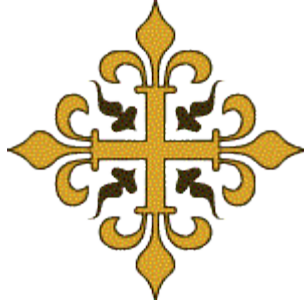


# The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 5.52

Psychology 2

Perspective • The Context and Facility of Mind



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Fourth Edition, October 2006

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Published by

The Upper Triad Association

P.O. Box 40

Willow Spring, North Carolina 27592

The Upper Triad Association is a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit educational organization established in 1974 and devoted to the study and practice of various principles leading to personal and spiritual growth.

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# Chapter 5.52

## Psychology 2



### Perspective

#### The Context and Facility of Mind

- Perspective is defined as the interrelation or context in which some object or subject or its parts are perceived (generally emotionally and to some extent mentally). Perspective is the point of view of the observer (perceiver) (thinker) and is very much subject to the bias, prejudice, and other habits of thinking and feeling that color the ways in which people see and evaluate observations and experience.
- Perception (and perspective) is (are) subject to the influence (bias) of the personality, including the relative coarseness of the physical body, the relative health or vitality of the etheric double, the relative quality (stability) (clarity) of the astral body (aura), and the relative quality (stability) (clarity) of the concrete mind (mental body).

## Attitude and Perspective

Two of the keywords associated with the challenge of life and the challenge of the spiritual path are attitude and perspective. The attitude or disposition of the aspirant and disciple contributes to the measure of success (the quality and intensity of the lessons learned) in facing the tests, trials, pressures, and crises of life on the path. If the student seeks understanding in and through all events and circumstances, and if the student faces each situation with a positive disposition, then the student is much more likely to learn and to understand the lessons offered in the experience and to survive the challenge with strength, encouragement, and a minimum of discomfort. Thus the spiritual progression of the student will be more efficient.

A person is what he thinks. The quality of a person's thinking determines the spiritual quality of the objective life. If the student enters an experience with the expectation of pain, discomfort, or failure; then he is quite likely to evoke that which he expects simply by virtue of his thoughts or fears. If the student enters an experience with idealistic expectations, then he may very well be blind to the lessons available and intended for him. But if the student enters with a realistic and positive attitude, knowing well that the inner self is equal to the challenge and that the challenge offers individual growth, then the student is more likely to achieve success and further enlightenment. The reasonable expectation of learning from all things and from all events is one of the healthy attitudes looked for in the aspirant.

The relative success of each experience rests not only in the attitudes of the student, but also in the versatility and adaptability of the student's perspective. A proper disposition will encourage learning, but it is the perspective that often determines the quality and depth of that learning. Truth can be found in all things, but truth is not absolute. A single, well-defined and narrow perspective can only encourage partial understanding. Limited perception leads to wrong or incomplete conclusions. The spiritual student needs to be able to see things in many ways, with an open mind and an open heart uncluttered by bias, prejudice, or opinion. The student must remain flexible in his thinking and in his entire approach to life on the path.

An object or event or concept can be viewed objectively and subjectively; physically, emotionally, and mentally; with the mind (individually) and with the soul (collectively); through the scientific, religious, philosophical, artistic, social, and cultural perspectives; from the microcosm and from the macrocosm; from the cause and from the effect; with interest or with disinterest; from the middle or from either extreme; from a discrete perspective or from a continuum of perspectives; inclusively and exclusively; and from one perspective at a time or from a simultaneous superposition of perspectives. There is no real limit to the number of ways that truth may be perceived, for there are more ways than there are human beings, and many differentials within each dimension. The student of wisdom looks at all things as inclusively as possible, because he realizes the dangers and limitations of narrow-mindedness and exclusivity.

The mind and the soul (individual or collectively) invoke (evoke) the experience and circumstances to be faced in any lifetime. Those circumstances may be faced unconsciously (without real merit and understanding). With healthy attitudes and broad visions, understanding replaces mystery and ignorance. The proper attitudes (disposition) and the broad perspectives of the spiritual student can meet the challenges of life and enable the soul (the thinker) to achieve the optimum experience and expression.

† Commentary No. 142

## Positive and Negative

The concept of contrast involving positive and negative elements (or terminology) is frequently encountered by the philosophical student. It is often important to be able to distinguish the meanings of each, drawn from context, since positive and negative can refer to things in several different ways, with numerous variations or implications. These may refer to good and evil, to activity and passivity, or even to something more or less arbitrary.

In the sense (illusion) (appearance) of good and evil, positive can refer to something that is beneficial, constructive, or appropriate; while negative can refer to something that is detrimental, destructive, or inappropriate. In a related sense, positive and negative can refer, respectively, to that which is superior and



inferior, ordinate and subordinate, higher and lower, definite and indefinite, qualified and unqualified (a paradox), conditional and unconditional (another paradox), real and unreal, objective and subjective, or independent and dependent. Or they may refer to an action and reaction (response), a presence and absence, or an affirmation (assertion) and denial. And yet, in each of these pairs-of-opposites there is not necessarily any sense of good or evil. So one must be careful in using these terms, to avoid the unintended implication of positive with good and negative with bad.

In another sense, there is not necessarily any correlation of positive with good. In this sense, positive and negative refer respectively to that which is active and passive, objective and subjective, or masculine and feminine. Here, masculine and feminine refer to polarity, a universal concept that goes far beyond apparent human sexual distinctions. That which is active by nature is called positive or masculine, while that which is passive by nature is called negative or feminine. The human lifewave (souls) is masculine, while the angelic lifewave is negative or feminine. A soul expressing itself temporarily through a male or female physical body may have an emotional nature which is positive (masculine) in some respects and negative (feminine) in other respects.

So polarity is not necessarily fixed or absolute. Positive and negative, active and passive; these terms usually have meaning only in a relative sense, as a plane of consciousness may be positive with respect to certain lifewaves or subordinate levels of consciousness, while being negative with respect to other lifewaves or to superior levels of consciousness. Furthermore, polarity in the sense of positive and negative is generally not discrete. There is normally a wide (continuous) range of intermediate values (degrees) between the extremes. Not all things are either black or white (rigid contrasts); many shades of gray may exist. So much depends on context and perspective. Many of the various pairs-of-opposites are actually rather arbitrary. That which is white is defined as the composite presence of light, but it may equally as well be defined as the absence of darkness. Even the so-called good and evil are not without some arbitrary implications.

Most everything involves some sort of moderation between extremes. The point or region of balance is often a matter of constructive neutrality (freedom) while each extreme remains relatively distracting. In this sense there can be

considerable variation in the point of balance (the paradox of rightness) from one individual to another, or from one context (perspective) to another. But the vagueness of diversity and contrast is resolved and simplified in the resolution of the positive and negative elements of each of the pairs-of-opposites. Greater unity (synthesis) (harmony) ultimately replaces (in consciousness and being) the lesser (temporary) realm of paradox and duality.

† Commentary No. 273

## The Human Perspective

One of the perils of the human experience is the tendency of the human personality to be centered on the objective human experience, which is misleading with respect to any greater (broader) (deeper) experience (life) (reality). Through the natural course of human development and evolution, the human being becomes self-centered (self-conscious in the lower sense) and distracted by (entangled in) the illusions of separate (discrete) existence.

This has some rather definite consequences in terms of individual human viewpoints, particularly in the unenlightened. The vision and current experience of the individual is necessarily perceived and interpreted in accordance with the self-centered consciousness and the limited, past experience of the individual. That limited experience and narrow, self-centered perspective is further complicated (reinforced) by the mass objective illusion and the prevailing beliefs in the reality (?) of the human perspective. Consequently, the individual tends to understand only to the extent of his own experience and beliefs. A person may have difficulty in understanding foreign experience (impression) since it may not correlate directly with his own. The individual will (usually) interpret all sense impression in accordance with his own familiar experience, even where such interpretations may require distortion into more familiar terms. An even greater peril (for the spiritual student) exists when that interpretation (misinterpretation) is performed unconsciously.

The spiritual student is ever urged to overcome self-centeredness and to broaden (extend) (deepen) the perspective (awareness) to understand matters in more universal (real) terms. The natural arrogance (illusion) of self-centered consciousness must be overcome if the student is to understand the greater

truths and recognize the place of all things in a greater context. As the student progresses, it becomes increasingly important for the student to understand and discern (recognize) relevance; for personal matters (the lessons or values of self-centered existence) become less relevant and impersonal matters (the interrelatedness of the whole) become more and more relevant.

The problems of the human perspective with regard to individual consciousness are similarly existent for human consciousness in general. Humanity has evolved through countless years of self-centered and human-centered experience. Consequently, any experience is interpreted (or misinterpreted) in predominantly human terms. Ordinary human experience merely sustains the illusions of human-centered existence; but extraordinary human experience is even more unfortunately interpreted in human terms by the self-centered. Thus the misunderstanding (conceit) of humanity is considerable, as the normal vision of humanity is centered on humanity rather than the whole of which humanity is merely a part. The tendency of humans to anthropomorphize or humanize the perception (or conception) of God, devas, etc. is one of many common problems in human perspective that create or sustain misunderstanding.

This problem of the human-centered perspective is basically one of wrong assumption. Man assumes self-importance and interprets his experience as if his is the only way to experience. Man assumes a great deal about his life and experience without any real basis; he tends to oversimplify his experience in familiar human (misleading) terms (in his limited (narrow) perspective). The natural remedy comes with some degree of humility (self-honesty) and the consideration of alternatives. With a broader, impersonal perspective, the student is more likely to learn the truth about existence and overcome the petty glammers and prevalent illusions of the self-centered (human) perspective.

## History and Perspective

The past cannot be accurately known via personal, (merely) psychological, or (merely) rational means, due to the bias or prejudice inherent in the human mind, its personality, and the mass (human) consciousness. That bias is the bias of personal energy (opinions) (emotional distortion) (mental temperament) and the bias of limited capability (the narrow, concrete mind) (limited experience) (partiality) (limited vision). The problem is compounded by the illusion of objective reality, the tendency of generally accepted opinions to become considered as facts (i.e., limited discretion), and the naiveté of ordinary humanity (who are enchanted by mass consciousness and tend to believe whatever is presented to them without any self-realization or discretion). The means exist, however, for humanity to overcome these limitations and achieve a (relatively) unbiased perspective on the past, present, and future.

Orthodox methods of historical research are generally quite limited (though potentially useful, as threads of truth appear throughout the historical records). Historical records reflect the bias of the individual or group recording the history, as well as the bias of the prevailing mass consciousness (at least to the extent to which the recorder is enchanted by that environmental consciousness (public opinion). Human bias is largely unconscious (subconscious) and the individual (and the group) is (generally) unaware of the entrained bias. The view (perspective) on a given history tends to change in time due to the changing perspective of the individual (which may even be at variance with others) and the changing perspectives of mass consciousness.

These changes may include some improvements, but history is still considerably distorted by perspective (both in present view and in the past (recorded) view), even though it may be reasonably objective. Where the past is not judged by prevailing (current) standards (bias), and where the limitations inherent in historical records and the limitations inherent in the researchers are properly considered, then the orthodox methods can be quite useful.

Psychical methods are largely subject to the same basic limitations of more orthodox, more rational methods (e.g., personal bias and human limitations).

Thus psychical methods (like the orthodox methods) are only of value where the consciousness and training of the individual is appropriate to the task. Psychic methods that rely on the (unqualified) personality are quite unreliable. But where the individual has achieved a properly qualified personality and where the individual has received the proper occult (esoteric) training, then the “memory” of nature can be viewed in a much more objective (reliable) manner than any orthodox, psychical, or rational means. But the price is impersonality and freedom from entanglement (freedom from opinions).

Where the memory of nature is properly accessed, the (unbiased) actuality of the past can be perceived to the extent that the individual can comprehend the panorama and properly relate that vision to the whole. This requires considerable training and self-discipline, and a broadening of the mind. With an esoteric posture, the past is not enchanting (neither is the present or the future) (the past may provide some insight, but the esoteric student is not dependent upon history; he is, rather, dependent on quality (consciousness)). The esoteric student tends to focus (broadly) more upon the present, (usually) relating to the “timestream” only in terms of purposive and causal (impersonal) relationships. The temporal perspective is not reliable; so the esoteric posture embraces an integral perspective which treats the past, present, and future as a single entity, being much more meaningful than any partial vision.

† Commentary No. 1104

## The Lower Flow

There is a not uncommon phenomenon that occurs in the lower worlds of (the perception of) “things falling-into-place” or (the perception of) “being led” to some particular and meaningful experience under somewhat magical circumstances (which may be (wrongly) considered unrealistic in terms of conventional materialism).

These phenomena are entirely consequential in nature. Through personal creativity (actions, behaviors, desires, feelings, thoughts, words, etc.) a person is continually contributing to the lower flow (karmic consequences). Yet all things (actions) are inter-related. And all things exist within a broad context of

underlying wisdom (God's grace) such that things (events) (consequences) happen according to need and responsiveness. That circumstances should appear contrived by external forces should not be surprising. Some unconsciously evoked forces (circumstances) manifest in rather subtle ways, others manifest more dramatically (e.g., in the feeling that one is being drawn to a place or particular circumstances). People accustomed to being responsive to this flow are rarely surprised by circumstances or their manner of occurrence. Things just happen naturally. God's grace is certainly a factor in these phenomena, but "God" is not personally involved nor is there any "great" significance to whatever happens.

All is governed by karmic law, yet each person functions with some degree of freedom within the karmic (consequential) field. If a person is responsive to afforded circumstances, then some lesson (assimilation of experience) (expression) is accomplished (some balance of forces is achieved). If a person is not responsive, and yet the force is compelling, then circumstances will be more forceful. And if a person is not responsive while the forces are not compelling, then that non-responsiveness will naturally contribute creatively to further circumstances (but not necessarily consistently with a sense of linear time). "Amazing" things happen all the time, yet most people are simply not aware of what is happening. And those who focus on "amazing" things tend to perceive things as "amazing" that are not generally or really so. It is as much a hindrance to learning to perceive non-significant occurrences as significant as it is to perceive significant occurrences as non-significant.

Circumstances are rarely, if ever, a matter of isolated consciousness. The flow is all-inclusive. Thus a person may attract circumstances in which he or she is afforded substantial learning (growing) (deepening) opportunity, or those circumstances may be primarily a matter of providing an opportunity for someone else, in which case a person may play a needed role (service) (with associated karma). Generally, there are lessons and roles for every participant in every circumstance. But that does not mean that every circumstance has great significance. In fact, most circumstances are not particularly meaningful. What really matters is the condition (perspective) in consciousness that a person brings to every situation.



The whole notion of things-falling-into-place is somewhat misleading, as “things” are always in place. The real balance is never substantially disturbed. What varies, substantially, are awareness and realization of the underlying forces (that are expressed within the balance). There is, however, a sense of a balance with the balance. Karma is a restorative force, a force that restores (minor) equilibrium within some broader ever-existing (major) balance. Growth occurs through contrast. Assimilation restores the balance, but the overall circumstance is always in balance.

† Commentary No. 1105

## Obstruction 1

Obstruction is the state of being (appearing to be) obstructed, constricted, interfered with, delayed, and/or hindered in a substantial way. Obstruction is potentially a very powerful experience for learning and adaptation. This may take the form of a specific and relatively brief phenomenon with “release” as soon as the lesson is learned or adjustment made, or it may take the form of a more general and longer-lasting phenomenon (e.g., transit by Saturn) with major opportunities, or it may take the form of very long-term denial of apparent freedom (e.g., incarceration).

Obstruction is a consequence. It really does not matter how it comes to be manifested. What matters is how a person responds to the obstruction (opportunity). What matters is that a person should take responsibility for the consequences (acknowledging that one has created one’s own circumstances) and be open to learning whatever lesson or lessons are conveyed through the experience. Although every person is creative, through actions, behavior, feelings, thoughts, words, etc., and although every person has inherent power to change one’s circumstances, there is no complete control of one’s life. There are always constraints or limitations of one form or another. And there is, generally, a not inconsiderable amount of conditioning that further constrains one’s apparent freedom. So what matters is how a person deals with all of this.

One approach is action, e.g., either believing that one has complete control of one’s circumstances (which is never entirely true) or believing that by taking action one can creatively manage or change one’s circumstances (which is

generally true, but not necessarily the best approach). In other words, one can confront one's circumstances, forcefully and creatively. The problem with this approach is that one tends thereby to not learn whatever the lesson is that is inherent to the circumstances, which leads to further and generally more difficult circumstances. One can, if one will, forcefully overcome one's difficulties, but unless the implied lesson is that exercise of force, then one misses the point. Furthermore, if one believes that one knows the implied lesson, then one is generally thereby impeded from learning whatever the real lesson is. Thus it would seem to be better to remain open-minded and not rely on confrontation (which is based on assumption) but rely on openness (intuition).

Another approach is passivity. One can surrender entirely to the process and allow whatever the circumstances are to dominate. This, too, is not necessarily the best approach. With passivity one tends to suffer throughout the process, by remaining vulnerable to all of the forces and conditions of the obstruction. This may indeed leave a very substantial impression (e.g., through pain) but will not generally result in conscious understanding of the implied lessons. One can assimilate unconsciously, however, but that process tends to be much more gradual (and non-dynamic) than other methods.

Another approach, the middle ground, is non-action. In non-action one remains intelligently observant, but without confrontation, without assumption, and generally without giving in to any associated pain or suffering (which is, after all, always self-induced (how one chooses to respond to circumstances)). In non-action one is open to learning, without being overly clouded by one's own biases and without being dominated by the external (obstructing) forces. Where obstruction is associated in some way with one's desires or intentions, then one can release (defer, subject to further realization and adjustment) those desires or intentions, allowing whatever lessons are needed to emerge into consciousness. Non-action is generally the more effective approach.



## Obstruction 2

Another way of looking at obstruction is to look at where one is intending to go (or what one is intending to do), and attempt to see what more reasonable alternatives there are. Sometimes the lesson is to overcome the obstruction. But more generally the lesson is to find the alternative, the more reasonable path. And sometimes the lesson is simply non-attachment, for one to not make the intended results (destination) (process) so important, thus allowing deeper, broader experience (expression) (understanding) to emerge. One's approach to the process is generally more important than the specific lessons and results to be achieved.

Sometimes obstruction has a broader context than the individual. It may be a collective process, in which one person (sincerely and/or unconsciously) plays an obstructive role that must simply be played, for reasons that may not be apparent (or meaningful) to others. One should not assume that the intended result is particularly important, nor that the obstruction itself is meaningful. But it may be. Some people are naturally obstructive. It is their nature. They unconsciously identify with the resistive force of matter (ego) and naturally resist any change (progress). This may or may not be "helpful" but it is generally rather secondary. One needs to be patient and understanding (and one generally needs to (gently) transcend the limitations implied or conveyed through obstructive people).

Another aspect of obstruction is the cyclic nature of manifestation at all levels. There are cycles (days) of activity (experience, expression, progress) and cycles (nights) of quiescence and assimilation of experience. The dark night of the soul is an example of a more personal cycle of discouragement, apparent obstruction, and painful assimilation and adjustment followed by (and facilitating) renewed (inner and outer) encouragement and growth. Obstruction is a form of tension, preventing or impeding untoward progress. But there are great lessons in tension (contrast) (conflict) (obstruction). The fourth ray (harmony through conflict) generally qualifies all such experience. And all of life in this world is such an opportunity (this is a fourth ray "world"). Progress is achieved through assimilation of contrast.

Some think that an unobstructed life is indicative of spiritual maturity, of things falling-into-place indicative of attunement. That this should be so in most respects is not uncommon among spiritual students, but without contrast, without some challenges in life, there is no real growth, no opportunity to transcend one's limitations. If a person is entirely comfortable with one's beliefs, being confident of their validity, then that constitutes a barrier to deeper truth. Thus challenge is pertinent. And obstruction serves a very useful purpose. The spiritual path is a path of continual deepening, of continual awakening. Being aware of obstruction and being intelligently responsive to implied or inferred possibilities for adjustment indicate some measure of spiritual maturity. To flow with life, drawing insight from every apparent difficulty, is the mark of one who is learning, growing, deepening.

Sometimes there are plateaus, for less deliberate assimilation of experience and for gradual preparation for the next cycle of activity. And sometimes there are peaks and valleys of experience, to be encountered, considered, and worked through. Obstruction is (potentially) a great opportunity for adjustment and progress. Yet the spiritual student should not be obstructive. The role of the spiritual student is to facilitate learning, growing, deepening, without imposing, without obstructing.

† Commentary No. 1109

## Process

At the level of human interest, including both experience and expression, there sometimes arises anxiety over results. The ancient occult adage "Trust in the process" is ever applicable. But in order to trust in the process, one must properly accept that the process may not be entirely what one thinks it is, and the results may not be entirely (if at all) what they are imagined or even desired to be.

The problem is that at the human level there is incomplete awareness and incomplete understanding of both the process and the intended results of experience in this world. The human tendency is, based on experience, to presume both the process and the intended results. But what the human being

desires or intends may not (always) be what is actually needed or intended in some higher (non-egoistic) sense. Yet the human being is creative. The human being has considerable capacity to create circumstances (and results) by virtue of thoughts, feelings, and (other) actions. Often, one need only imagine the outcome and dedicate sufficient energy to the creative process, and the outcome will be created. But as the student progresses along the way, there is increasing wisdom (accompanied by deepening humility), and the appreciation that the student may not understand what is best for all concerned, even where there is insight into the karmic balance and the evolutionary context.

Thus trusting in the process means accepting that there is an evolutionary flow (of intended experience and resolution (meaningful results)) and that the forces of evolution are always in effect and will naturally bring about whatever is actually needed, in accordance with the relative ability of the people involved to be responsive. One can still be creative, but it is much more effective to be creative within the context of non-egoism than to be (individualistically and/or presumptively) willfully creative. This requires not inconsiderable humility. This requires patience and trust. And this (properly) requires acceptance of responsibility for all of one's circumstances.

Yet the ego would rather control those circumstances more deliberately (and take credit for the results). The involvement of ego (willfulness) (personal desire) (selfishness) (self-centeredness) (sincerely so or otherwise) tends to complicate the process (through additional karmic constraints) and undermine the timeliness of results (even though timeliness is something that the student generally cannot comprehend because of its multidimensional nature). And the (creative) direction of the ego is generally not (quite) in the direction of evolution. By trusting in the process (and dampening the involvement of ego), better and more timely results are achieved.

On the other hand, the spiritual student is not properly concerned with particular results (or with any results, per se), but with the process itself (more correctly, with adherence to the path (way) (Tao)). The tendency of looking for results also tends to undermine the process. Yet in the broader perspective, the process is all-inclusive, and all of the "human" tendencies are accounted for (in which case the process is always satisfied). But the spiritual student should, nonetheless, seek to live in accord with the (evolutionary) process, collaborating

creatively through responsiveness, and in so doing transcending much of the lower nature (ego) (intellect) (desire) (lower will), etc. With acceptance of the way, and trusting in the process, there need be no anxiety at all (anxiety is merely the murmurings of ego). Without anxiety, one is simply free to allow things to happen as they need to (not passively, but intelligently).

† Commentary No. 1458

## Content and Context

In art, metaphysics, nature, philosophy, psychology, religion, and theosophy, there is a challenge of both content and context. Content refers to the substance and essential meaning or significance of the material, the ideas and insights, the lessons inherent in or implied by the substance or presentation. Context refers to the environment or framework or perspective in which the content is placed, which both enriches the content and provides a basis for both application and understanding.

Content is necessarily related in some sense or another to the context. Every aspect of truth (relative content) is found within a relativistic framework (relative context). The same truth may be found in more than one framework, in which case that truth is relatively more significant, for each context provides additional insight and depth. There are personal and community (cultural) and psychological frameworks. And there are philosophical, religious, and scientific frameworks. Each contributing something to the whole. One cannot properly (fully) apprehend content (truth) without also understanding and appreciating the context(s). The broader and deeper one looks, the broader and deeper is truth then and thereby revealed.

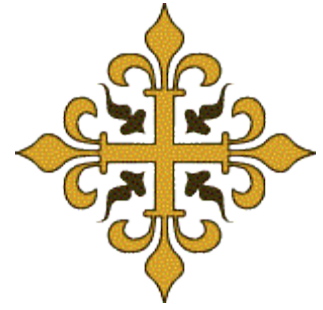
A problem is the tendency of many (most) people to interpret content within the relatively narrow context of their own relatively limited experience and considerable conditioning (bias). It is difficult for many people to apprehend and appreciate that experience beyond their own can contribute significantly to understanding. If one interprets experience or content in a relatively narrow framework or context, then there is at best only a (rather) partial and limited understanding. If one embraces or intuitively experiences or content in a relatively

broader sense, then there is a deeper and broader understanding. All understanding is necessarily partial, but embracing truth in a relatively broader and deeper sense leads to a necessarily greater understanding.

Physical scientists tend to see content only or primarily in the context of the material world. People of a given culture who have limited experience with other peoples or cultures tend to see content only or primarily in the context of their own culture. People of a given religion (denomination) tend to see spiritual content only or primarily in the context of their own faith. Men tend to see content according to their own, masculine context. And similarly, women tend to see content according to their own, feminine context. Intellectuals tend to see content according to context of their own intellectual biases. While people of less-intellectual basis tend to see content according to the context of their own feelings. One's own experience and knowledge provide a considerable and potentially (generally) considerably limiting context.

As one deepens in experience, as one evolves in consciousness, as one approaches God (truth) with increasingly clarity (based on refinement of consciousness), then the context for truth is necessarily broadened and deepened. The spiritual student embarked upon this quest (for truth leading to conscious union or communion with God) learns not to be attached to knowledge or ideas, not to have opinions. The spiritual student learns to realize that the immediate context is only part of the whole. The spiritual student learns to see things in an increasingly broader framework. And the spiritual student learns to overcome or transcend all or most his or her conditioning and all or most of the ordinary psychological barriers to greater apprehension. Unfettered, the self-realized student is simply more effectively able to embrace truth.

# Section 5.521



## The Long View

- The ordinary human perspective is relatively short-sighted and normally takes into consideration only that which can be taken at face value, i.e., that is apparent to the senses. The spiritual student eventually develops a longer, broader perspective.

## The Long View 1

One of the more significant differences between the way the (planetary) spiritual hierarchy focuses (consciousness) and the way most human beings focus, is the breadth and depth of focus. The spiritual hierarchy embraces the long view, a focus and perspective that reaches forward in time far beyond the normal (human) vision of the (incremental) future.

The breadth of the hierarchical view is considerable, for all lives within the planetary (evolutionary) scheme must be embraced. This inclusive view insures that all of the pieces of the planetary scheme fit together coherently and in a meaningful manner, consistent with the overall plan. But a merely inclusive view is not enough, for the march of time must also be embraced (causally) (not casually) in order to achieve the reality (fulfillment) of the divine archetypes which make up that evolutionary plan. This means that the (long) hierarchical view must stretch for aeons, linking pieces of the vision together progressively, but based upon the intended goal and how best to achieve that goal. This long view is distinctly different from the incremental view.

In the incremental view, one looks at the present status and perceives (or tries to perceive) the next (immediate) step (i.e., the direction) and the focus or energies (qualification) necessary to bring about that (incremental) progress (in some aspect). The incremental view is important and necessary, but is a (relatively) minor (short-term) consequence of evolutionary momentum, not being (really) part of the (macroscopic) invocation but (rather) being part of the ultimate (immediate) evocation of consequential forces. In the long view, one must first embrace the plan in its greater depths, to see the relative goal at the extent of one's vision. Then one must assess the current state of manifestation (current conditions, circumstances, quality of consciousness, etc.) visualizing (recognizing) a flow of energy from each to the other. This coherent visualization then evokes the forces of change (and progress) which in turn result in the ultimate realization of the hierarchical (logoc) archetypes for this major cycle.



During this process (hierarchical visualization), it is important for the participant to learn to (and therefore be able to) (and) recognize the archetype or goal at the extent of one's vision. There are some hierarchical workers (esoteric students) who focus primarily on the distant objective (which necessarily links the present state to the (distant) future state). There are some who focus on current assessment (being observers of (current) human culture (consciousness)). And there are some who accomplish both, consciously and intelligently bridging between the two. Considerable intuitive (contemplative) talent (atma-buddhi-manas) is required of participants in this process, and that talent (and its exercise) is not possible without alignment in two dimensions (alignment of the integrated and refined personality with the soul and alignment of soul and hierarchical consciousness (which is itself aligned with logocentric consciousness (and will))).

This two-dimensional alignment (in the context of the long view as well as some other aspects) means that the individual participant does virtually nothing as an individual. There is no mental deliberation or analysis, no individual ideas to contend with, but, rather, there is a group realization of causal forces, objective, means, etc. The fulfillment is achieved by virtue of that continuing realization (recognition), which is an entirely different process than the normal individual (short-term) creative process (of invocation and evocation in more deliberate terms).

† Commentary No. 530

## The Long View 2

In both cases (the short-term and the long-term creative processes), the details of the working out of the creative forces are not (cannot) be considered within the visualization, as that would compromise the effectiveness and integrity of the process. The long view (long-term creative evocation of an established (albeit dynamic in a very gradual sense) archetype) is the most inclusive, least personal activity of all of the hierarchical endeavors.

Although most hierarchical workers (esoteric students) are concerned with incremental processes (nonetheless subjectively and impersonally), those incremental efforts also require the participants to possess some of the same



talents and abilities as those involved in the long view (of course those incremental processes are also not concerned with individuals or particulars (the details refer to the structural aspects of manifestation, the framework for the manifestation of creative (evolutionary) forces).

The spiritual student can effectively prepare for the hierarchical work (and the long view) through constructive visualization exercises, in particular by utilizing (or attempting to utilize) long view methods on a shorter, smaller scale, by visualizing an appropriate objective and linking the energy of the present and future without resort to focusing on the details of implementation, but by keeping the vision in mind and allowing the creative forces to evoke that which is envisioned (the details (implementation) are the natural karmic consequences (qualified energy) of sustaining the vision). As ability is developed and refined, the student can gradually broaden and deepen the focus and (simultaneously) seek to recognize some portion or aspect of the plan to be embraced (which is not the egoistic exercise of projecting one's personality views of how the plan should unfold).

Another useful approach (in preparation) is to develop an impersonal vigilance, by becoming aware of current conditions (and forces) in (human and planetary) consciousness and contemplating their relation to the plan. No spiritual student is an isolated observer, since all are linked in consciousness (on some level) and contribute to the overall (filtered) impression or realization of current conditions, so that every observation (by a qualified observer) contributes to the overall assessment. This vigilance involves effective (objective) observation (awareness) and (subjective) consideration.

The esoteric student who embraces the long view (or hierarchical work in general (as all esoteric students do in some measure)) must ever recognize his or her subordinate position (participation) in these creative and evolutionary processes. The long view is the vision of the planetary (solar) logos (not even the vision of the planetary (solar) hierarchy, which merely assists in the working out of that logoc plan). And the long view is, in the final (non-temporal) analysis, already much more real than the differential vision (and immediate reality) of the human species. The long view also embraces an important and necessary attitude, of doing things (projecting forces) of no concern or consequence to the current conditions or incremental processes, of planting

seeds and creating the foundation and framework for future conditions (without being distracted by more immediate needs). The immediate needs may be significant (on their level), but their fulfillment would not be possible if not for the long view (that embraced the current conditions (qualitatively and relatively) in the distant past). To embrace the long view is to tread the more noble path of greater reality (the tradition of service without recourse to seeing the effects of one's work).

† Commentary No. 531

### The Long View 3

One of the important practical aspects of participating in the long view is that participants are no longer distracted by current conditions and events (narrow focus) and are therefore able to be more impersonal and more inclusive.

There are very many who focus on the present personal situation and that focus is relatively separative. Many focus on the present conditions, seeking to change those conditions through that focus, but such effort (sincere and well-intended) is futile, since the present is entirely consequential and no one has the ability to change the present. Certainly one can change one's attitude toward present conditions and thereby change one's response (which in turn contributes toward further consequences) in a (hopefully) more positive (constructive) manner. Those many who sincerely and actively work with current conditions play an important role nonetheless, in (constructively) fulfilling the karmic consequences of the present and demonstrating the current quality of consciousness. But a present focus does not contribute directly to the creative process of bringing about the intended (qualitative and generalized) future.

Thus although the spiritual student is encouraged to live in the present tense (the timeless, eternal now), the spiritual student is also encouraged to embrace the forces and energy of the future in a positive, constructive, inclusive, generalized, impersonal manner. Relatively few work with the long view (since relatively few are qualified) but those who do work quietly and in confidence, for the vision of the logos is a subtle and encouraging force. The fabric of the future and the creative visions (archetypes) and patterns within that fabric are such that they can only be contacted on abstract mental and intuitive levels, which

means that any endeavor of concrete mental activity (i.e., thinking) is at best a response and not the embrace per se.

However, those whose mental activity is reasonably consistent with the higher (abstract mental and intuitive quality) can receive impressions that are in response to and an interpretation of the higher vision and associated energy (and consequential forces). In alignment proper there is no thinking, but with reasonable alignment the higher energies can and do induce thought-forms in the lower mind (just as the mind can embrace external thought-forms (from the concrete mental plane)), and therefore the esoteric student attributes (assumes) (presumes) no authorship, personal or otherwise. Others may naively presume (personal) authorship (without even thinking about it) which simply distorts the thought-form to some greater extent. But in any case thought-forms emerge which more or less reflect various aspects of the higher vision (the long view) and can be utilized by the individual (and group) as appropriate and according to the character and quality of the thought-form and the character and quality of the perceiving consciousness.

The spiritual student should strive to redeem the views and perception of the personality (which is viewed by the soul as noise), elevating the individual consciousness above and beyond the realm of opinions and other personal energies and attachments in order to embrace the more refined (more subtle) and more inclusive energies of the logos and the interpretation (transformation) of those energies by the spiritual hierarchy into creative forces for the planetary scheme. The student is encouraged to think about those impressions, continually (if not continuously) testing them for quality (relative validity) (freedom from personal energy), in seeking to understand where we (humanity) (the planet) are going (from the higher view, rather than from the appearances of current conditions), thereby contributing to bringing about that realization.

# Section 5.522



## Orientation

- In the context of metaphysical psychology, a perspective is any one of a number of points of view, while an orientation is a relatively predominate (general or lasting) perspective (direction of thought, inclination, or interest). In this sense (for example), the (qualified) esoteric student may utilize various liberal, conservative, and progressive points of view, without necessarily or generally having a liberal, conservative, or progressive orientation.

## Perspective and Orientation

Perspective is defined as the interrelation or context in which some object or subject or its parts are perceived (generally emotionally and to some extent mentally). Perspective is the point of view of the observer (perceiver) (thinker) and is very much subject to the bias, prejudice, and other habits of thinking and feeling that color the ways in which people see and evaluate observations and experience. Thus perception (and perspective) is subject to the influence (bias) of the personality, including the relative coarseness of the physical body, the relative health or vitality of the etheric double, the relative quality (stability) (clarity) of the astral body (aura), and the relative quality (stability) (clarity) of the concrete mind (mental body).

Perspective may be relatively good (positive) (constructive) or bad (negative) (destructive), broad (inclusive) or narrow (exclusive), brief or persistent, loosely-held (flexible) or closely-held (inflexible), lightly biased or heavily biased, subject to some maya (glamour) (illusion), etc. Perspective is heavily influenced by a person's character, quality, temperament, and values. Most people do not realize how biased they are in the way they perceive people, experience, the world, etc. The (qualified) esoteric student is less biased than ordinary humanity due to considerable refinement of the personality (vehicles) and considerable self-discipline resulting in relative clarity. The (qualified) esoteric student is also more aware of his (relatively limited) bias and therefore more able to compensate for and account for that bias. The (qualified) esoteric student is also more able to consciously utilize a number of different perspectives (to see things in different ways), to consciously realize his perspective (thereby being able to weigh his perception), and to integrate (correlate) data obtained from the various perspectives utilized.

For example, the (qualified) esoteric student is neither (exclusively) liberal nor conservative in his views, but able to perceive things from both points of view and recognize (integrate) the best (better) attributes (and observations) of both (or more). The (qualified) esoteric student is both able to view things in a narrow (closely-focused) perspective for detailed analysis and in a broad (widely-focused) perspective for correlation and inclusion. The bias of spiritual

and esoteric students is largely a matter of having spiritual values, esoteric knowledge, and a relatively refined nature (i.e., a relatively constructive bias). Even so, the student must endeavor to remain open-minded, for the existence of or adherence to opinions is ever (at least partially) preclusive or inhibitive of further progress.

In this context (metaphysical psychology), a perspective is any one of a number of points of view, while an orientation is a relatively predominative (general or lasting) perspective (direction of thought, inclination, or interest). In this sense (for example), the (qualified) esoteric student may utilize various liberal, conservative, and progressive points of view, without having a liberal, conservative, or progressive orientation.

Spiritual and esoteric students (should) have spiritual and esoteric orientations (respectively), which incorporate their relative refinement; their relative depth and breadth of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; and their relative quality and capability in consciousness. The spiritual and esoteric perspectives (orientations) (depending on whether relatively temporarily or generally held) are relatively broad and inclusive, appreciative of cause and effect relationships, somewhat eclectic relative to ordinary points of view, and relatively free from personal bias (prejudice) (opinion).

† Commentary No. 654

## Event Orientation

An event is something that happens and is marked by a particular (relatively well-defined) location and (relatively short) duration (in space and time). Events may be or appear to be relatively significant or insignificant (depending on emotional appeal (glamour) or rationalization (illusion)).

An event orientation is the largely subconscious and predominating point of view of much of humanity, wherein (selected) events tend to be noticeable, noteworthy, significant, etc. A person's date (and circumstances) of birth, death, major injury or illness, marriage, divorce, graduation, change of address, employment, promotion, etc., are relatively (generally) considered significant (in the event orientation). Similarly, natural disasters, major accidents, crimes,

conjunctions, transits, supernovae, etc., are generally perceived by the bulk of humanity as events and as being relatively significant.

The event perspective (and the event orientation) (focusing primarily on events (or succession of events)) is one of the products of the grand illusion of separate existence (physical reality) (ego). It is quite natural for people (personalities in incarnation) to focus on discrete events, for those events are much more noticeable (memorable) (recognizable) to the simple (physical) vision and experience than are the underlying processes that actually account for events. In the limited (event) (superficial) perspective (orientation), events are pretty much all there is, since, at least superficially, events happen and to some extent lead to other events. With only physical (sense) impressions and emotional (and mental) reactions to physical (sense) impressions, ordinary people have no reason or ability to perceive anything (much) more. Thus it is also only natural that (particular) events should capture attention and that people should be attached to events (and anniversaries of events). This is all part of the intended experience (trial by matter) and not without its affordance of learning, for the forces that produce events lead to impressions and consequential motivations, changes in attitudes, etc. It hardly matters (at this stage of consciousness) that the event-oriented person thinks (incorrectly) that events per se are the catalysts for subsequent activity and events, whereas in actuality, the events are merely brief, superficial indications of the underlying, relatively longer-term karmic (causal and consequential) forces.

From the esoteric standpoint, events are not (in themselves) significant. The causal and consequential forces are significant. The underlying processes and associated relationships are significant. The measure of learning and understanding reflected as quality of consciousness is significant. The specifics and particulars of event-oriented experience are simply not important relative to the underlying processes and forces. Those (the bulk of humanity) who sleep through life in the physical world, being largely unaware of karmic processes, quality of consciousness, etc., are learning mainly incidentally and subconsciously. Those (few) who awaken to the underlying reality are simply consequently and subsequently relatively able to learn more directly, more consciously, and more effectively.



The problem of the event orientation is a matter of association of symbol with reality. Instead of recognizing events (and outer objects) as symbols and indications of underlying reality, they are more generally (and wrongly) considered to be real (and therefore relatively significant). In time, the spiritual student becomes less and less satisfied with the superficial (event orientation) and gradually adapts and transforms the focus and habits of waking-consciousness to the process orientation.

† Commentary No. 655

## Process Orientation

A process is a natural phenomenon marked by gradual changes that lead toward a particular result. Processes are manifested over time (in the case of processes associated with objective (physical) manifestation) and are perceived by the bulk of humanity mainly by their associated events (or superficial indications). Processes are much more significant than events in the sense that (1) processes are heavily involved with causal forces, (2) processes lead to further (consequential and subsequent) processes (events do not lead to further events; processes and associated forces lead to further processes and associated forces, while events are merely superficial by comparison), and (3) events are merely indicative of the underlying processes (forces).

A process orientation is the relatively consciously embraced point of view of the bulk of (albeit few) serious spiritual students and disciples (esoteric students). In the process perspective (orientation) the emphasis (focus) is upon the causal chain of karmic (causative and consequential) forces in relation to the evolution of consciousness and the unfolding panorama of manifestation. Events are incidental consequences of processes and their associated forces. An event may be traumatic to those who are involved, but the precursive activities (behavior) (attitudes) and attachments of the involved people and the underlying evolutionary processes are more significant.

Those who have progressed to the process orientation but without particular spiritual qualification are simply those who realize that achievement and accomplishment are the result of (the process of applying) effort (e.g., hard work). With deeper (more subtle) understanding, the work motive is gradually

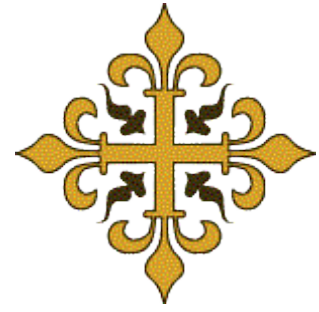


transformed into service motive, as personal objectives are transformed into impersonal objectives in (relative) cooperation with the evolutionary plan. But this practice (transformation) (process) is actually a matter of identification with the spiritual path (on some level) which is a process and not an event. Conscious appreciation of processes allows more effective participation in processes, whereas (mere) appreciation of an event in itself leaves a person relatively unconnected with the processes and forces which incidentally produced the event in the first place.

The whole of (evolutionary) manifestation is process-oriented. The patterns of evolution (manifestation) are interrelated processes within processes, each with its objectives and characteristics (qualifications). Life (consciousness) (form) unfolds, grows, develops, progresses, and interrelates through a succession of cyclic processes and the manifold of associated karmic forces. For every apparently (but not really) significant event, there is a causal chain of significant processes and involvements over a relatively considerable period of time and there are further causal chains that emerge (largely) as a consequence (not of the event but) of those earlier processes. Thus major (?) cataclysmic events, with momentous and violent (overwhelming) upheavals, and major (?) cosmic alignments, with great correlation of forces and releases of energy (qualification), are not important compared to the quality of consciousness and evolutionary intentions (processes) that are in effect for considerable periods of time and bring about the events.

The problem of event orientation is that people are so easily distracted by (enamored with) superficial things and events, that the more significant relationships and processes are generally not recognized. But with increasing spiritual orientation, the spiritual student becomes relatively free from such distractions and more properly focused on the (processes of) spiritual work.

# Section 5.523



## Reference Frames

- A reference frame is a particular framework or perspective for perceiving, evaluating, and understanding things in relationship. A reference frame has a focus, an origin or place from which everything else is measured or perceived. Being able to perceive something in more than one reference frame tends to add considerable insight to the perceptive process.

## Reference Frames 1

One of the concepts of physics that can be applied to human psychology is that of reference frames. A reference frame has an origin or place from which everything else is measured. The reference frame is the means through which everything is measured relative to that origin. If the origin is fixed (without moving) then everything else either moves or not with respect to that origin. And if the origin is moving, then the reference frame is moving, and everything else either moves or not with respect to that origin, but will appear to be different than if the origin were fixed. But from the point of view of the origin, it is always fixed. The origin moves only in the sense that it is relative to some other origin or reference frame. It does not move (ever) in its own reference frame. In other words, the choice of origin and the choice of reference frame determines how things are measured or perceived.

For example, the planet (earth) may be considered an origin and the (rest of the) external universe may be considered to be embraced by and through the reference frame that is centered on the earth. In this reference frame the earth does not move, but everything else (sun, moon, stars) moves. It does not matter, in this reference frame, that it is actually the earth that is moving around the sun. All of the encountered phenomena can be perceived from this earth-centered reference frame nonetheless. But one might draw the wrong conclusions, based on this choice of reference frame. Likewise, if the sun is the origin, the earth is perceived to move around the sun, but also the background of stars appears to move while the sun appears to remain still. And one might draw the wrong conclusion from this. In actuality, the stars are relatively motionless, but all move to some extent. But the choice of origin and the choice of reference frame determine or strongly influence how things are perceived.

For all practical purposes, the chosen origin is the center of the universe or the place from which everything else is perceived and apprehended. The reference frame is the context or means of perception and apprehension. For any given choice of origin, there are many possible reference frames, depending on the number of dimensions embraced, the manner in which each dimension is embraced (e.g., linearly, exponentially, angularly). While things appear

differently depending on origin and reference frame, one can simply transform coordinates from one reference frame to another, without losing validity. In other words, all reference frames embrace the same truth or actuality, but in different ways, leading to potentially different inferences or conclusions.

In any given reference frame there may be more than one object apprehended. These objects may be moving relative to each other, within the framework, but they are apprehended inclusively and relatively, within the overall reference frame, even though each (exclusive object) may be an origin in its own right and have its own reference frame. But the experience of one is limited compared with the experience of the broader, more inclusive reference frame. The exclusive (individual) object sees other things only relative to itself. The inclusive reference frame allows objects to be perceived relative to each other and relative to some broader context or whole.

For example, in a two-dimensional (planar) self-centered reference frame there is no possibility of perceiving or apprehending depth. But in a broader, more inclusive, more dimensional, non-self-centered reference frame, it is possible to perceive and apprehend depth in potentially many and various ways, each contributing something to one's understanding.

† Commentary No. 1362

## Reference Frames 2

Now most people are essentially and substantially self-centered. The origin or center-of-the-universe is the person (body) (mind) himself (herself). And the (typical) human reference frame allows a person to embrace or perceive everything else as if it were external to oneself but relative to oneself. This places a tremendous bias on the whole process. Because a person's own conditioning determines the reference frame, i.e., how things are perceived and apprehended, objectively and subjectively, correctly or otherwise. In practice, in such a reference frame, almost everything perceived is distorted by the process. And so only a very (very) small portion of truth and reality is actually embraced.

A self-centered person suffers the illusion of independence, of separateness, of individuality, of personal significance. Experience is embraced in a self-centered

manner, i.e., relative to oneself. What is significant, to such a person, is whatever is consistent with what that person wants or the process through which that person believes something can be obtained. But most people are not entirely self-centered. Their worlds (reference frames) are still self-centered but tend to include the immediacy of friends and family, vocation, etc. The context is somewhat broader, slightly more inclusive, but still self-centered. Instead of embracing a polarity or dichotomy of oneself and everything else, there tends to be a polarity of oneself and one's immediacy, and then everything that is external (or appears to be external) to oneself and one's immediacy. As the person grows personally and psychologically (and even spiritually), the origin and reference frames remain essentially self-centered, but the reference frame is broadened and becomes more inclusive, embracing one's cultural, national, racial, and religious context in addition to one's personal, family, and (narrow) vocational context.

But there still tends to be, for most people, a sense of "us" and "them" if not a sense of "me" and "them" ... And yet, with additional experience and growth there is a gradual but continual (inexorable) expansion of one's horizons and perspective, an increasing inclusiveness, and increasing universalism. This is all simply an expansion of one's reference frame in various dimensions and an expanding and continual reevaluation of how things are perceived, in some very gradually increasingly larger, broader, deeper context. As that perspective grows, then it becomes more possible to (more correctly) apprehend relationships of objects (people, groups, concepts) within the reference frame, even while remaining relatively self-centered.

Eventually one reaches the practical limit of one's ability to apprehend externals in this universal sense. A person (the mind) can embrace all peoples (even all lives) as consisting of a whole, but it is still merely an experiential and/or intellectual apprehension, which means that what is universal is conceptual and one is still feeling and thinking in a fundamentally self-centered manner, despite one's thinking to the contrary, because the reference frame remains centered on the origin (oneself). So it hardly matters that one has become more and more noble in one's outlook and practices. One has simply become more inclusive, but through a reference frame that is inherently self-centered.

The real change comes when there is a radical transformation of origin and reference frame, where a person no longer thinks and feels and behaves individually, but much more subjectively, without any sense of self and others. This is a considerable transformation of the reference frame.

† Commentary No. 1363

### Reference Frames 3

Many people work relatively selflessly, engaged in relatively noble work, while remaining in an essentially self-centered reference frame. But through (proper) transformation (self-realization), one can transcend the sense of individuality and actually live through the collective reference frame. In this collective there is no origin, no self to relate back to. This is not simply a replacing of the self with the group or collective or even universal (in which case there would be a sense of “us” and that which is not “us”) but a much more radical process in which the consciousness of the collective is embraced without attachment to the collective. In this sense there are no barriers. But this is extremely difficult to evoke and extremely rare. And yet, eventually, this is where one (not-one) must be. Words are very much inadequate to describe either this process or the experience, for human language simply has not the words. Until one is “there” one cannot truly apprehend except (merely (superficially)) intellectually and conceptually.

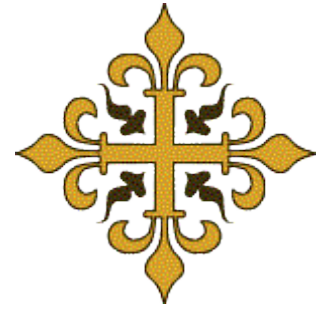
Now this whole concept (reference frames) can also be applied to collective frameworks. For example, one can perceive the world through the framework of materialism, or through the framework of psychology, or the framework of metaphysics, or some other framework. Each such framework has its own nature (quality and character) and dimensionality, its own set of conditions (conditioning, biases). And each is compounded by the biases and conditioning and perspective of the person himself (herself) (i.e., the personal framework or reference frame). But each framework is necessarily somewhat self-centered (the origin being the basis of the reference frame) and each framework has some dimension or extent of inclusiveness.

For example, there are two religious reference frames called, respectively, Baptist and Unity. In the Baptist reference frame everything is perceived and interpreted according to Baptist beliefs and principles, and in the Unity reference frame everything is perceived and interpreted according to Unity beliefs and principles. But while each serves a purpose and satisfies the needs of its adherents (to some extent), and while each contributes to the whole, the Baptist reference frame is relatively exclusive and the Unity reference frame is relatively inclusive. In the Baptist framework there are Baptists and there are non-Baptists. But in the Unity framework there are (properly) simply people (children of God), with no substantive distinctions made between adherents and non-adherents. In the Baptist framework, Unity is an external phenomenon. In the Unity framework, the Baptist faith is an internal phenomenon.

Another example is that of spiritualism and theosophy. The spiritualist framework is centered on spiritualism and theosophy is seen within the spiritualist reference frame. In other words, theosophy is an extension and dimension of spiritualism, i.e., derived from or evoked by spiritualism. But in the theosophical framework, which is centered on theosophy, spiritualism is an extension and dimension of theosophy, i.e., derived from theosophy, validated through the perspective of theosophical principles, a part of theosophy in some broader sense. Of course there are both similarities and differences between the two, and one may be more inclusive than the other, but both frameworks are (relatively) true, and both have value (the actual genesis is simply not important). They simply (tend to) appeal differently to different people.

But collective frameworks are not substantively different from individual frameworks, simply having a broader (collective) embrace. What is needed, eventually, is a radical transformation (breakthrough) on some collective scale.

# Section 5.524



## Sleep

- Sleep is a practical dimension of human psychology and includes the conventional notion of "the natural periodic suspension of consciousness during which the powers of the body are restored" as well as (1) the inner or occult dimension of sleep and (2) the more poignant notions of waking sleep.



## Sleep 1

Sleep, from the orthodox perspective, is defined as “the natural periodic suspension of consciousness during which the powers of the body are restored.” This definition is accurate for the physical body, since the consciousness which is suspended is only that of the waking consciousness. Sleep is a very active period from the standpoint of consciousness on the planes above the physical (particularly the astral).

“Going to sleep” is essentially the process whereby the higher principles withdraw from the dense physical and etheric (vital) bodies. Clairvoyantly, the higher principles are seen to hover near the physical body (and its etheric counterpart), using the astral (and to some extent, depending on evolution, the mental) body as their vehicle. The processes of going to sleep and entering into transition (death) are similar in some aspects. In death, the soul withdraws from (association with) the dense physical body for the last time, and draws the etheric body out with it (severing the life thread). It is this separation of the etheric body from the dense physical which prevents any further vitalization by the life force (prana) of the body as a composite form (organism). Every night, during sleep, while a person is unconscious on the physical plane, he or she is still alive and active on other planes. Death is essentially only a longer period of suspension of physical plane consciousness.

The primary function of sleep is that of restoration, which is practicable only during the separation of the higher principles from the lower. During the hours of waking activity there is a constant struggle between the etheric and astral (mental) bodies whose desires (thoughts) have the effect of breaking down tissues in the dense physical body which the etheric labors to harmonize, cleanse, and restore. As the hours of waking activity lengthen, the etheric body gradually loses ground in the struggle, and there comes a point of fatigue wherein the etheric body’s ability to properly process (channel) prana deteriorates. This deterioration results in a saturation with prana. Clairvoyantly, the aura of a well rested person would show “rhythmical vibrations” of “the electrical waves of life.” The aura of one who is fatigued,

however, would be “composed of atoms whirling with an almost incredible spasmodic rapidity” stemming from the over saturation with Life Force.

The astral and mental bodies are also in need of restoration at the end of a period of activity. The struggle that goes on between the various bodies has a deteriorating effect on the substance of each. The work of restoration during sleep begins with the mental plane and proceeds downward to the physical. The restoration process on mental and astral levels involves retrospection ((honestly) reviewing the events, feelings, and thoughts of the day in reverse order (generally proceeding from the effects to the causes)). The process serves to replace distorted perceptions, errors, and disharmonies with true impressions, wisdom, and harmonic tone. There are three ways of assimilating experience through retrospection: (1) consciously, during waking hours, (2) unconsciously, during sleep, and (3) in the period following death.

The more experience one can assimilate consciously, the less one needs to assimilate during sleep; the more one can assimilate during sleep (dependent upon the evolution and responsiveness of the astral and mental bodies), the less one needs to assimilate after death, and consequently, the less time that will be required between incarnations. Consciously adhering to a retrospective exercise each night before passing into sleep can greatly enhance spiritual growth and understanding.

† Commentary No. 657

## Sleep 2

In addition to the active processes of restoration and assimilation, several other activities take place during sleep. Sleep provides a potent opportunity for the overcoming of attachments, and it allows much appropriate service work and learning to be done through the astral (and mental) vehicle, unencumbered by the limitations of the physical body. During sleep is also encountered a variety of dream activity.

During sleep, some of the weak attachments of the personality may be effectively overcome. There is some genuine wisdom behind the common concept of “sleeping on a problem.” If there is a problem or concern for which an

appropriate solution cannot be recognized in the waking consciousness, frequently an appropriate approach (direction) will be recognizable following an adequate period of sleep, or it may be realized, through the cleansed and restored vehicles, that a problem really does not (did not) exist at all. Before going to sleep, one should simply pose their concern, and then deliberately let go of it (consciously detach oneself from it). Where there are strong attachments or concerns borne in the emotional body or mind prior to sleep, there will be an incomplete separation of the bodies, and the restorative (retrospective) (assimilation) (learning) processes cannot take place. The individual will feel no more rested (probably more fatigued) upon awakening than he or she did prior to sleep.

Sleep is also the time during which many spiritual students perform varied service activities on the astral plane (mental plane for some more advanced disciples), and during which they may receive teaching in the "hall of learning" on the highest level of the astral plane, and in the "hall of wisdom" on the mental plane. For the most part, when consciousness on the astral or mental planes is not fully developed, these activities will not sufficiently impress the physical brain for there to be any memory of them upon awakening (except occasionally in the form of a dream). Eventually, the spiritual student reaches a point in development at which he can maintain a continuity of consciousness as his astral body slips out of the physical upon going to sleep, and he is able to work in full consciousness on the astral plane as he works in an analogous manner on the physical plane while awake. While deliberate attempts at prematurely cultivating this continuity of consciousness are not advised, the spiritual student can (should) constructively qualify his pre-sleep thoughts. An appropriate qualification would first encourage the completion of the restoration work on his own bodies. From there he might proceed to a qualification for generalized service, that he might be of help wherever needed. He would maintain an attitude (energy) of goodwill, possibly mentally sounding a service-oriented mantra as part of the qualification.

There is a wide spectrum of dream activity and quality occurring during sleep. The most common (confused) dreams of average humanity are merely the result of the incomplete separation of the bodies (the astral body remaining closely identified with the physical body (often due to strong mundane attachments)). This abnormal condition results in the varied phenomena of the astral plane

being mixed in a confused and incongruous way with the vague and agitated impressions still playing upon the brain cells from the subconsciousness and conscious thoughts and emotions.

These dreams are most common in the first hours after going to sleep and in the hour before the astral body completely re-enters and awakens the physical body. No importance should be ascribed to such dreams.

† Commentary No. 665

### Sleep 3

A clear distinction must be made between dreams (dream experience) and direct recollection of experience during sleep. They are distinctly different phenomena resulting from distinctly different processes. Dreams represent the first step toward continuity of consciousness, but merely reflect the noise and confusion of the astral plane, as filtered by the desires and bias (glamour) of the personality (emotional nature and to some extent the concrete mind) and consequently have little utility save to further feed or sustain the personal glammers and illusion. The second step is "dreamless sleep" where the person does not remember the "dream" or sleep experience. The third step is actual continuity of consciousness during the periods of sleep.

While the confused dreams stemming from the incomplete separation of the astral and physical bodies during light sleep are the most commonly recalled, there are several other categories of sleep experience, including (1) dreams relating the "wish-life" in terms of the sights and sounds of the astral plane, (2) recollection of the work done or actual experiences on the astral and mental planes during sleep, (3) impressions of mental (plane) quality which convey some of the lessons learned during sleep, (4) actual telepathic communications during sleep, and (5) impressions from the soul concerning group work and the world plan. None of the various dreams are particularly useful (in conscious remembrance) since all dreams imply incomplete (improper) separation of vehicles during sleep. "Dreamless" sleep is indicative of more constructive spiritual endeavors (during sleep), with subsequent conscious learning from subconscious experience (with or without conscious recollection).

Dream analysis and interpretation has some inherent usefulness for those who lack the ability of constructive (insightful) discrimination, as well as some inherent limitations and potential for compounding misunderstanding. Attempts at drawing significance from recounting the varied phenomena and vague impressions of the most common dreams (originating from restlessness) are of little value (at best). Frequent dreams of this nature are indicative of poor sleep. Rather than trying to recall these dreams and ascribing significance where none exists, the subject should concentrate on overcoming attachments (strong emotions compelling the mind) that prevent the necessary separation (which leads to real (beneficial) sleep) of the astral and physical bodies during proper (dreamless) (non-recollective) sleep.

Even when dealing with dreams that have a degree of coherency and originate in the astral or mental planes, proper interpretation is unlikely. In drawing meaning, for instance, from those dreams which are a record of the experience on the astral plane during sleep one may certainly gain some insight into the "character trends" and some subconscious desires of the subject, since it is the wish-life of the subject that generally attracts (seeks out) the various astral satisfactions (glamours and illusions) that are contacted in such dreams. But it should be realized that the astral plane also encompasses the wish-life of the entire race (root-race) (humanity), now and through the ages.

Many people observe and contact thought-forms that are not related to them individually, but rather to the massive wish-life of humanity. Mistaken identification with these thought-forms can lead to attribution of suppressed or subliminal desires and urges where none may actually exist. A further problem in interpretation is its dependence on the ability (inability) of the subject to accurately bring the sleep experiences back into the waking consciousness (such capability being inconsistent with the need for dreams in the first place).

## Sleep 4

Sleep experience is related to the quality of consciousness. Some degree of mental facility and control and some considerable degree of emotional refinement and qualification is required before any of the experience on the mental plane during sleep can be recollected by the waking-consciousness (experience on the astral or emotional plane during sleep is hardly worth recollecting). Thus, only as the subject approaches mental polarization could one expect to accurately interpret a dream as giving indication of the individual thought-life or the thought-life (analogous to the wish-life on the astral plane) of the race. Yet, as one progresses, in this sense, one becomes less and less interested in dream analysis and interpretation, for dreams fade in potential relevance and significance compared to the direct learning through intelligent awareness, recollection, and realization.

The paradox of dream analysis and interpretation contrasts the abilities needed for proper analysis and interpretation with the lack of need for such analysis and interpretation if those abilities are present. If a person has achieved a measure of (constructive) (insightful) discrimination (the ability to discern meaning, significance, value, etc.), then such a person has a significant measure of (conscious and subconscious) learning ability, during the waking hours and during sleep. Without significant attachments, such a person (spiritual student) will sleep “dreamlessly” (without need for conscious recollection) and awaken refreshed, with some conscious understanding of problems and issues of interest.

One of the problems of attention to (preoccupation with) dreams is that more often than not the supposed interest in learning from dream experience is really a mask for the attractions of glamour (presumed significance) associated with (presumed) revelations or personality interests (that are really attachments and distractions). Even where the learning interest is genuine, the dependence on indirect means (of dream analysis and interpretation) (of considerable limitation, having considerable probability of misinterpretation (due to personal energy) and (consequent) misunderstanding) actually undermines the mental development and the development of the faculty of (for) discrimination.



The existence of dreams indicates a lack of resolution or (normal) imbalance of the emotional (desire) nature, the concrete mind, and the higher self (and an incomplete separation of the subtle vehicles). "Dreamless sleep" implies harmony (resolution of conflict) or (natural rather than normal) balance (and a proper or complete separation of the subtle vehicles during sleep), while continuity of consciousness (which is quite rare and limited to the disciple who has achieved alignment and rapport (a responsive lower nature)) indicates the most productive state for the spiritual student (who is then able to recollect accurately the appropriate activities undertaken during sleep). In between these three principal steps are intermediate steps that imply the process of bridging. Some (accurate) representation of astral experience may appear in the form (interpretation) of relatively sharp dreams (provided the student has the commensurate capacity for discrimination). But for the most part, there is little similarity between dream remembrance and proper recollection of sleep activities.

In the final analysis, the purpose of sleep is the rest and revitalization (qualification) of the physical body, the etheric or vital body, the astral body (emotional nature), and the concrete mind. A secondary purpose is learning (to some extent) and service (in the case of spiritual students).

† Commentary No. 1145

## The Awakened State

The awakened state is very relative. Most people are awake in some ways and asleep in others. Most people are asleep in materialism, sense indulgence, and/or egoism. The vast preponderance of humanity are asleep in the sense that they lack conscious awareness of who (what) they (truly) are. The bulk of humanity identify with the lower self (personality) (body) (ego) (mind) and have no realization of the higher Self nor any realization about the higher Self. The problem is that the lower self is not who (what) a person really is. The lower self (personality as a whole) is simply a vehicle of consciousness for experience and expression. Through identification with the superficial aspect of the human being, the bulk of humanity live superficially. Consequently, they are asleep in

that sense. The awakened state (proper) is transpersonal, beyond the personality-centered experience that prevails in this world.

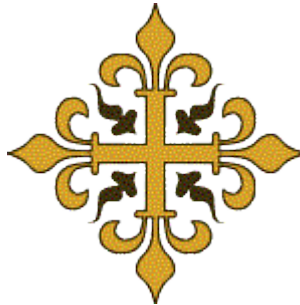
Those who have pondered or studied the notion of an awakened state at least (generally) appreciate that a distinction exists between being asleep and being in some (meaningful) awakened state. Yet most remain asleep because that understanding is superficial (intellectual) and not realized in practice. Most who embrace the spiritual path or spiritual principles think of themselves as therefore being awake, when in fact, they are no more awake in this sense than they were before, because their awareness (waking consciousness) remains self-centered in the sense of being based in ego (the illusion of separateness), even if there is an intellectual appreciation of these distinctions. Thus most people are superficial, living superficially yet meaningfully at some level (extent) of experience.

When a person proclaims his or her being awake (in an awakened state) it invariably means that the person remains asleep. Because it is only the ego (false self) (superficial, artificial self) that can make any such proclamation, and it is necessarily false. The ego is not awake (the ego is not even real) and the ego cannot participate in the awakened state. The awakened state is, in fact, the absence of ego. The person who does not know if he or she is awake is more likely to be closer to an awakened state, for the "knowledge" of (presumption) of the awakened state is necessarily false. In the awakened state, there is no knowledge. There is only realization. There is awareness and there is understanding, but it is not conscious in the sense of being intellectual or a matter of personality. If a person is thinking, then the person is asleep (not awake in this higher sense).

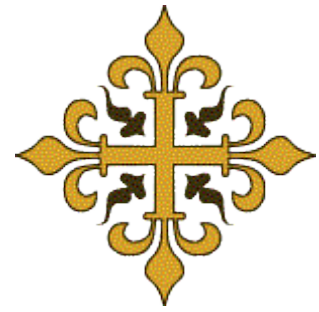
If the personality is involved in the process, except as a wholly qualified and responsive (non-independent) instrument of expression, then the person is personality-centered and not in an awakened state. To become awakened one must necessarily transcend much of the limitations of personality-centered consciousness. In order to be awake, the student must not be entangled in the world or worldly affairs (the student may be present in the world and participating in experience and expression but not to the extent of being entangled). In order to be awake, the student must necessarily transcend the ego and the intellect (at least to a substantial extent).



The spiritual student gradually learns to be the casual (unentangled) observer, not judging or evaluating what is observed, but simply watching (oneself as a personality and the external world as a reflection of consciousness). Thus the student gradually awakens and as the awakened state is achieved and sustained, the student is able to effectively bridge between the two worlds (higher and lower).



## Section 5.525



# Transactional Analysis

- Transactional analysis is a particular combination of humanistic psychology and behavioral therapy, involving a theory of three ego states or sets of actions, behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. The three ego states or aspects of personality in this system are Parent, Adult, and Child (PAC).

## Transactional Analysis

Much of the following information has been excerpted and edited from various sources, including material published by the Institute of Transactional Analysis (UK), the USA Transactional Analysis Association (USATAA) and the International Transactional Analysis Association (ITAA).

Transactional analysis (TA) is a theory of personality and a systematic psychotherapy for personal growth and personal change, practiced within the field of human psychology, that offers some insight into human behavior. However, TA alone is relatively superficial, being based on theory and observation and relying on inference. Alone, it does not embrace the underlying metaphysical causes and factors, and so TA is somewhat limited. But in combination with some deeper apprehension of human nature, TA can be quite helpful.

### Introduction and Overview

Transactional analysis is a combination of humanistic psychology and behavioral therapy, popularized by an American psychiatrist, Eric Berne in his book entitled *Games People Play*. Berne aimed to provide a quicker route to emotional health by focusing on individual problems and not the patient's whole history. According to Berne we all have three aspects to our personalities: parent, adult, and child (PAC). In the course of communicating with others, through "transactions," we need to use all these aspects in the most positive ways possible. The games of the book's title are the destructive transactions with others into which people tend to get entangled.

TA offers insight into one's relationships and the tools to conduct them in a generally more successful manner. It can help those who see themselves as victims to learn to function more constructively. In addition to being a theory of development, transactional analysis is a system of social psychology. As a social psychology, transactional analysis looks at the relationships within the ego and between individuals. TA has become a popular resource in psychotherapy, education, and organizational development, because it

encourages people to see the many sides of their own personality and understand how their personality relates to others. TA is a theory and practice of psychology that recognizes our basic interdependence, our interrelatedness, and the difficulties which arise with dependence and cooperation.

Transactional analysis is both a theory of personality and a system for the improvement of personal and social functioning, within the humanistic tradition. Eric Berne re-examined the basic assumptions of psychiatry and developed a system of analysis which in principle can be applied to the structure of the personality, interpersonal transactions, life plans or scripts, and the "games people play."

Structural analysis takes its starting point from Freud's theory of the ego. It identifies three ego states; the parent, the adult and the child. It enables us to clarify our life experiences, thoughts and feelings, examining how we learned much of our beliefs and values from our parents and other parental figures, and how being in different ego states can influence our behaviors and relationships.

Analysis of transactions examines both social and psychological forms of human communication using the ego state model to diagram the types of transactions. Transactions may be open and clear, or combined with ulterior messages. Their analysis provides a way to understand "stroking" patterns, how most people exchange the level of contact and recognition that most human beings seem to need.

Script analysis, which is possibly the weakest link in TA, offers an approach to the question: How do we get to be the people we are? Superficially, the origins are embedded in the history of our childhoods, families, culture, and life experiences. A "life script" develops (usually) without our being aware of it, for purposes of survival, approval, and security rather than for self-realization. By analyzing the content of our ego states, we can in principle determine the idiosyncratic programming of parents and other influential people and our responses to this programming, i.e., our conditioning. The problem is that the human being is more than merely a consequence of worldly conditioning, there is also the factor of consciousness brought forward from experience in previous lives.

Analysis of games. It was Eric Berne's writings on "games" that first drew the public's attention to TA. Most people learn to play games in childhood as a response to family and life circumstances. According to TA enthusiasts, the motivation in continuing to do so as adults is the need for stimulus, structure, and as a substitute for security. In principle, games are predictable patterns of indirect communication, using ulterior transactions. They are played out of awareness. Games analysis seeks to define these patterns and their consequences.

## The Philosophy of Transactional Analysis

The philosophy of TA accentuates that respect and empathic acceptance are essential to psychotherapy. Its practice is based on a contract between client and therapist, in which they take equal responsibility towards common goals. The methods and concepts used are made open to the client in the understanding that power is shared. TA has application in counseling and, because of its emphasis on communication, is also applicable in training, management, education and other areas where some understanding of people is central.

## Application

There are four fields of application or specialties in transactional analysis, namely, (clinical) psychotherapy, counseling, education, and organization.

### 1. Psychotherapy Application

The underlying philosophy of TA is respect for the intrinsic worth and dignity of human beings and their capacity to change. These beliefs are fundamental to the quality and maintenance of the psychotherapeutic relationship. Equality is affirmed in the making of a therapy contract, in which the therapist and client can gain insight into conscious and unconscious forms of communication. This process enables the transactional analyst to work with the issues of transference and counter-transference that become evident particularly through the analysis of ulterior and crossed transactions.

Transactions form part of the games some people play. These psychological games and their outcomes in turn can be perceived as scenes in a person's life script. Decisions about self, others and the world are made in childhood and have a significant influence on how we live our lives in the present. By analyzing the transactions, games and unique life scripts, both therapist and client may gain a picture of the client's unconscious life plan which, once in awareness, can be changed and resolved.

TA therapy is usually offered weekly in frequency and is practiced in groups and individually. TA trainee and qualified transactional analysts are bound by explicit codes of ethical behavior and professional practice.

## 2. Transactional Analysis Counseling

TA counseling is a professional activity within a clearly defined contractual relationship. The process enables clients to develop awareness, options and skills in daily life, through the enhancement of the individual's strengths and resources. The aim is to increase the client's autonomy in relation to the social and cultural environment.

The fundamental link between Eric Berne and Carl Rogers, the founder of conventional person-centered counseling, is the belief that individuals can regain access to their true selves through the provision of a respectful and facilitating counseling relationship. The field of counseling is often chosen by professionals working in the social, psychological, and cultural areas of practice, as in social welfare, pastoral work, health care etc.

Although it overlaps with the field of psychotherapy, TA counseling is an equally specialized activity, with a distinct focus of skills, knowledge, and experience.

### 3. Transactional Analysis - A Humanistic Educational Psychology

In its educational application, transactional analysis (TA) offers a model for understanding personality, human development, communication and personal life patterns. It provides ways to describe and explain both internal and interpersonal behavior, in an innovative and accessible manner. Because of its emphasis on the interactional aspects of communication, it is valuable in most branches of education.

Three philosophical concepts underpin TA in education. (1) Respect for the dignity of all human beings and empathic acceptance of them is central to successful relationships between teachers and learners. TA describes this concept as the "I'm OK - You're OK" position. (2) People at all ages and stages of development are capable of learning to take responsibility for their decisions and actions. (3) Educational difficulties can be addressed effectively with co-operative goodwill and a coherent theoretical framework which clarifies the human dynamics involved.

Educational TA is also contractual, so that all parties know where they stand, and what agreements have been made for what purposes. Throughout the process, the ideas and methods are used openly, to promote informed co-operation in the aim of power being shared between all parties. TA's theoretical model of human development is valuable in understanding the learning process. Life plans can be revised at any stage of growth so that students may realize their full learning potential.

### 4. Organizational Applications of Transactional Analysis

TA provides a systematic approach to understanding the links between human needs and behaviors, and the ways that organizations are effective or ineffective in solving their problems and serving their customers.

Organizational consulting based on TA uses a contractual approach. Consultants maintain its theoretical accessibility, so that its concepts and ideas are readily understood and can be applied by people at all levels of an organization.

TA consultants are trained regarding group dynamics and leadership styles and in many concepts which relate specifically to organizational life. Time management, cycles of development for handling change, and analysis of organizational scripts can add clarity and direction to organizational development. By observing ingrained behavior patterns and exposing the accompanying limiting beliefs, the consultant can offer guidance to executives and help create healthy organizational cultures, in which individuals can function effectively and enthusiastically. Emphasis is placed on avoiding non-productive competition and conflict, and developing more effective problem solving strategies.

† Commentary No. 1302

## The Ego State Model

The Ego State or PAC Model and associated transactional analysis (TA) embrace a theory of three ego states or sets of actions, behaviors, feelings, and thoughts. The three ego states or aspects of personality in this system are Parent, Adult, and Child (PAC).

The Parent state is the personality playing the role of parent, either consciously or unconsciously, with some consideration for parental behavior influenced by one's own parents, i.e., acquired parental conditioning. This implies that one's own role-as-parent tends to mimic in some ways the mannerisms of one's own parents. A more conscious person will realize these tendencies and transcend them, incorporating those "inherited" parental traits that are suitable, discarding those which are not, and cultivating new, more suitable traits. In a broader sense, one's role as parent is also a consequence of what one brings into this world from previous experience, modified by the current experience, and so includes both parental conditioning and experience beyond one's own (current life) upbringing.

Similarly, the Adult state is the personality playing the role of a mature adult, i.e., sensible, but still conditioned by one's upbringing and experience, and potentially changeable as one continues to mature. But the Adult state is relatively more mature than the Parent state, less a matter of (unconsciously) playing a role, more a matter of being oneself and responding to immediate



circumstances (here and now) more or less objectively, while the Parent state is often triggered by “parental” circumstances, the Adult state is not. Likewise, the Child state is the personality reverting to the patterns of behavior and feeling and thinking that one had as a child, usually (naturally) being more self-centered (self-absorbed) and being relatively less objective than one would normally be in the parent or adult state.

The problem with the Ego State Model is that it tends to oversimplify things. It is helpful in the sense that much of human behavior can be perceived as fitting into one or another of these three (artificial) states, but the states are merely perceived and inferred on the basis of observations (of behavior, feelings, and thoughts), when in fact the actual and natural ego states are more varied, more complex, and non-correlative. What is more “true” are the actual transactions that take place, which can be perceived as relating to the three states, e.g., between two adults, between a parent and a child, etc. And yet one of the insights of transactional analysis is that people often continue to replay roles, from childhood or other times in one’s life, applying largely unconsciously to current circumstances what is not really (sensibly) applicable (i.e., what has not really been resolved lingers influentially).

In this Ego State Model (and in fact) a human being is a composite of ego states and can play a role (embrace a state) in one moment, and another role in the next moment. In principle, the human being can relatively easily evoke the parent within or the adult within or the child within. In practice, most human beings are so conditioned by habits or behavior, feeling, and thinking, that it is all rather quite mechanical, and behavior, feeling, and thinking is largely triggered (almost predictably) by a combination of heredity, upbringing, and external circumstances (i.e., previous and current experience results in conditioning). The real challenge, through transactional analysis or through other means, is to become more aware of this conditioning and gradually transcend it, in the process becoming more enlightened and becoming more effective (constructive) in relationships with other human beings.

## Transactions

In some general sense, transactions are simply “communicative actions or activities involving two people or groups of people or things that reciprocally affect or influence each other.” Each transaction is an act, process, and/or instance of transacting. A transaction may be balanced and more or less equally reciprocal, or unbalanced and partially reciprocal (or generally somewhere in between). Transactions range from those which are consciously engaged and consciously apprehended to those which are relatively unconsciously engaged and only partially apprehended.

In the more formal context of transactional analysis (TA), a transaction is an exchange or communication or momentary (or prolonged (extended)) relationship in which one person is addressing the other from one or another of the three ego states and the other person is responding (or reacting) from one or another of the three ego states (parent, adult, and child (PAC)). Given that, in the framework of TA, each of two people has a range of three ego states, there are six unique combinations or possible types of transactions, namely parent-parent, parent-adult, parent-child, adult-adult, adult-child, and child-child. So transactions in the TA sense are more particular to the psychological framework of TA.

Transactional analysis is properly the analysis and consideration of transactions or sequences of transactions, utilizing the ego state or PAC model. Some transactions are called strokes, i.e., any act or transaction involving substantive recognition. In acknowledging each other, in transacting, in recognizing each other, two people are exchanging strokes. Strokes can be positive or neutral or negative but the emphasis is upon positive or constructive strokes. Most psychologists believe that people need (positive) strokes in order to develop or maintain their self-esteem, and some people, in believing this, resort to artificial strokes.

Indeed many people need encouragement, need to develop the ego and their sense of self-esteem. Indeed need to develop constructive methods of relating or transacting with other people. But not all people. Some people are able to live

at a higher level, in which the ego is transcended and “stroking” is not needed. Another problem with “stroking” is that it often becomes mechanical or artificial, lacking in genuineness, and in which case therefore one is not being truly honest or constructive. If one is self-enamored and dependent on stroking, one is inhibited from developing to the next level of (personality and spiritual) maturity.

The value of transactional analysis is in helping people to understand their conditioning, their behavioral and attitudinal and communicative habits, and in understanding then facilitate constructive change (personal psychological growth) (toward greater psychological health). But while TA has a great deal of potential value, if practiced casually or personally or superficially, it can also be distracting and misleading. If one focuses on transactions as ends-in-themselves, then one misses the real opportunity for learning and growing. If one measures every relationship, every transaction, to gauge (perceived) advantage, then one is abusing the process. And a lot of this occurs unconsciously, which tends to compound the problem. Thus there are natural transactions, which are merely appreciated, and contrived or unnatural transactions, which create stress or tension on some level. Properly embraced, the study of transactions is a study of one’s own attitudes and behaviors and consequences in consciousness, and the personal growth that results.

