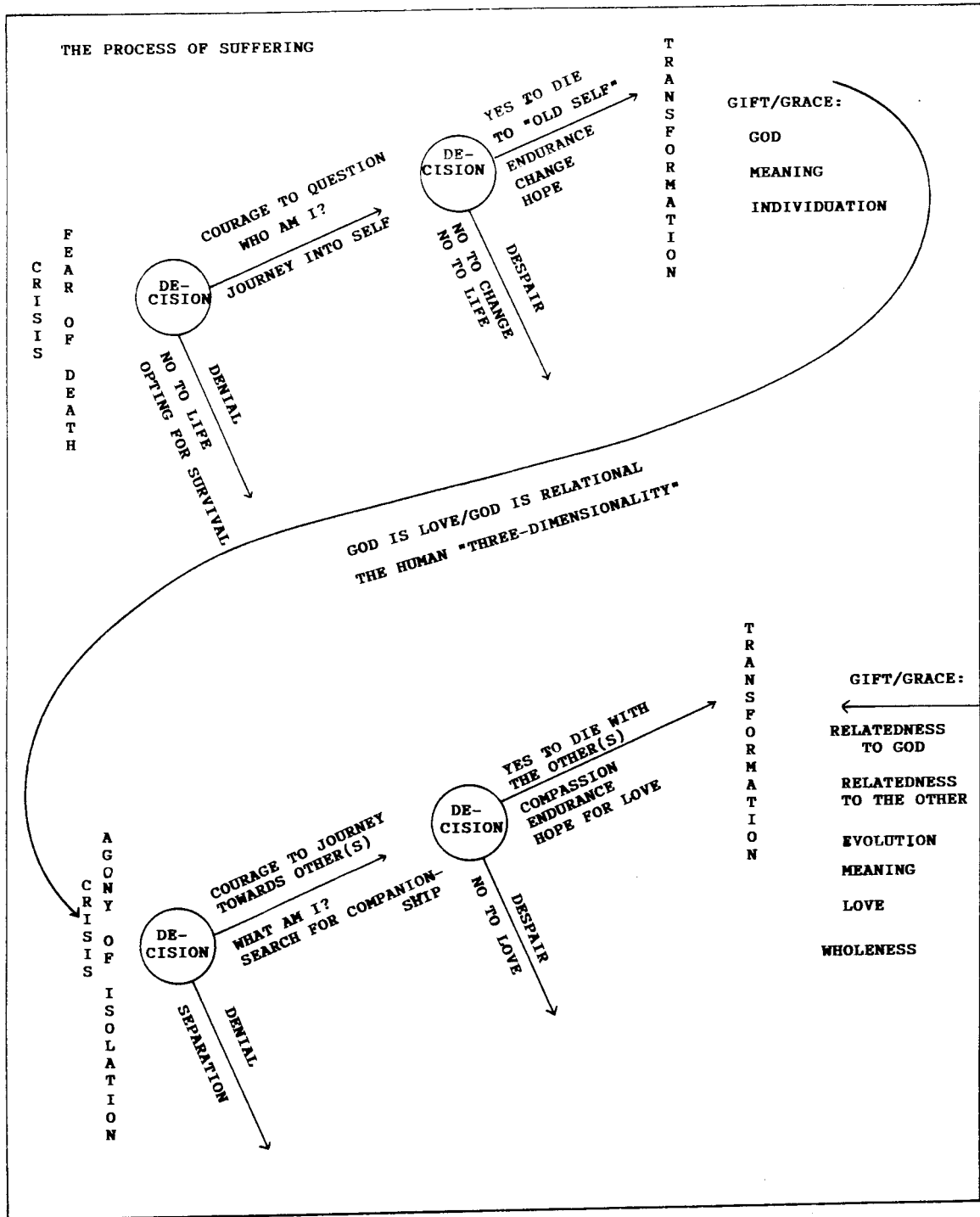


Figure 17

Figure 17 depicts my integrated view of the process of suffering. It could be seen as a "map," which may be helpful to find one's location in the process of becoming.

Dunne's man is anonymous. The people I encountered in my early childhood years when I was a refugee had names. Some names I knew, most I did not. The people I met were in different stages of becoming. The suffering was at times so great so that what is normally an inside story became a story for all to see. Also the reactions to suffering became so extreme and obvious because the suffering was extraordinary. And in addition the normal structure of comfort of home, church, friends, relatives, stable conditions, work, etc. was taken away, so that the reaction to suffering was amplified. Reactions varied. Some withdrew into themselves and chose the solitary road in the midst of chaos. Some denied reality and pretended that nothing had happened. Some laughed and made jokes when someone died. Some despaired, and some killed themselves. Some suffered with others and for others. Some were always ready to help. Some shared their last piece of bread with a stranger. Because the war was a crisis which affected so many people at the same time, the process of becoming, the process of suffering, brought many people to a different level of existence. The question for meaning and for God could be heard everywhere. People discussed their belief openly. People prayed on the road. Some cursed at God.

Some mocked people who believed. Some denied God's existence. Some lost their faith. Some started to believe. Some helped in the name of God. God was dealt with in one form or another.

In an extreme situation like war, it becomes apparent that a person's sanity depends on how he deals with the question of meaning, of God. In an extreme situation it becomes nearly impossible to brush this question aside and turn to daily living. Death is too close. If someone started to lose courage, i.e., faith, in the war situation, chances were slim that the person could endure. It became obvious that life depends on one's "God-dimension."

Whenever a person is conscious of dying, wherever pain is experienced, there too one's earlier certainty about God is destroyed...[People] have experienced Gethsemane, the fear of death, but also the conquest of all fears in the place in which the cup of suffering is drunk to the bitter dregs. (Soelle, 1975, p. 82)

Dunne's man, as said before, has no name. But his name could be Kim Malthe-Bruun. He was a Danish sailor, who belonged to a resistance group

and at the age of 21 was shot to death by the Gestapo on April 6, 1945...In a letter from January 22, 1945, he wrote: The teaching of Jesus should not be something that we follow just because we have been taught to do so...At this moment there comes to me, as one of the profoundest truth I have learned from Jesus, the perception that one could live solely according to the dictates of one's soul. (Soelle, 1975, p. 82)

And at the end of March 1945 he wrote "I have often thought of Jesus. I can well understand the measureless



love he felt for all men, and especially for those who took part in driving nails into his hands." (Soelle, 1975, p. 83)

Kim was a man who went through both parts of the suffering process. He went into the soul and back into the human circle. He met God in Jesus in his soul and in others. And his letters tell us that he entered into an "I and thou"-relationship with God.

## CHAPTER V

### PASTORAL COUNSELING- THE ART "TO BE WITH"

This chapter consists of two parts. In the first part I go back to my own story and as an example of an application of the pattern for the process of suffering highlight the different parts and stages of my journey. In the second part, the major part of this chapter, I go back to my phenomenology of suffering and show that especially the pastoral counselor has to develop his/her "three-dimensionality" as much as possible so that he/she can counsel his/her clients successfully. And I explain pastoral counseling as the art "to be with." Finally, applying the pattern which was developed in the paper, I point to those characteristics and attitudes of the counselor in the different stages which in my view are most helpful to the process of therapy, i.e., suffering.

I. I realize that my journey has a pattern similar to the one of the man Dunne describes. The experience of my brother's death confronted me with his death and my own mortality. It took me two years to get my courage together to come to Chicago and also enter therapy. I had said yes to the journey into my self. The next decision followed quickly. I decided for long term therapy when I realized

that my journey had to lead me deep into my self so that major discoveries even when painful could take place. I said yes to that, too. And though it was a painful insight to recognize how wounded I was, the full extent of my suffering fortunately stayed hidden from me. The first major transformation happened when I started to realize who I was. A new meaning was given to me for my life when I felt called to become a pastoral counselor, to be with people who like me struggled and suffered in different ways.

I needed to get out of my isolation and to share my story with people whom I could trust. I did and I shared on a level on which I had never shared before. I recognized my neediness and sought out an unknown life, leaving the security of my "old life" behind.

Yet that was not enough yet. Relationships had to be worked through, old attitudes and patterns of relating had to be questioned. Letting go of parts of my persona, of projections and also relationships felt like dying. Transformation happened bit by bit. The experiences of my past started to become a gift. When for the first time in his life a client who had been in the Korean War dared to share his terrible experiences in the war with me and ended with the sentence that he had no idea why he felt understood, because "people who have not been there really could not understand," I realized that something had happened. And finally my image of God which had been

distorted by the experiences in my childhood is also now finally crumbling, giving way to an experience of God as Love.

II. People who come to pastoral counseling are people in crisis, people who suffer. Therefore the question arises, how can the ideas presented in this paper be of benefit to the practices of pastoral counseling?

I believe that pastoral counseling is an art. A good artist has two major elements to work with, his craft and his creativity. Both elements have to enhance each other if good art should be the result. Yet the creativity of the artist must be in the end the leading part. It has to become the inspiration which employs the craft wisely. As an artist I spent many hours just learning how to mix colors. I produced piles of sketches in order to explore the juxtaposition of colors. But those sketches were not works of art. Only when I felt reasonably sure about being able to handle the techniques, these techniques became what they were meant to be, i.e., tools. My focus shifted to the important part of being an artist, I was ready to become creative.

Integration, I believe, happens when that shift of focus takes place. Techniques and skills are of vital importance and always need to be attended to, yet they will never be the focal point of counseling. This paper is about the inner process, the focal point of what goes on in

counseling, the process of suffering. While this paper deals with the understanding of suffering as such, it also helps us to focus at the same time on the core "events" of the process of counseling. And it also prepares the way to gain insight into the appropriate attitudes and responses of the counselor in general and at the different stages within the counseling process in particular.

In the introduction to "Existential Psychotherapy," Yalom tells a story about a cooking class, where the "surreptitious 'throw-ins' made all the difference" (Yalom, 1980, p. 3) between an imperfect and a superb dish.

Formal texts, journal articles, and lectures portray therapy as precise and systematic, with careful delineated stages, strategic technical interventions, the methodical development and resolution of transference, analysis of objects relations, and a careful, rational program of insight-offering interpretations. Yet I believe deeply that, when no one is looking, the therapist throws in the 'real thing.' (Yalom, 1980, p. 3)

In this chapter I would like to look at the "throw-ins", because I believe that they give life to the counseling process and make it an art.

In the last chapter I summarized suffering as:

- 1) an experience of BEING.
- 2) a process of BECOMING, and
- 3) a process in service of TRANSFORMATION to a higher level of being.

Referring to this summary the question arises, how can the pastoral counselor promote the corresponding "positive"

attitudes, i.e., the openness of the client to the different stages in the process, which I believe are:

- 1) the COURAGE to "be",
- 2) the COURAGE and HOPE to "become", and
- 3) the HOPE to be "transformed" by "LOVE"?

The question arises for the counselor: which "throw-ins" of the counselor are vital and helpful to that process, or what is asked from the counselor during that process?

Ad 1) I believe, that if someone comes to counseling he/she is in pain of one sort or another. The "throw-in" which makes all the difference is the "being" of the counselor; nothing less will do. "No intellectual system, but direct experience only can counterbalance the blind power of instincts." (Jung, 1928, C.W. 6, p. 51) The counseling process can become a life-giving experience only when it becomes an encounter of two people who connect with their "beings." Only then may the client find the courage to "be," where "courage is self-affirmation 'in-spite-of,' that is in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming itself." (Tillich, 1952, p. 32) Nothing can replace that encounter. This encounter is unique, because two unique people are involved and meet at a particular point in time, yet at the same time this encounter has universal characteristics, because it takes part in what is the greatest gift of any person, i.e., that he/she "IS", and that the "being" is good. This "being" is good, because it

is a direct expression of the imago Dei in him/her, because "being" is the gift of God's creative action. If there is any hope that the pastoral counseling process is "going to work," it presupposes that the counselor is in touch with his/her own being. What is asked from the counselor is more than having learned skills and techniques. It presupposes that the counselor has been and is true to his/her inner journey and has been and is open to his/her own process of suffering. It is the counselor's own journey which makes the counselor empathic to the client and reminds him/her of the fact that he/she cannot take suffering away. Sometimes it is possible to alleviate some circumstances which cause painful situations that are not necessary, but there is no way to eliminate suffering. When a child has been murdered, a wife is dying of cancer, a boy has been abused, there is no way that the facts can be changed or denied. Yet that does not mean that we have to give up. Here the insights from the previous chapters help us to prevent getting stuck in "how things stand." (Dunne, 1975, p. 21) The change from "how things stand" to "God is that all things are possible" (Dunne, 1975, p. 25) can only happen by someone's "being-present." "Christ himself can only be understood in terms of presence. Christ is not the one who comes to tamper with humanity. Christ is the one who comes to be present to humanity." (O'Connell, 1972, p. 61) When we really "are," i.e., are present to ourselves and to God in that moment,

and we meet someone and open up to that other person's being, the "being" of self changes into a "being-with".

Ad 2) The pastoral counselor is not only asked to "be," but to "be with." This "being-with" though flows naturally from the "being", if the "being" has developed along the imago Dei in us, because the "natural action" of God, who is the "I am who I am," is to love, i.e., to be in relationship. Therefore when we connect to the core of our being, we find, so I believe as Dunne does, the God-image in us which opens us to the "being-with-the-other."

This "being-with" is an intense form of care. "Care is a state, in which something does matter...It is the source of ...human tenderness." (May, 1969, p. 289) The "being-with" of the counselor states: "I care!" In that moment that situation of suffering, the crisis has already changed. Externally not much seemed to have happened, and yet the context is different. In one form or another we all have experienced that care can change everything, because that care is able to confront denial and despair. To cry when in isolation and to cry when someone holds you caringly can make the difference between despair and hope. By doing that we live out of our "three-dimensionality" of relating and so recreate our "originality", i.e. we become more how God had meant human beings to be.



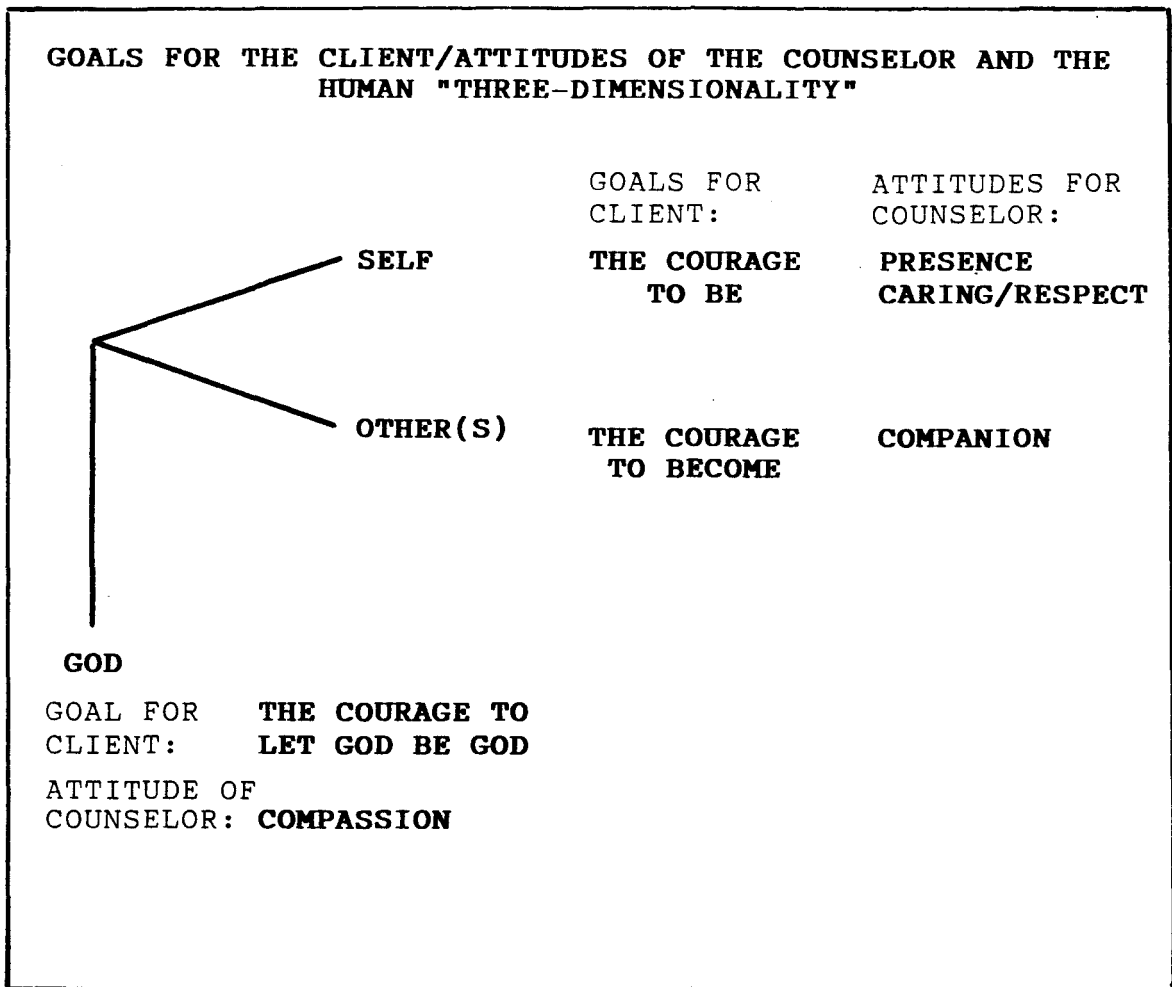


Figure 18

This mystery of "being-with" can only unfold in respect. Respect for the separateness and dignity of the client is essential. This precarious balance of being "sensitive to the suffering of persons in the midst of intensive struggle without being drawn into the struggle itself" (Estadt, 1983, p. 5) has to be kept and watched out for by the counselor. This balance can be kept only if the

counselor lets God be God, because if we let God be God, we can rely on God and don't get sucked into a state where the limits of separateness become fuzzy and caring becomes ineffective.

Without a caring relationship between client and counselor the counseling process cannot happen. Martin Buber believes that "in the beginning is the relation" (Yalom, 1980, p. 364) and he speaks of the "I-Thou" as being the highest kind of a relation. I believe that at the beginning of any counseling process there has to be a relationship, and it is the "I-Thou"-relation which has to be aimed for, a relationship, where "if one is to relate truly to another, one must truly listen to the other: relinquish stereotypes and anticipation of the other, and allow oneself to be shaped by the other's response." (Yalom, 1980, p. 365) Striving for the "I-Thou"-relationship, opens the door so that a new reality can happen, a reality where God is present.

This happened on the road to Emmaus when Christ joined the two apostles who were on the road to their "becoming." When Christ joined them, everything changed because their reality had become new and hope had evolved. Therefore in order to encourage the client in the process of "becoming", the counselor-client relationship must instill hope.

Hope comes close to being the very heart and center of a human being. It is the best resource of man, always there on the inside, making everything possible when he is in action, or

waiting to be illuminated when he is ill. It is the most inward possession, and is rightly thought of...as still there when everything else has gone (Lynch, 1965, p. 31).

This hope is an existential hope, a belief in the goodness of being, and therefore is able to oppose evil, which as said before, is the threat of "non-being". Hope is generated by "being-with," by companionship. This "being-with" opposes by its very nature denial and despair, the traps of the journey.

To be a companion means to use the two basic gifts we have as "enfleshed spirits," which are "our words and physical presence." (Westley, 1989, p. 14) To be a true companion can demand a variety of tasks, and the specific task will depend on where the client is at a particular time and what he/she needs. Companionship can include temporary mothering for example. It means carrying necessary projections. What Mudd says in the following about the analyst and analysand is also true for the counselor and client. "For the projections to take root as a viable transference the analyst must demonstrate, not by doing but by being that he/she can carry the projection and so constellate hope in the analysand." (Mudd, 1990, p. 139) In this process the counselor becomes the mediator of life, like a 'psychological heart/lung machine'" (Mudd, 1990, p. 139), "the analyst's fundamental task then is to keep the patient 'alive' while simultaneously helping the patient to learn how to die." (Mudd, p. 138) I remember when I was a

refugee that sometimes a person just wanted to give up. "No more! I don't want to go on any more!" was the cry. When there was no one who cared, that was the end. That person was left behind to a quite certain death. Yet when he/she was "lucky", when there was someone who cared, someone who carried that person's bag which contained the few belongings he/she hung on to; someone who dragged him/her along with whatever, at times even rude words, there was hope. Most of the time the person who wanted to give up recovered and after a while went on by him/herself. It is essential to bridge these gaps, when despair attacks, when fear of death strikes hard. These are the moments when it becomes apparent that "evil will be vanquished, but only through the efforts, the generosity, the commitment of man." (O'Connell, 1972, p. 63) Hope consists in that there is a way out, even if it is very painful to go that way.

The act which flows from the authentic "being with" as companion is- as creation flows from God's being- the creativity of finding ways of how to be with the client in the most appropriate fashion. To be a companion means "that man has the ability to respond to the situation" (O'Connell, 1972, p. 68), to respond to the client's needs under various circumstances so that he/she can remain hopeful,- not inflated, but hopeful. The pastoral counselor becomes like Christ, a "pontifex", a builder of bridges over gaps of despair.

Herein lies the possibility of the emergence of the transcendent function and with it the hope of personal authenticity. This process is nearly always mediated through the transference/countertransference relationship whose most essential element is the living example of the analyst. (Mudd, 1990, p. 138)

"In actual practice, therefore, the suitably trained analyst mediates the transcendent function for the patient, i.e., helps him to bring conscious and unconscious together and so arrive at a new attitude." (Jung, 1916/57, C.W. 8, 74) What it comes down to is that the "being-with" is the basis on which the different ways of assisting the client are built on. The "how" of this "being-with" will be determined by the given situation. It can mean for the counselor to be pontifex, mediator. It can mean to be a midwife: "The analyst...can now assist in the rebirth... of the personality but should act only as a midwife might when she leaves as much to nature as is humanly possible." (Mudd, 1990, p. 140) All these various ways are expressions of an authentic and creative companionship. To break the bread (panis) with the client means to share with him/her the bread, whatever it is like. The process of being a true companion puts a high demand on the pastoral counselor. This is, I believe, only possible, when counseling is a matter of the "heart," because it is there where insights occur, creativity is inspired. It is in the "heart" where the client experiences that he/she is not alone in his/her suffering. Through the companionship the "I-Thou" has

become a relationship, where God is present, because at the center of the heart there is God, as Dunne describes it.

Because God is in the relationship of the counseling process- explicitly or implicitly- the pastoral counselor mediates also the relational being of God, and therefore leads the client back again into the human circle.

This process of holding through the acceptance of the self projection, stable dosing response and therapeutic dying leads from transference pathology to the eventual emergence of kinship libido which can be re-imagined as the recognition of the common fate of mortality and the empathy that results from that shared recognition. In death we recognize our utter equality. (Mudd, 1990, p. 140)

An important characteristic of true companionship is humility and it is vital to know that we are all equal on the road of "becoming." Therefore it is important to realize that it is necessary for the counselor "to be diminished in direct proportion to the analysand's increasing development of a stable ego/self axis." (Mudd, 1990, p. 140) What is asked here from the counselor is to be ready "to die," too. The companionship is an accompaniment by the counselor of the client on his/her way of the cross. The counselor has to go all the way, too, and is asked to accept his/her own kind of death so that the client may live in freedom. This is an imitatio Christi or, as Sears says, "Each human relationship deepens and broadens the heart of Christ as it reaches out to the other." (Sears, 1984, p. 33)

Ad 3) The ground is laid for transformation to happen, and companionship turns into compassion. Mudd says: "In death we can recognize our utter equality" (Mudd, 1990, p. 140), which means that death itself leads us out of our isolation into a new understanding of "being," of "being-with," and of "God's being." This understanding can come only from experiencing it, when the energy of suffering is transformed into an experience of love.

But...there is an opportunity for a direct experience of one's own death in witnessing the death of others. But this is granted to us only on a single premise. The premise is love...And what is imparted to the lover faced with the actual death of the beloved person...is that he himself experiences this death...He is accorded an experience which comes close as humanly possible to the dying person's experience of his own death. The word 'lover' should not be misunderstood in romantic terms...we are speaking of that wholly selfless affirmation which can be read in the eyes as they gaze upon the beloved, an affirmation which says. How good that you are! (Pieper, 1969, p. 20-21)

This love here described can be called compassion. Through this compassion the client and also the counselor are transformed. Compassion instills hope, because it becomes an experience of love. The possibility for transformation is created, because where love is, everything is possible, and evil has no chance because love transforms and endures everything.

In November 1945 Father Gebhard Bierbaum died in prison camp Number 404 in Marseille, France in the arms of my brother. His last words to my brother were: "Die Liebe

uberwindet alles (Love endures everything)." (1. Cor. 13:7)  
This was Gebhard's response to cruelty and torture. He had overcome evil by love. Both my brother and Gebhard were changed, "transformed", in that moment.

Referring to the "model of the process of suffering" at the end of the last chapter, I would like to suggest here a similar "model", in which I would like to indicate corresponding characteristics, attitudes which I believe are asked from the pastoral counselor at the different stages of the process of suffering, which is the process of counseling, the process of BECOMING.



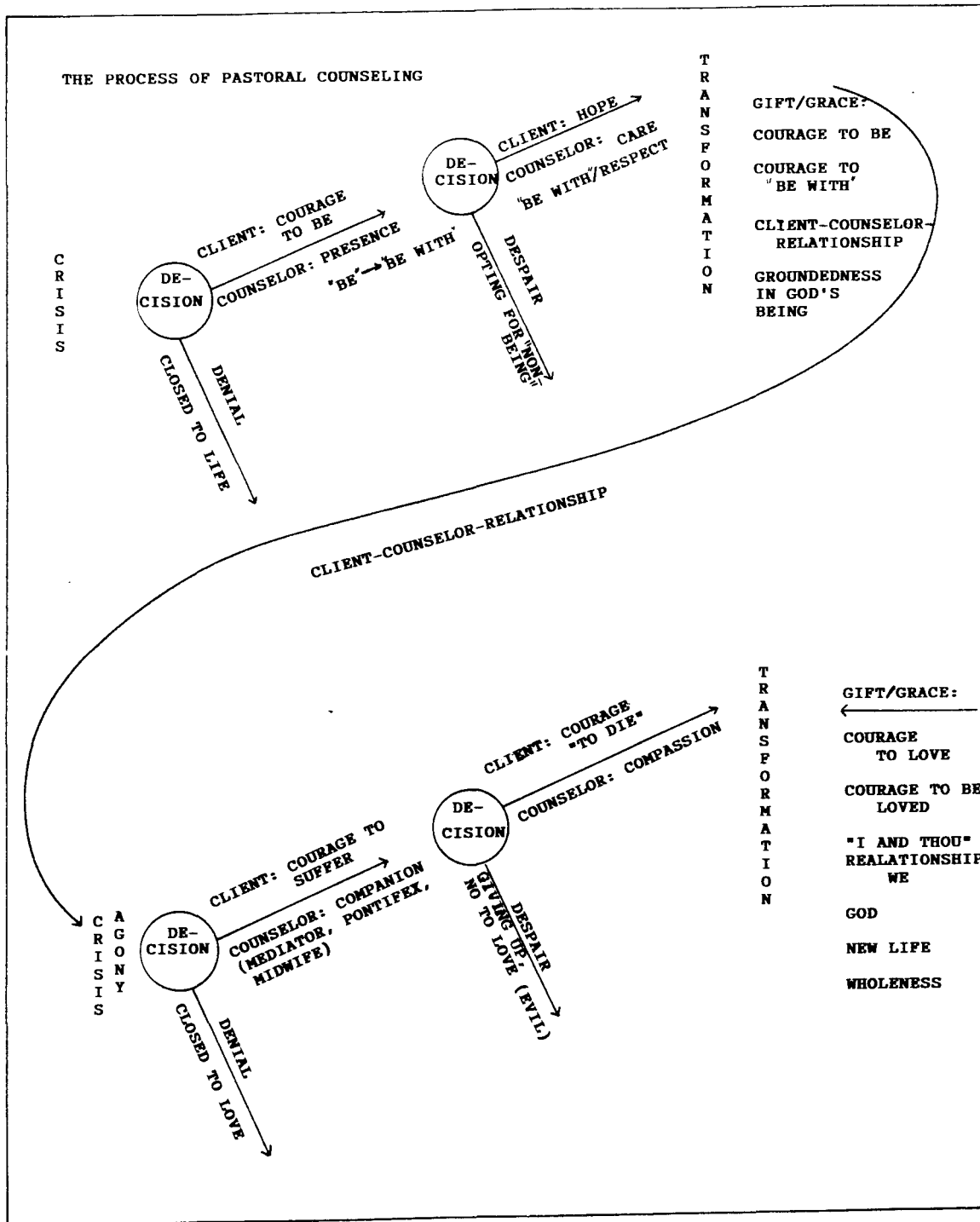


Figure 19

I feel a deep kinship with people, who are "on the road," with people who are in process. I have finally come

to realize that my early childhood experiences, even though they have been very traumatic, presented me with a gift. The gift is that I feel called to be companion to people who are hit by crises and are in an inner or outer turmoil of suffering. There are many forms of suffering, many forms of imprisonments, which I cannot deal with in the context of this paper. My companionship will have to take many forms of expressing itself depending on what kind of suffering I encounter. Yet I believe that there is a similar underlying pattern, the one found in this paper, in the various forms of suffering. Now I recognize that my past can become a source for empathy, true companionship and compassion, a source for a true "being with." For a long time I felt imprisoned, isolated by my wounds, my childhood experiences. This is no longer the case. My experiences of cruelty and suffering do not isolate me any longer, but direct me towards people. Therefore in my own life I am travelling- as Dunne's subtitle of his book The Reasons of the Heart reads: the journey...back again into the human circle.

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## VITA

Ingrid Erika Poller, née Eisermann was born on June 23, 1941 in Kattowitz, now Poland, then part of Germany. She is the youngest and only daughter of three children. As a young child she witnessed the horrors of the end of World War II and its aftermath, when she was a refugee for almost three years. These years left a deep impression on her. After her parents resettled in Dortmund, Germany, life became more normal.

Ingrid obtained her elementary and secondary education in Dortmund, Germany, where she also attended the Schiller Gymnasium graduating in 1961 with "Reifezeugnis" (B.A. Hons. equiv.). Starting in 1961 she pursued graduate studies at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany and the Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck, Austria. In 1964 she received a State degree in Philosophy and Education and in 1965 a State degree in Mathematics and Geography (M.A. equiv.). In 1965 she entered the Staatliches Bezirks-Seminar in Dortmund, Germany and received in 1967 a postgraduate degree in Education/Psychology (M.Ed. equiv.).

Ingrid married in 1964. When her first two children were born, she put her career on hold to care for her children. In 1968 the family emigrated to Canada and lived for fourteen years in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

From 1969 to 1971 Ingrid was Lecturer of Mathematics at St. Mary's University in Halifax and from 1970 until 1972 she pursued graduate studies in English at St. Mary's



University and Dalhousie University in Halifax, where she completed all the required courses towards an M.A. degree in English.

Three more children were born and the family moved to Digby, Nova Scotia, living on a farm. The next several years were spent at home to raise the family.

In 1982 the family moved to Newfoundland. From August 1983 until August 1988 Ingrid was replacement teacher at Bishop O'Reilly High School in Port au Port, Newfoundland. In the fall semester of 1985 she was Instructor of Art and Design at the Western Community College in Stephenville, Newfoundland, and from January 1986 until 1989 she was Lecturer of Mathematics at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook, Newfoundland.

During the summers of 1988 and 1989, Ingrid took courses at the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University of Chicago. In 1989 she enrolled there in the M.A. Pastoral Counseling program.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by INGRID ERIKA POLLER has been read and approved by the following committee:

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of MASTER OF PASTORAL COUNSELING.

13 July 1991  
Date

  
Director's Signature