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"The Frozen People"

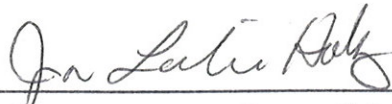
A THESIS

The Honors Program
Saint John's University

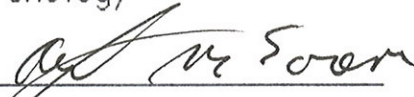
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Distinction "All College Honors"
And the Degree Bachelor of Arts
In the Department of Psychology

By
Andy Holly
May 1994

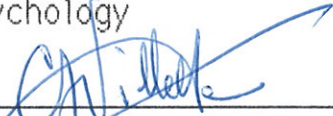
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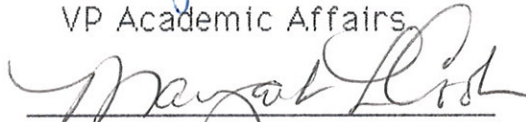
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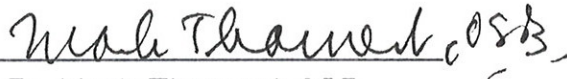
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Part One

The Anxiety of the Human Condition

In his book, "The Denial of Death", Ernest Becker claims that the basic conflict for any human being is realizing the beauty and truth of the human conscious experience (known as the soul), while at the same time realizing that this amazing experience of existence is cased in a body whose materials are worth "Approximately 98 cents" (Becker 23). Becker goes on to claim that Freud had it wrong when he said that the main conflict for the child is the Oedipus conflict, rather he claims that the real conflict for the child is to balance out these two seemingly paradoxical facts. The fact of the interior, personal experience of the world, and the fact of the material, vulnerable body. I agree with Becker that this is a very deep struggle for children, and I also believe that this conflict does not end after childhood. Throughout all their life, people experience themselves as special, and in my opinion, believe deep down that they either are, or should be immortal. Perhaps this is the reason that so many philosophers and religions have considered the possibility of life after death, despite the real lack of emperical evidence to back up the possibility . We consider life after death because deep down everyone

believes that some part of us is too special to die. To quote Irving Yalom "Deep down each of us believes ... that the rule of mortality applies to someone else, but certainly not to ourselves" (Yalom 34)

In Yalom's wonderful work, "Existential Psychotherapy", he develops much the same idea as Becker. He divides the person into the spiritual part of us that is self aware, and that can at least dream of immortality, whether or not it can reach it, and the physical body that is destined to be food for the worms. Yalom goes on to describe a system of defense mechanisms (which he considers to be in the same categories as Freud's mechanisms) which have the purpose of defending the ego (or the self) from awareness of the nature of death. An example of one of these is the idea of personal specialness. Personal specialness is a defense mechanism that helps us to resolve the paradox of body and soul. It consists of the individual believes in the specialness of the self, so much that they do not really believe they are going to die. He quotes Tolstoy's short story, "The Death of Ivan Illich"

"In the depths of his heart he knew that he was dying, but not only was he not accustomed to the thought, he simply did not, and could not grasp it."

"The syllogism that he had learned from Kiezewetter's Logic: "Caius

is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal" always seemed correct as applied to Caius, but certainly not as applied to himself. That Caius-man in the abstract-was mortal, was perfectly correct, but he was not Caius, not an abstract man, but a creature quite, quite separate from all others." (Yalom 49)

Ivan Illich believed so strongly in his own specialness that he was unable to reconcile the idea of the self and the idea of a mortal human nature. Like all great art, this story of Ivan Illich has become so popular, I believe, because it has struck a chord with common human experience. Ivan Illich was able to understand that the faces he saw on the people he met everyday were human faces, and that someday those faces, those people would die. However until it was forced upon him, he could not connect that to himself. In western philosophy, this struggle with death has been commented on by many different philosophers. Heidegger speaks of "The impossibility of further possibility" (Yalom 34). Soren Kierkegaard speaks often of the "Dread of non-being"(Yalom 34), while Karl Jaspers talks of the "fragility of being"(Yalom 34)

Becker, Yalom, Tolstoy, and all these philosophers all speak about a crucial point in existentialist philosophy: Death anxiety. According to Yalom, death anxiety is just below the surface of the consciousness,

rarely ever seen, but affecting many if not all of the decisions that we make. In my mind, however, death anxiety is the tip of the iceberg. Death anxiety is only one way that we experience anxiety. Anxiety about death is perhaps the largest, or at least the most obviously existential anxiety that we have, however it is only one of many different types of anxiety.

Let us now define exactly what anxiety is. Anxiety is closely related to fear, however anxiety is much different than fear. When one has a fear, one is afraid of something. Fear always has an object that one is afraid of. One is afraid of an on coming car, or being laid off because of company cutbacks. Anxiety, on the other hand is the experience of being vulnerable to a potential threat. In other words, fear is an emotion that we feel when we are aware of threats to something that we value, anxiety is the emotion (or perhaps state) that we experience when we are aware that something we value has the potential to be threatened. Paul Tillich puts it nicely when he says "anxiety is finitude experienced as ones own finitude" (Tillich 56). Because we are finite, we are vulnerable, and all that we have or are is subject to death and destruction. Tillich is saying that when we are aware of the fact of vulnerability, we are experiencing anxiety. In a way anxiety may be considered a fear, however consider it as fear of everything, or a fear of nothing, or even consider it a fear that has

no object. Kierkegaard has a useful, if confusing phrase that sums this up. Anxiety, he says, is a fear of nothing but "Not a nothing with which the individual has nothing to do with." (Yalom 74)

Here will be a good place to give an example to help clarify what I am talking about. Anyone who has ever raised a child is very aware of what anxiety is. I used to laugh when my mother told me that after she gave birth to me, she would check on me several times a night, just to make sure that I was still breathing. I thought that was paranoid, until I took care of my baby sister for the first time, and found myself checking on her several times during the night, even though there was no real reason to believe that she would be having any problem. That feeling was the purest feeling of anxiety that I have ever felt. I had no idea what could have happened to her, I was simply aware that something could have happened. I was afraid of nothing in particular, and I was afraid of everything. My fear had no object. I was aware not of any tangible threats to her safety, rather I was aware of her vulnerability to threats

Human beings are always trying to make anxiety into a fear, as Kierkegaard said "The nothing which is the object of dread (anxiety) becomes, as it were, more and more a something." (Yalom 67) Rollo May puts it even simpler when he says "anxiety seeks to become fear." (May 87)

A person who has anxiety will look for Physical and real ways in which the object they value is threatened. In my personal example that I gave above, my anxiety I felt for my sister (and no doubt the same anxiety that my mother felt toward me) made me very watchful for any real threats towards my sister. When she could crawl, I made sure that she was very careful around stairs, when she could ride a tricycle, I made very sure that she did not go into the street. In this case my anxiety about my sister's safety motivated me to do something to be as sure as possible that she would be safe. Once I had specific fears that could be dealt with my anxiety turned into fear, fear that could be dealt with and that motivated me to do something specific.

However it is a very serious mistake to believe that anxiety can ever totally become fear. As Alfred Hitchcock said "The unexpected, by definition, cannot be prepared for". There are always forces outside our control. To continue my example from above, If I had tried to control all of my anxiety about my sister's health, I would have locked her in a room, only feeding her. However even that would not have stopped the possibility of cancer, for example, or that the house could catch on fire. Anxiety can be controlled and managed, but it can never be defeated.

How anxiety is experienced is the next question. I have already

mentioned one way, Death anxiety. Other authors list other ways. Tillich says that "there are types of anxiety according to the ways in which non-being threatens being." (Tillich 87) So if anxiety is an awareness of our vulnerability, of our potentiality of our non-being, any way in which we see ourselves would have to have the converse of seeing a threat to ourselves. Tillich has three different ways in which non-being threatens being, the anxiety about death (which threatens our life), the anxiety of responsibility (which threatens our freedom) and the anxiety of guilt (which threatens our self appraisal). While I personally believe that this is a very interesting, and useful list. I will not make my own for three reasons. First of all, to make a list is dependent on a paradigm of human nature. It is only after deciding what human nature is, that one can make a full list of how that being is threatened. I am not prepared in this paper to give a paradigm of how the human person works. Secondly, individuals differ so much that often making a list is just assuring that someone will show you how they do not fit in. The more that one tries to pin individuals down by lists of what should be, the more the individuals break out of molds. Finally, culture has a great impact on how one see one's self, so I am not prepared to make statements that might fit this culture that would not fit another culture. My own personal way of answering the question of

in what manner does anxiety affect us is to take Tillich's general statement that anxiety affects a person when they see the possibility of non-being affecting their being. Individual cases are best left decided on an individual basis.

Next we move on to the question of individualization. The question here is what does it mean to go through the process of individualization, and how does that relate to anxiety.

Part Two

Individuation and Anxiety

I would like to begin this section with a quote from Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Anna's husband, who has suddenly become jealous of his wife's affection towards another man. This jealousy strikes him as offensive to his wife, because he learned early on that "one" is not supposed to be jealous of his wife. Anna's husband has lived his life as a dry bureaucrat, who has spent most of his life by doing what "one" (the impersonal, and stereotypical human) is supposed to believe. This is how Tolstoy describes the experience.

"He felt that he was standing face to face with something illogical and irrational, and did not know what was to be done. Alexey Alexandrovitch was standing face to face with life, with the possibility of his wife's loving someone other than himself, and this seemed to him very irrational and incomprehensible because it was life itself. All his life Alexey Alexandrovitch had lived and worked in official spheres, having to do with the reflection of life. And every time he stumbled against life he had shied away from it. Now he experienced a feeling akin to that of a man who, while calmly crossing a bridge over a precipice,

should suddenly discover that the bridge is broken, and that there is a chasm below. That chasm was life itself, the bridge that artificial life in which Alexey Alexandrovitch had lived. For the first time the question presented itself to him of the possibility of his wife loving someone else, and he was horrified at it." (May 86).

Alexey is caught between the pain of the jealous feeling that he has for his wife, and the feeling that he has that one should not feel this way. All his life he has been told what a husband should be and what a wife should be, and for the first time he is realizing that the answers he has lived all his life by might not be all true. He was not the only one who understood the relationship between a husband and a wife to operate this way, in fact his entire culture had a common understanding of what the relationship between a man and a woman should be. Despite the fact that he was not supposed to feel jealous, the facts of the situation made him do so.

I believe that everyone who grows up within a society will sooner or later experience this same struggle between the way they were told things would be and the way they are. Usually it begins during the teenage years, when a person first realizes that everything they were taught is not necessarily true. This is when the process of individuation

begins. Individuation is the process of changing ones personal self reference from the formal, and stereotypical "one" to a personal and changing "I". In other words, it is the process of finding out about the self as distinct, with personal beliefs and experiences that are different than anyone else in the world. If this sounds complicated, all it means is that everyone in the world is a different person with a different genetic makeup and different personal experiences. The process of individuation is the process of understanding that the world sees you in a way that may not agree with the way you see yourself, then trying to live you're life according to you're own rules. For example, an artist might have to defy the will of his family and friends to pursue his dream, if his family has always seen him as a businessman . Another person enjoys intellectual pursuits, that person will try to find work in some pursuit that will allow them to do just that.

This finding out about the self, as opposed to what others see you're self as is the process of individuation. On the surface this process seems like a very simple struggle. However as I hope to show, it has many layers. The top layer is very simple and obvious. This top layer of fear that prevents us from becoming ourselves is the persecution of those around you whom you are different than. Human beings have a need to have

societies and groups that we can be broken up into. These groups serve as a way of having a common experience that all the members of the groups can share. A great example of this is the gangs that we find in so many high schools. The members of these groups have shared common values and habits, these gangs are in effect a very small society. In any society, whether it is as big as the United States, or if it is as small as these high school gangs, anyone who falls outside the expected way of acting or believing is a threat to the way things are. This is why so many great people throughout history have been outcasts, because greatness is achieved by being one's true self, and that is always (or at least very often) in conflict with what is expected. That is why anyone who is trying to be true to themselves is going, to a greater or lesser degree, to be an outcast. The probability that a person will fit neatly into what a social circle expects of him or her is very small. We all have little quirks, and different things that make us unique; If we are true to this uniqueness, we will destroy the stereotype of how someone should act. This will inevitably bring persecution from those who have accepted what the social group has decided that the "One" (the impersonal and stereotypical man) should do, and in doing so have denied their own uniqueness.

It is important to understand why almost every person (and please

realize that using generalizations when speaking about individuals is very dangerous, because there will be someone who will destroy the rule.) Will be somewhat different that what they should be. That is because these social meanings that are derived by people are derived by common experience. Using the example in Tolstoy, the society that Alex was in got the notion of the husband and wife that he was familiar with, because that was how many people commonly experienced the relationship between husbands and wife. Likewise, in our society, we have commonly shared notions of what it means to be married, and how married couples should relate to each other, and those also come from generalizations that many people experience about husbands and wives. The reason that these generalizations can never be good enough, is because they are generalizations that fail to take into account the amazing difference that individuality creates, yes the common experience for married couples is to love one another, however to say that is the sum and total of the experience to completely ignore what the individual married couples needed to do to accomplish that love. For someone to come along and to expect that because I am married, we will love each other because that is what married couples do, is to completely ignore what needed to happen to get to that point. Each married couple needs to find their own way to love

each other, and doing that is a process of finding out as much about yourself as it is finding out about the other. People can never fit into the snug categories that society gives them, because these categories are much too shallow to encompass a individual.

I do not wish to say that these groups are necessarily bad things. Indeed it seems to me to be a natural human instinct to form these little social circles with people who have things in common with you. Having common languages, habits, and values makes a society (of any kind) work much smoother. However this must be balanced against the very real individual difference that people have. As anyone who has tried to "be themselves" can tell you, rejection can be a very painful experience to suffer.

Now this social stigma is the top layer of difficulty that those seeking individuation must suffer, I do believe that there is a deeper reason why people are hindered from individuation. People struggle with individuation because it is a powerful experience of the anxiety that we talked about in the first part. Individuation is the process of changing your perspective of the self from the generalized "one" to the individualized "I". The more you become an "I", the more you realize just how fragile and vulnerable your situation is. Once again, referring to

Tolstoy's husband, as long as he could consider himself and his wife a "one" in the relationship, he could feel safe that his wife loved him, because that is what a wife is supposed to do. If all his wife does is what she is supposed to do. If all she is a "one", then she will forever love him because she is supposed to. Alexey can feel safe, there is not only no threat, there is no possibility of a threat. However the minute he understands his wife as an "I", as a creative, and creating person with freedom, and sees their relationship move from an "I-It" relationship, to an "I-thou" relationship (to use the language of Martin Buber) , he must feel anxiety because the relationship is now open to threats. Individuals are open to change, while categories are not.

I would hope that the reader sees the harm that seeing this relationship as a category does to the husband. As long as he thinks his wife loves him because she should, he cannot believe that she loves him because of a free choice. He refuses himself the giddy feeling of being loved because he is, instead he is loved because he must be loved. Alexey believes he is loved not because his wife has deep feelings for him, but because she must. Although he does save himself pain by relating to his wife as a category, he also costs himself joy, and the real experience of being loved, for it is not the individual that is loved, but the category.

These social definitions do not end with an understanding of relationships, as we well know. In fact the most powerful and pervasive effect that social definitions have on us is not how we relate to others, but how we relate to ourselves. Society gives us a way to structure our own lives . It is such a large effect, and so pervasive effect, that often we don't even notice it. A great example of this is the idea of the American dream. The idea that by working hard, and following the rules will lead to a nice house in the suburbs, a great family and (most importantly) to happiness, has been a guiding light to generations. It gives Americans a way to live their life without having to think about it. Now, to be fair, every society has their own version of how to live your life. Some are more developed than others, but if you want to find out what each society wants for its members, look at its myths, and it's stories.

Not only does the larger culture have ready made meaning, but smaller cultures, the gangs, have them as well. Often this value system is so accepted by the group that the members accept the meaning as self evident. A wonderful example of this in my own peer group is the meaning of alcohol. For my peer group in particular, alcohol has a vast social meaning. Drinking is considered to be a 'fun' activity that 'cool' people do. It is my strong belief that much of the drinking that is done in college is

done not because it is actually what the individuals want to do, but because it is what they think they are supposed to be when they want to have fun. So on a Friday night, when a student has nothing to do, they will drink, because they think that they are supposed to do that if they want to have a good time. People drink both so that other people will think that they are 'cool' and 'fun' (this is the first threat to individuality that I mentioned above) and also so that they will think that they are 'cool' and 'fun'. People believe that drinking is fun, and that people who drink are fun as a category, that they will even drink when they don't want to in order to have fun.

It is my firm hope that the reader will see the absurdity of this example. Doing something that you don't want to do in order to have fun seems to me to be paradoxical. And yet people do it, because they do not want to have to deal with the anxiety of not knowing what to do with themselves otherwise. The experience of having lots of free time and nothing to do (as in our example on Friday night) is frightening because you then realize that there is nothing you want to do. There is nothing you care about enough to do. So people buy into the social definition as an easy way out. It is only when one has faced this anxiety of having nothing to do that one can begin to decide what they want to do. The freedom to choose what

we want causes anxiety because we realize that we are the ones that give things meaning. This is a powerful responsibility. The responsibility to choose one's life. It is easier to simply accept the social definitions, as fitting for the self.

Now, just as the cost in this case of Tolstoy's husband for believing himself a category was that he could never feel the joy of love, so is the cost of buying into social definitions about one's self the inability to care about anything. One is caught forever doing what you are supposed to do instead of what you want to do, because there is nothing that you want to do. The anxiety of choosing what you care about is just too much.

Part Three

Meaning and Anxiety

We now turn to the question of meaning and joy, that is how the human experience is one of finding meaning in a world without intrinsic meaning. This act of finding meaning and living a life according to this chosen meaning is what leads to the experience of joy. A more common term that may fit (but that I will not use because there are too many other connotations with other ideas) is happiness.

In his wonderful book "Love and Will" Rollo May explores the human psyche and its failures. He explores the idea of intentionality which he defines as the "structure which gives meaning to experience." Put simply intentionality is our own particular twist on the objective world that we all share in common. For example everyone sees an automobile parked with the same objective characteristics. However one person may experience the automobile as being incredibly beautiful because it is a car that they have always wanted, while another person may view the car with disgust because they owned one once and it was always breaking down. The different examples are as diverse as the number of people in the world. The point is that everyone experiences the physical aspects of the car in the same way (everyone will say that the car is blue, for example) however

the subjective experience of the car is totally different. This difference is intentionality which is "...the bridge between the subject and the object."

To get to the roots of intentionality is to get to the roots of the human psyche. "Consciousness is defined by the fact that it intends something...thus intentionality gives meaning full contents to consciousness." I believe that human self consciousness means that he/she experiences themselves as objects among many. It begins with the existence of the self and then proceeds to awareness of the surroundings and finally comes back to awareness of the existence of the self among the surroundings. What this means is that a human being is able to imagine themselves as objects within the world, at the same time as being and acting in the world. We are able to act and be, while at the same time we are making decisions about how we will act and be.

It is this reflective ability that forces us to decide about a relationship to our surroundings . We see patterns in the outside world and desire to understand those patterns . It is this ability that has lead to the foundation of the sciences. It is an attempt to find an abstract symbolic relationship between objects we sense in the environment. When we experience ourselves in the environment, we are faced with a particular

problem. With the world, that we cannot control, we see different stimuli and reactions to the stimuli. However with ourselves we see stimuli and we react to those stimuli, however we also have the power to choose how we interpret those stimuli, and thus to change what our reactions will be. This is what I believe is free will.

Intentionality is a method of creating rules that we will follow to respond to stimuli. This is in effect where the science of philosophy comes from. It is a science because it tries to create rules to govern the world that we see, however it also creates those rules. Philosophy is a case of creating rules for ourselves to follow. All too often people misunderstand and think that the rules are external to themselves.

This is what May means when he says "intentionality gives meaning to consciousness" We experience consciousness objectively through our senses but then it is our chosen intentionality that interprets(or gives meaning to) the experience. Husserl flips it around by saying that meaning is an intention of the mind, either way it does not matter. We all interpret the world through chosen meaning structures.

Perhaps here some examples would be useful. Imagining a group of people passing a beggar on the street. One person would feel strong guilt for his own life of leisure, while another would feel no pity because the

person "Deserves what they get". In the first case let us assume that the person is a devout Christian who believes that one should help the poor. Seeing the beggar in the street made him feel guilty because of his self-chosen beliefs about the poor. While the second person, who believes strongly that any person who works hard can make money, will see the beggar as lazy. In both cases totally different experiences of reality were created by the people because of different views on the situation. In the same way, these different views created different actions by the people in question.

Simply put this is the search for meaning that humanity has discussed for so many centuries, and the frightening fact of it is that intentionality of an experience is totally based upon ourselves. As I discussed in the last part, we can learn a meaning system from our parents, or church, or society, but in the end we are the ones responsible for making it and believing in it, because only we are ourselves. That sounds like a self-evident statement, but it is a very powerful one. If we do not choose a meaning or an intentionality, it will not be chosen for us. In fact it is impossible not to choose an intentionality, because without it we would not be able to act.

What is the damage with not choosing meaning. May addresses that

question also. He draws out two different areas in the human psyche, the will and the wish. The wish is the mental desire that moves us. We want something first and then the will moves us to get it. This is not much different from the Freudian scheme where the id would be considered the wish and the ego would be a form of will.

Will in contrast, is the action that leads to wish fulfillment. It is our ability to admit to our wishes and act upon them. Wish is the first step of a decision. However no wish can exist without some sort of intentionality. We need some sort of belief in intentionality to set our wishes up in. For example, in the case of an artist who sees a beautiful forest and desires to paint it. The wish is the first movement to paint, but without the meaning schema (the belief) that says that creating a painting is somehow a "good" the artist would not have the natural inclination to create the painting.

It is important to see the fine line here. The urge to create something may be an innate human desire, however the urge to do so in a painting form is a desire that is governed by our own decisions about the value and meaning of a painting. A painting is worthless unless we decide to give it meaning. So the great work of the artist begins with a basic and brave decision about the meaning of his/her art in the void of any

objective standard.

This happens in the most basic human drives. Take sex for example, no one could deny that there is a basic biological impetus to have sex. And at the same time, I don't think that it is difficult for the reader to see how an individual's particular meaning schema could determine their attitude to how sex should be incorporated into their life. However think about the basic biological reward that sex has. Is that governed by intentionality? Yes, however it is so basic that few people will have the opportunity to realize it. In the action of saying that sex is a good thing one is making a basic decision about the value and worth of their human nature. It is possible, in other words, to decide that pleasure is not something that is valuable and thus actually become sickened by pleasure. We see some of this in the great mystics and holy men of the east and the west, who are able to deny themselves pleasure because of a basic decision about their relationship to pleasure. On the other extreme of this we see the same thing but for much different reasons in depressives. The depressive decides that the self is bad, and devalues the self and actually decides that if the self is not good, than anything that makes the self feel good cannot be a good thing. This leads to the inability to experience pleasure that we see in so many depressed people.

So what intentionality does is it gives a framework in which one can experience their wishes and desires and go about achieving them. In T.S. Elliot's poem "The Waste Land" The characters are pampered and spoiled people who have nothing left to wish for. May points out that the "opposite of wish is apathy". Without the ability to care about something life is completely apathetic and dull. It is the wish that moves a person, drives them and gives them something to work for.

In fact the ability to wish and the ability to create intentionality are basically the same thing. When one creates a meaning schema for their life they are making a decision about what they thing is good and worthwhile. When one has decided what is valuable in their lives, it is only natural that they will have a wish and a desire to pursue this good. By defining something as good, you are saying that you want this thing. Wish and intentionality are flip sides of the same coin.

It is very important to realize just how individual this quest for meaning must be. Every person will come up with a completely different answer for the question of what is meaningful, simply because every person is different. Whatever a person wishes and desires is a reflection of who they are as a person, and what they have experience. This is the reason that there is no right answer. This is the reason that there can be

not static rule for what to wish for and what is not worth wishing for. It is an individual quest that cannot be satisfied, by definition, by someone else's answers.

One last example will help here, in our society we have the attitude that boys who are emotional are "sissys". Now if there is a boy who is very sensitive by nature, he will be told that for him to be that way is not a good thing. The problem with that is that he is that way. For him not to be that way is a lie. Now everyone sooner or later will face up to this because everyone will realize that he/she does not fit in to the stereotypes that have been created for them. I hope that the reader would see the connection between this and the last chapter, this search for meaning and the experience of individuation are flip sides to the same coin. The search for individuation is the search for the self; what you are, the search for meaning is the search for how that self relates to the world, and how self will act in the world. They are not seperable. One must know ones self before one is able to choose something in the world that has meaning to that self, likewise one must find how one reacts to the world and how one acts in order to find out about the self.

Just like in the case of individuation, the key reason that people do not choose meaning is because it causes a collision with anxiety. Choosing

meaning means becoming an individual, and that means looking at the vulnerability of the self. Not only that, but choosing meaning means realizing the responsibility of the person to make meaning. The individual must deal with the fact that any meaning exists only because the individual chooses to believe in it. This belief requires a leap of faith, and anyone who has faith can tell you that faith causes anxiety because by definition faith is groundless. The meaning that one chooses has meaning only because the individual chooses it. One bases ones life on a belief that has no external factual backup. Take a writer, for example, if this writer is going to devote his/her life to the art, he/she is going to have to have a belief in the value of writing, for writing's sake. If the writers goal is to achieve fame, his writing will fail because it will not be honest. If the writer wants to make truly great writing, he/she must be willing to write something that may not become popular, instead the writer will write something that he/she believes is good. To do this requires faith, a belief, in the value of writing. This faith is not based on any objective standards because writing apart from human interpretation is nothing. This belief in the value of writing is based solely on a decision of the writer. The baselessness of the belief causes anxiety.

How much easier for the writer to base his/her life on an accepted

goal, like gaining fame. Working for fame is a goal that is accepted as a good in this society. So many people work for that good and never question the value of that common belief. There is security in numbers, if you are willing to give up you're ability to think for yourself.

Part Four The Frozen People

This leads us to the reason that I wrote this paper. The Frozen People are, in the context of this paper, those people who have not chosen any meaning in their life, they have not developed any individual sense of the self, of the I. Because of this, they are living someone else's life, doing things because others have told them that those actions are valuable, never really questioning, never really knowing, what they are doing, or why they are doing it.

I would like to give the personal experience that shows where the idea for this paper came from. I sell pull tabs for a Bingo hall in St. Cloud. While I don't want to say that all, or even most, pull tab players are problem players, so many of the chronic players seemed to play pull tabs for so many other reasons that just entertainment. The look on their faces as they play pull tabs is truly sad, almost frightening. There is a real need for them to win, and the need has to do with so much more than money. Money for the players really isn't a goal, all of the chronic players who are honest with themselves know that they don't make money playing pull tabs. When a player wins early in the night, say one hundred dollars, it is a given that the player will spend all of that before the night is over. One night, a man came in with a hat of a local pizza place, he proceeded to

spend one hundred dollars on pull tabs. He won nothing. None of this was unusual at all, until he told me that he worked for the local pizza place whose hat he had on, and he had just delivered a pizza. The money that he spent on pull tabs was the company money. He left crying. This was one of the most powerful experiences in my life. I had no idea, and I guess that I still really don't know, why he did what he did. As I reflected upon it, it seemed more and more that he played tabs for the excitement, not for the money. It seemed to me that he was searching for something to give his life intensity. Sitting there playing pull tabs, knowing that he would be fired if he lost must have been his way of looking for that intensity in his life. Understand the relationship between this intensity and what I am discussing in this paper. In my experience, intensity comes from caring deeply about an event. First Love is considered very intense because it means so much to the people involved. Notice that I used the word means, coming from meaning. I believe that intense experiences are directly related to the meaning that people have regarding that event. If one is in a situation that could be deadly (like combat vets), the experience is intense for a normal person because this normal person could lose their life, which I think we can safely say means a lot to most people. I guess that I believe that the reason that these chronic pull tab players play is

because deep down they know that there is a need for that intensity in their life, however because they do not see themselves as individuals, because they have not chosen any meaning, because they are unable to face up to the anxiety of their position, they are not able to have any real intensity, any real care, in their life. So they seek substitutes, like gambling, or drugs, or sex.

Now if you look at the list that is there (gambling, drugs, sex), you might notice that these are some of the same topics that people like to talk about in terms of addiction. I firmly believe that most (if not all) addictions can be described in terms of a misguided search for meaning. Having said this, I would hope that the reader would understand that this is just another paradigm to explain the action of addiction. This paradigm has it's strengths, however does not serve as a complete understanding of the problem. Having known people that have been addicted to all of the above items, I can say that any addiction is a search for intensity, a search to give the addict a feeling of caring about something.

The question inevitably rises, who am I to judge someone else's life. Some of the people who are considered brilliant by our culture have used sex or drugs to excess, Jimi Hendrix, who considered to be the greatest guitarist of all time died of an opium overdose, writers life Fitzgerald and

Hemmingway were drunks, Keith Richards, the lead guitarist for what many (including myself) consider to be the greatest rock and roll band of all time the Rolling Stones, literally became an archetype for hedonism, who am I to say that these people are living their lives inauthentically? Well the first response I have to that is to say that it is very difficult to make generalizations of individuals without knowing the person, and what was really going on, we don't really know why these people did what they did, it is possible that for this individual what would be an addiction for anyone else is not for them. On top of that, however I think that anyone who has ever seen an addict will tell you that there is no doubt that there is something wrong. Perhaps they can't always give proof, but people can tell that there is something wrong, that the addict is just not happy. Even the addict will usually admit to not being happy, they just don't know what else there is to do. My belief on this matter is that these people caught in addictions are desperately looking for intensity in their life, but can't choose meaning, so whatever they feel is twisted by the knowledge that it is temporary, once the high is gone, life will be the same for the person.

The condition that I see these frozen people (All of them, not just the ones with addictions) is lost without any self chosen meaning. When I

say the self, I mean the individualized self, the self that is aware of being an I, being different. Only this individual is capable of choosing personalized meaning. Now to a certain extent this is all of us. None of us really know ourselves totally, life is a process of gradually knowing the self, and then translating that to action in our lives. These frozen people have stopped this search, they have stopped looking, they are stuck. Stuck in a body they do not really own, doing things they don't really want to do, living a life without joy. These people are fundamentally out of harmony with themselves because they are living a life that does not agree with who they are.

Victor Frankel described the condition of these people as "existential neurosis". Carl Jung said that over half of the people he saw for depression were suffering from some sort of loss of meaning in their life. I believe that much of the depression that we see in our country today has existential roots. Now, let the reader beware, this is a very tricky area, because there are so many different factors that lead to depression. These factors would interact with these existential roots in so many different ways that generalizations are almost impossible. Take biology, for example, there is little doubt that depression is caused in part by biology. If you add to that the many different types of depression that the

DSM lists, there are many different options. To say that people are depressed only because of existential causes is to misunderstand the facts, and to do great disservice to the depressed population.

What I can do is try to describe the feeling that this frozenness would bring about. I believe that it leads to a real feeling of apathy, a lack of motivation, that exists because the individual has nothing to care about. I also see a lack of joy. These people who are stuck are unable to experience any real joy (joy, not pleasure) because joy is a result of caring deeply about something, if you do not care about anything you may not feel anxiety about that thing, but neither can you love it.

The more that I experience and think about this feeling, the more that I realize that the exact experience is a very subtle one. Because of individual differences it is very difficult to put a diagnostic category on these different experiences. Above I said that the most important factor to look for in these frozen people is a lack of joy. Just because two different people experience the same lack of joy, does not mean that they will experience it in the same way. For example, one person might try to deal with this lack of joy by becoming a hedonist, grabbing pleasure after pleasure in an attempt to get himself and the rest of the world to believe that he is happy. While another person would suffer from a complete lack

of pleasure, they would be so depressed about the feeling of emptiness they have inside, that they would be unable to experience pleasure as that.

Also that is not to say that depression is a bad thing that results from this stuckness. One of the more wild ideas that I had, that I am not really ready to defend, but that I will throw out here just as something to think about is the idea that depression evolved in the human species as a way of forcing individuals to continue to grow in the process of individuation. When one feels depressed, it makes one evaluate what they are, and what they care about. Because I believe that this ability to structure meaning has evolutionary value, it would stand to reason that those people who had a genetic pre-disposition to grow in the experience of the self (this disposition being the depressive experience) would survive, while those who do not evaluate and do not grow would have less of a chance of survival.

The question for us psychologists is what are we to do for these people in a therapeutic setting. This is a very difficult question, because by definition no one can make you search for yourself. If the therapist attempts to force, or push their client into finding meaning in their life, often all he or she will be doing is just replacing the old way of looking at things with a new one, that is no better. The therapist must act as a guide,

as a friend, and as a person to cry to, but the therapist can never try to make the patient do something that he or she is not ready for. Remember that there is a very real reason that people do not choose meaning, because they are not ready to deal with the anxiety that comes with it yet. If the therapist does try to push, either they will fall flat on their face, because the patient will ignore the attempt, or the patient will have to face an amount of anxiety that they are not ready to deal with.

Conclusion

We're finished. I hope that I have given the reader a taste of what I see as these frozen people, and I guess that my fondest wish is that the reader will challenge him or her self to become the person that they want to become. I really do believe that is the challenge that each of us must face, especially in this world that seem to be moving more and more to some sort of 'group think' leadership, where the polls determine what is truth. I can honestly say that writing this paper has given me a better sense of my self, and as I prepare to give the finished product to my committee, I know that I have a better sense of anxiety. To the reader, I say, I hope that you have enjoyed the trip!

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