THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE THOUGHT OF ROLLO MAY - MOGK

THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE THOUGHT OF ROLLO MAY

by

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ABSTRACT

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Freedom is the distinctive characteristic of man and the human condition reflects the state of that freedom. As seen by Rollo May, freedom is the uniquely human possibility of choosing how to put oneself into life in face of various obstacles. Freedom is typified by the experience of vitality and centredness. However, identity in freedom is threatened profoundly by a bifurcation of reality which enters under the aegis of technological expertise.

The goal of May's therapeutic work is to free the individuals who seek help so that they may experience their existence as real and assume their responsive, decision-making position within the human dilemma.

This is a study of freedom and its dynamics in light of May's efforts.

PRÉCIS

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La liberté est le trait distinctif de l'homme, et l'état humain indique la condition de cette liberté. Selon Rollo May la liberté est la possibilité uniquement humaine pour choisir comment vivre en face des obstacles divers. La vitalité et le "centredness" font voir la liberté. Cependant l'identité de l'homme qui connaît la liberté est menacée par la fissure du monde qui entre sur la scène sous la bannière de la méthode scientifique.

Les travaux thérapeutiques de May servent à libérer ceux qui désirent de l'aide pour épreuver la réalité de leur vie et accepter le dilemme humain qui dit que le vrai homme est sensible et décisif.

Voici une étude de la liberté et son fonctionnement d'après les travaux de Rollo May.

PREFACE

This thesis has arisen from my concern to be able to minister more adequately and understandingly to those persons entrusted to my pastoral care. These contacts have extended from the parish and persons in general social situations to those persons who are located in special settings such as the military and prison scenes. In each milieu I have witnessed an overall preoccupation with freedom.

The basic issue in the thesis concerns freedom and each person's posture before this great challenge to be himself and to be free, both for himself and for others. It is before freedom that the individual's values come into question and he fumbles as he attempts to determine the meaning of his life and his goal in life.

Some may see this effort as dreadfully naive and underdeveloped. Others may see this effort as a failure to produce a vision of the future. Both will have missed the goal of this paper which is to explore the human dilemma of our age and to attempt to envision the way to personal freedom. A complete study would be unwieldy and beyond the present limitations. A vision of the future would tend to deny the central and unique position of each valuing and creating agent

who chooses and moves into his future.

The work is admittedly germinal. However, the results are personally encouraging. Thus, it is my desire to share my findings and it is my hope to inspire others to help shoulder the burden in such a manner as to raise the question in wider and deeper personal terms: "What does it mean for me to be a man?"

I acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude for help, guidance, and patience towards the intended goal. Dr. Monroe Peaston deserves my thanks for directing my research along productive avenues. My wife, Patricia, and my son, Cory, have sacrificed time that we could well have spent together as a family. The Board of Theological Education of the Lutheran Church in America has assisted financially. Others have been of assistance through their comments, queries, and support. To all these, named and unnamed, I express my thanks.

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INTRODUCTION

The most critical issue of this age is that of freedom. It is both a personal and a socio-cultural problem which leads us to search for meaningful forms of relation and community. We all are challenged and much is demanded of us, for the weight and the future of mankind rest upon our conclusions and the decisions which we bring to life.

Persons of many disciplines and interests have given voice to their perspectives and findings. Those disciplines of immediate concern are theology, philosophy, and psychology. Theologically, Martin Buber has aided us immensely in his I-Thou relational distinctions and clarifications. Paul Tillich and Søren Kierkegaard have assisted by means of philosophical and theological precision and depth. Rollo May has pointed out other contributions that could be made by psychology and psychotherapy.

May insists that psychology, like other disciplines, must function with an adequate image of man. Indeed, this is perhaps the basic question of the issue of freedom: What is man? There is a danger that our technological proclivities will write off or reduce man to the level of an individual mechanism that needs adjusting. But man has needs and goals that must be established and clarified so that appropriate

fulfilling action can be initiated. Psychology exists to serve man in these needs and in their formulation.

Essentially this places us in the situation of a dilemma of seeing an adequate vision of man himself and of attempting to become this particular man. The question "What does it mean to be human?" is basic and central to our considerations.

Man today is searching for his place in this evolutionary and transitional era. He needs to bring into focus his self-image. He must sense his own being before attempting to fulfill himself. At heart his wandering is a search for meaning, for his voice and logos.

Within this setting the works of Rollo May are most valuable and formative of an adequate operational view of man. Living within the polar tension of subjective and objective awareness man seeks to create his values. At any moment he is called upon to enter into anxiety-creating situations. For this endeavour he needs courage. Without it he retreats and he dies.

In five chapters we attempt to follow through May's insights and contributions as a practising counsellor and psychotherapist. The first chapter is concerned with freedom as the uniquely human possibility and is seen as the key to establishing the image of man in an age of massive depersonalization.

Secondly, we attempt to show that freedom is possible when man assumes progressive self-consciousness and raises the questions of existence in terms of himself rather than

in terms of external realities and criteria. This presupposes man's act of valuing and being ready to commit himself in the movement toward freedom.

In the third chapter we explore the idea that freedom is never a state of having-arrived, though it is possible to move towards freedom and into expanding fulfillments of personal freedom by confronting anxiety. Anxiety is, thus, a dynamic of freedom with the possibility of freedom as its goal.

Fourthly, we consider intentionality as that area of personal totality wherein one has the opportunity and ability to choose for his freedom. It presupposes the work and conclusions of the preceding chapters and leads forward to the point where one assumes personal responsibility for one's own individual and social existence. The goal of therapy is that one should care and actively participate in the adventure of freedom.

The fifth chapter summarily draws together the thoughts surveyed. The attempt is constantly to recognize the individual's distinctive being and his identity as a person who can know freedom and discover hope in order to face courageously into this transitional age.

In our age, as in all ages, people have two choices: to choose to grow or to choose to die, to choose to become enslaved or to choose to seek freedom and fulfillment. This burden of choice rests upon us more heavily in a transitional

age wherein we know that

> when a culture is caught in the profound convulsions of a transitional period, the individuals in the society understandably suffer spiritual and emotional upheaval; and finding that the accepted mores and ways of thought no longer yield security, they tend either to sink into dogmatism and conformism, giving up self-awareness, or are forced to strive for a heightened self-consciousness by which to become aware of their existence with new conviction and on new bases.[1]

It is our intention to draw forth some pertinent conclusions from the work of Rollo May, who has made a notable contribution towards establishing an image of man in freedom.

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[1]Rollo May, et al. (ed.), Existence: A New Dimension In Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1958), p.17. He continues, "a crisis is exactly what is required to shock people out of unaware dependence upon external dogma and to force them to unravel layers of pretense to reveal naked truth about themselves which, however unpleasant, will at least be solid. Existentialism is an attitude which accepts man as always becoming, which means potentially in crisis" (p.17). This work is hereafter cited simply as Existence.

CHAPTER I

FREEDOM: THE HUMAN POSSIBILITY AND THE MALAISE OF CUR TIME

> I have no desire to speak in strong terms about tnis age as a whole, but he who has observed the contemporary generation will surely not deny that tne incongruity in it and the reason for its dread and restlessness is tnis, tnat in one direction truth increases in extent, in mass, partly also in abstract clarity, whereas certitude steadily decreases.[1]
>
> Unless I can have some effect, unless my potency can be exercised and can matter, I inevitably will be the passive victim of outside forces and I shall experience myself as without significance.[2]

When Rollo May surveys our portion of the twentieth century he observes that man is typified by a sense of rootlessness, anonymity, and depersonalization. Man, the valuing agent, discovers himself confronted by a deep split which separates reason from emotion.[3] This split heightens cultural

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[1]Søren Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p.124. This work is hereafter cited as Concept. On pp.130-137 he clarifies the meaning of 'certitude.' 'Certitude' obviates the subject-object distinction which so dichotomizes our total age. 'Certitude' is akin to 'inwardness' and 'wholeness of being.' 'Integrity' would be close in intent.

[2]Rollo May, Psychology and the Human Dilemma (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1967), p.27; hereafter cited simply as Psychology.

[3]A valuable work in this vein is Erich Fromm's Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966). See also Gordon W. Allport, Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Per-

loss of unity and tends to overrule efforts to become free. Reason, gaining the upper hand, extends its territories by means of technological expertise and reduces life to objective levels, thereby obliterating man in a wholistic sense. In this milieu freedom is the first casualty and the crucial issue.

Freedom, however, can be revitalized and restored. Man can be re-born. But,

> man in the twentieth century has experienced a profound alteration in the basic images of reality by which he lives....The crisis of today is a crisis of humanness itself. It raises the question of what it means to be a human being who is present to the sheer mystery of his existence in a universe radically different than the past. It demands that humanness be invented anew through the creation of symbols which articulate man's experience of his relationships.[4]

This is the challenge which confronts us and into which we move: to "invent" humanness and clarify the meaning of freedom.

We follow the lead of May as we turn to 'artists' and their efforts to address their age. For, whoever the artist and whatever his orientation, he speaks of the meaning of life.[5] By means of his medium (be it picture or language) he addresses the possibilities of a particular era. He lends body to the personal values and goals that are in vogue. He

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sonality (New Haven:Yale University Press, 1955).

[4]Anon., "The Solitary Life of the Secular Religious," Image, IX (June, 1970), p.2.

[5]Rollo May, The Meaning of Anxiety (New York:Ronald Press Co., 1950), "literary artists symbolically express, often with remarkable fidelity, the unconscious assumptions and conflicts of their culture" (p.4). This work is henceforth cited as Anxiety.

acts also as a prophet in his pointing to the future. His basic function is to sharpen the growing edge of his age, to heighten consciousness.

In the literature of any period one may discern the values which hold together the existence of the persons then living, just as one may discover the issues of the time and the possibilities for the future. However, when one surveys the literature of our own period, one might wonder about the values and the consistency of our vision of life. There is no shortage of literature. But we discover that there are few stories that are generally agreed to be vital and significant on a large scale. Few, if any, stories are known that take man beyond the despair of the death of Willy Loman in Miller's Death of a Salesman.[6] The cutting edge of tragedy in the life and death of Willy still exists but few are the people who are being opened to life by this edge. Furthermore, there is no acceptable and established image of man in the future.

Indeed, as we consider the works of art in our century, we detect that our excellence has been in the portrayal of human despair. Miller represents Willy Loman as the man who has lived his life, only to have Willy confronted by his own loss of identity and significance. Picasso in turn excells in his Guernica where he draws together the fibres of suffer-

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[6]Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman (New York:Viking Press, 1958).

ing in this age of deep personal estrangement, alienation of man from man and man from himself.[7] We reflect an age still mired in despair and the loss of vitality.

Perhaps we are at the point of beginning to look at ourselves in the throes of life. But we have not yet been able to present our time with a personal and humanly-fulfilling image of man in the future. Coming from an age of almost gross certainties, we now find ourselves in an age of uncertainty and transition. At a time when we are told that we must develop the capacity to defy Zeus,[8] we discover that values and meanings are faint.

It is not that we do not take the future into account. It is rather that we have not yet sharpened our perceptive intentions to the point of being willing to behold and take into ourselves the mood of our time. We are wanting in the

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[7]Rollo May, "A Psychologist Looks at Mental Health in Today's World," Pastoral Psychology, VII, No. 5 (May, 1956): "First, modern man has become alienated from nature....Secondly, we observe that people in emotional difficulty have become alienated from themselves. This is shown chiefly in the fact that they have lost the sense of their own worth and cannot accept themselves. They have clung to external proofs of their worth as selves - winning good grades in school, making a profitable marriage, getting ahead of the Jones's, and so on....they have become alienated from their fellow men. They have lost the experience of community....modern man has become alienated from the meaning of his life" (pp.12-15).

[8]Rollo May speaks of this in Existential Psychotherapy (Toronto:C.B.C. Publications, 1967), p.28. This work is hereafter cited as Psychotherapy. See also Catherine Marshall, Christy (New York:The Hearst Corporation, 1968):"those who've never rebelled against God or at some point in their lives shaken their fists in the face of heaven, have never encountered God at all./ You mean it's good to rebel?/ I mean that rebelling against our human lot and admitting that we don't understand are clear steps on the way to finding reality" (p.432).

courage to say what we expect of the future and we hesitate at the thought of examining our legitimate needs.

We tend to be lost in time, caught between an outworn past and an uncertain future. We are overwhelmed at the prospects for a non-human future as portrayed by Orwell in 1984[9] and Huxley in Brave New World.[10] Our present weighs so heavily on our hands that we are frightened and unwilling to think of a future which has all the prospects of being the age of the machine and not another step forward in the realization of man. Extinction threatens in various forms. We hide in and from the shadows. There seem to be no symbols and myths currently capable of claiming our allegiance.[11] We lack a thorough-going myth of man, for we live in an age of radical change. In such an age of transition values change and we lose our hold.

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[9]George Orwell, 1984 (New York:New American Library, 1949).

[10]Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (London:Vanguard Library, 1956).

[11]Rollo May (ed.), Symbolism in Religion and Literature (New York:George Braziller, 1961):"When a word retains its original power to grasp us, it is still a symbol, but when this is lost it deteriorates into being only a sign; and by the same token, when a myth loses its power to demand some stand from us, it has become only a tale" (p.17). Italics his. This work is hereafter referred to as Symbolism. Rollo May, "Creativity and Encounter," Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XVIII (May, 1963):"the symbol and myth are the living, immediate forms which emerge from the encounter, and they express the interrelationship of subjective and objective poles" (p.371). See also F. W. Dillistone (ed.), Myth and Symbol (London:S.P.C.K., 1966).

We are caught in a play of power. The person's need to decide is frustrated by the operations of a dualistic theory of man. Man's decision-making ability is short-circuited as subject and object tend to face each other in an absolute stance. On the one hand, we note that our age can easily become retrogressive and even destructive in the creation of "IBM-creeps rather than people."[12] On the other hand, we are agonizingly aware that available power can be utilized constructively with persons in mind and at the centre. Between these two poles we tend to be frozen in self-pity, apathy, and a massive sense of loss. We conclude that "when the individual loses his significance, there occurs a sense of apathy, which is an expression of his state of diminished consciousness."[13] Truly, the real danger seems to be this common trend toward the surrender of consciousness.

For all intents and purposes one can equate 'impotence,' 'loss of significance,' and 'diminished consciousness.' The danger inherent in this experience of impotence is that that person who experiences impotence also runs headlong into anxiety. The anxiety in turn moves into regression and apathy. These bring hostility into play and the hostility deepens the alienation of man from man. This is the web of our situation today.

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[12]M. Darrol Bryant & Erich Weingärtner, Dimensions of Discontent (Geneva:Lutheran World Federation, 1970), p.25.

[13]May, Psychology, p.35.

The sense of meaning takes wings as goals and values are shaken by changing times. With the crushing advent of the age of automation man loses sight and use of his human powers. He falls into the habit of viewing all life in the objective and externalistic sense. Life is exclusive in a profound sense as individual competition and possessiveness replace viable community involvement and contribution. Hostility, anxiety, and isolation soar as each individual becomes the "potential enemy of his neighbor."[14]

In this milieu reason is reduced to technological expertise. Emotion and will are separated from legitimate functions of the personality. Following the Victorian will to power, the self has been retrograded to the level of a thing. Man has become objectified, divided against himself. A strict and terrible bifurcation of reality has crept into history. Life is compartmentalized and personal unity is undermined. A personal centre of life is wanting as man moves into an age where goals and values have not yet been firmly established or cogently recognized.

The average citizen has lost any deep sense of worth and dignity as this wave of dehumanization advances. The individual vanishes as life takes on ever-increasing 'fatedness.' Central authority and totalitarian ways of life gain strength as the individual loses power, or denies his use of it. Losing awareness of himself, the individual may succumb

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[14]Rollo May, Man's Search For Himself (New York:Signet Books, 1967), p.43; hereafter cited as Search.

to the pressure of the state to abide by the decree to favour one son of Oedipus at the cost of denying humanness to the other son or he may defy the state of affairs and hazard the upset of the state itself - truly a revolutionary act.[15]

People tend to be stripped naked before the one who dares to become personal, the one who defies the loss of a language for communicating on a personal level. So much conversation is mere cocktail prattle.[16] Words issue without meaning. Chatter covers the absence of emotional depth.

> Machines are already better at communicating with each other than human beings are with human beings. The situation is ironical. More and more concern about communication, less and less to communicate.[17]

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[15]The reference is to the final section of the trilogy of Sophocles, The Oedipus Plays of Sophocles, trans. Paul Roche (New York:Mentor Books, 1958), pp.162-210. Creon, king of Thebes, decrees that the body of Eteocles (a son of Oedipus) should be given full funeral honours while the corpse of Polyneices (Oedipus' other son) should lie unburied. This decree is actively protested by Antigone, their sister.

[16]See T. S. Eliot, The Cocktail Party (London:Faber & Faber Ltd., 1950). See also May, Pastoral Psychology, VII, No. 5:"one of the odd things about our society is that there are so many words bandied about in newspapers and over the radio and television, with so little real communication. There is so much social activity with so little real interchange of human emotions and experiences among people. It is almost as if the chief rule for a success in social life were to keep one's chatter meaningless and to cover up rather than reveal one's own deepest and sincerest feelings" (pp.14-15). See Paul Tournier, The Meaning of Persons (London:S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1963):"the fear of not knowing what to say makes us talk of something else, divert the conversation on to subjects that are not so uncomfortable to discuss....fear of emotion. Many people avoid personal subjects through fear of the emotions they may arouse, for fear of weeping, of having their hearts touched and their sensitiveness revealed....such demonstrations might be taken for signs of weakness. A false feeling of shame about the emotions is very widespread" (p.153).

[17]R. D. Laing, The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise (Harmondsworth:Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p.34.

In short, "our world has become disenchanted; and it leaves us not only out of tune with nature but with ourselves as well."[18] Despair is the act of falling short of tragedy on the way to viewing man in his fulfillment. So far in our age we have not developed this tragic sense of existence.[19] We are not yet at the point of being able to affirm a personal sense of dignity.

One discovers that it is pointless for man to try to "solve his personal psychological problems by the same methods as had been so effective in mastering physical nature and so successful in the industrial world."[20] But until a person finds himself of value and worth sharing, he does not have a basis for community with his fellow men. 'Having' can never become a substitute for 'being.' 'Fulness' can never serve adequately as a substitute for 'fulfillment.'[21] The direction becomes clearer.

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[18]May, Search, p.63.

[19]May, Search:"the tragic view indicates that we take seriously man's freedom and his need to realize himself; it demonstrates our belief in the 'indestructible will of man to achieve his humanity'" (p.67).

[20]May, Psychology, p.65. Italics his.

[21]May, Pastoral Psychology, VII, No. 5:"one of the tragedies of modern society is that this simple satisfaction in producing something of value for the community becomes diluted until it is almost non-existent. Then we place the value not on what we produce, but on the prize it brings - namely, the wages. And the goals of work tend to become not contributions to one's community, but competition to get ahead of one's neighbor" (p.15).

> We must rediscover the source of strength and integrity within ourselves. This, of course, goes hand in hand with the discovery and affirmation of values in ourselves and in our society which serve as the core of unity. But no values are effective, in a person or a society, except as there exists in the person the prior capacity to do the valuing, that is, the capacity actively to choose and affirm the values by which he lives....One person with indigenous inner strength exercises a great calming effect on panic among people around him. That is what our society needs - not new ideas and inventions, important as these are, and not geniuses and supermen, but persons who can be, that is, persons who have a center of strength within themselves.[22]

It is no wonder that we are able to look about and observe this strange scene.

> 'Social reality' seems to have disappeared altogether. What has coherence in the culture or makes sense? In terms of classic Freudian analysis where once there were traumas, specific causes for confusion, there now seems to be a pervasive sense of loss and rage, a paranoia directed at an entire culture, a sense of having been betrayed by the world itself.[23]

This is the inevitable outcome of learning the language of the machine,[24] the language of technology. Reason, the language of man, has been applied to the so-called objective world so that reason has been "reduced to a new kind of technique."[25]

This is the malaise of twentieth century man. The

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[22]May, Search, pp.68-69. Italics his.

[23]Peter Marin, "The Free People," This Magazine Is About Schools, IV, No. 2 (Spring, 1970), p.47. Italics his.

[24]Marcia Cavell, "Visions of a New Religion," Saturday Review, LIII, No. 51 (December 19, 1970):"to learn a new language is to learn to look at the world in a certain way" (p.14).

[25]May, Existence, p.22. Italics his.

nature of man as being[26] has been denied and lost as we have fallen into the dichotomy attributed to Descartes. By reducing man to the concrete we have lost in large part our particular relationship to the world through time. Man has in fact been reduced to another thing to be mastered, a fated creature. Thus, man has lost his self-relatedness and finds himself in the initial position of the mythic heroes whom we shall consider later. Man must discover himself.

In our time we see impersonality and loss of self-relatedness presented together, so that we are seduced by "sensation without sensitivity, intercourse without intimacy, in a strange perverse[way] that makes the denial of feeling a preferred goal."[27] The individual becomes another mechanism and even sex becomes impersonal as it enters the service of security.

Confronted by this chain of impotence, confusion, and apathy, it is inevitable to find conformism ranking high in social performance. Then comes a new threat: exile. "The real threat is not to be accepted, to be thrown out of the group, to be left solitary and alone."[28] So the man is in

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[26]May, Existence:"'Being' is a participle, a verb form implying that someone is in the process of being something.... becoming connotes more accurately the meaning of the term in this country" (p.41). Italics his. See also May, Psychotherapy:"your being is not your capacity to see the outside world; it is, rather, the capacity to know yourself as the one who can see the world" (p.4). Italics his.

[27]May, Psychology, p.43. Italics his.

[28]May, Psychology, p.120.

worse condition when all is passed than when he began.[29] He ends by losing self-consciousness.

Thus, our need for the ontological approach which May presents; the only way we can understand and deal with human beings is to clarify the nature of being human.[30] We find ourselves being pulled in two directions. We are attracted by the innocence of the girl who says, "Was and will make me ill. I take a gramme and only am."[31] Escape can be appealing. But we are also attracted by existentialism which speaks to our core where we are addressed as what we are, what we would like to be, and what we can be. We are doubly addressed by the desire to escape the conflicts of life and by the fulfillment of the mythic depths of our being.

We look for symbols of human-ness and discover that the one symbol that has some power to reach us is that of the revolutionary. But the thought of a "cultural revolution"[32] shakes our roots, for we resent the intrusive judgment that we have not exercised our consciousness,[33] that we have sold our-

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[29]See Matthew 12:45.

[30]Laing, op. cit., "any theory not founded on the nature of being human is a lie and a betrayal of man" (p.39).

[31]Huxley, op. cit., p.92.

[32]Ivan Illich, "The False Ideology of Schooling," Saturday Review, LIII, No. 42 (October 17, 1970):"cultural revolution is a reviewing of the reality of man and a redefinition of the world in terms that support this reality" (p.68).

[33]One too easily glosses over the note of Rosemary Ruether, "The Lord's Song in a Strange Land," Event, XI, No. 8 (September, 1971):"every revolution begins with a change of consciousness" (p.23).

selves short of our potential and settled into an eerie sort of pre-human comfort. We speak of the age of the person[34] and we recognize that before us is the intensive and demanding task of envisioning the prospects for humanity. Under the dual cry of "Freedom" and "Humanity" we know that

> during the decade now beginning we must learn a new language, a language that speaks not of development and underdevelopment but of true and false ideas about man, his needs, and his potential.[35]

The basic need and issue of our time is freedom and "freedom is to be distinguished radically from license."[36] We are part of the search for the freedom to be man. But personal freedom is to be lived only on the other side of the question, "What is man?" It is this question with which art comes to grips in order to wring out a future for man. "What does it mean for me to be a person?" The answer to this root question sets the boundaries and goals for our future. Our relation to freedom spells the opening or the closing of the future of man.[37]

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[34]See Dietrich von Oppen, The Age of the Person (Philadelphia:Fortress Press, 1969).

[35]Illich, Saturday Review, LIII, No. 42, p.57.

[36]Rollo May, "The Psychological Bases of Freedom," Pastoral Psychology, XIII (November, 1962), p.45. See also A. S. Neill, Freedom - Not License! (New York:Hart Publishing Co., Inc., 1966).

[37]It is one of May's repeated basic observations that technology operating without a person-fulfilling goal is not freedom. The man who lives without commitment will never know freedom. See May, Existence, p.88.

It is in view of these considerations that Rollo May looks at the myths of a past age, an age similar in tension to our own time.[38] In order to see man and the prospects for humanity May brings to our attention two myths of Greece. From the myth of Orestes and that of Oedipus, May leads us to an honest and careful consideration of the human condition and the possibilities for the future.

In the Oresteian trilogy we see a young man who is quite similar to man today. He is rendered impotent under the disguise of love and concern. Independence and freedom are denied to the son as his mother kills her husband, takes the cousin to her husband as lover, and exiles her son Orestes with the suggestion that she is really exercising great care for her son. He is reduced to the status of an undesirable object, so he must go. He is wiped out as a person.[39]

Orestes rises and overthrows this false love used to gain power over him and he takes the life of his mother. Madness ensues and the young man flees to Athena, the goddess of civic concern. All the while Orestes in this self-imposed exile is torn between his insistence on innocence and the revenging spiteful spirits of darkness. A trial is arranged

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[38] See Aeschylus, The Oresteian Trilogy, trans. Philip Vellacott (Harmondsworth:Penguin Books Ltd., 1969), pp.9-24. Vellacott clarifies the struggles and tensions involved.

[39] At this point one may be struck by the similarity between Orestes and a contemporary welfare recipient, perhaps well-cared for but almost certainly of little personal significance.

for him, since he has acted under divine counsel, and since it is detected by the gods that his plight is that of man seeking progress and the freedom to be man. The people of the jury receive guidance in their decision and, at the risk of releasing violent darkness and struggle throughout the land, declare Orestes to be innocent of the murder charge.

In this myth the destiny of man is unfolded as we see a new dimension in history. Whereas earlier myths hastened to show the gods manipulating human life, this myth reveals the struggle of the gods taking place on the level of personal consciousness, "in the structure of each man's deepest experience."[40] Orestes struggles for his existence as a person in his own right. He fights to overcome his "imbeddedness."[41]

We see that "something more than Orestes' personal life is at stake."[42] He asserts his responsibility for his behaviour and faces the ensuing guilt. He portrays the fact that

> in the vicissitudes of the structure of human existence every young person must go through the struggle of becoming free from his parents and must assert his own biological independence and psychological and spiritual freedom.[43]

In this act, Orestes raises the level of his consciousness to a new height.

> The new dimension of consciousness now embraces fate and freedom, determinism and choice, the requirements of

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[40]May, Psychotherapy, p.23. [41]Ibid., 24.

[42]Ibid., 24. [43]Ibid., 25.

> social morality and the responsibility of the individual person.[44]

New prospects for man are revealed through the exercise of responsible and personal freedom!

The personal setting is the initial loss of potency and the social setting is a culture in which success has become dominant so that the gods no longer receive first devotion in a deep and personal manner. The person has been turned inside out and subjected to externally-imposed order. The alternative to this emptiness and destruction of the person is the quantitative striving to mask the qualitative loss.

One creed no longer directs people's life, for there are as many creeds as there are people.[45] In such times it is recognized that "man must suffer to be wise."[46] Each person must affirm his own being, despite an unalterable past.

> The past no man can alter.
> What Fate holds secret still
> Let your courage burn to try.
> . . . . . .
> There is no way but this to staunch the wound
> That bleeds our race.
> None from the outside can help; we must ourselves
> Cure our own case.[47]

In the time of transition, competition, reason used for abusing man, upset of values, and threats against one's

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[44] Ibid., 25. Italics his.

[45] Aeschylus, The Oresteian Trilogy, p.105:
Time was, when one creed ruled the people's mind:
. . . . . .
Success is now men's god.

[46] Aeschylus, op. cit., 48. [47] Aeschylus, op. cit., 120.

person; in time of change - as surely in all times - one can no longer opt out of life by refusing responsibility as does Orestes' mother.[48] One's roots must be certain. As demands are increased, the individual must assert more assuredly the centre from which he receives his being. He cannot afford the luxury of laying the responsibility for the times at the feet of the younger generation.[49]

May provides an overall emphasis of the trilogy in terms that speak aptly to existence in the twentieth century.

> Man is free to choose how he is to encounter his fate. He chooses how he can relate to his destiny. The new level of consciousness lies in his experiencing himself as the man who can stand before fate, and who by consciousness can transcend his fate.[50]

Thus, by means of consciousness one can face into the loss of potency evidenced in our culture! One is enabled to face the responsibility of being a decision-making person.

In addition to the myth of Orestes May takes into account the myth of Oedipus - a better known episode. However, it seems that common acquaintance with the myth is no assurance of accurate understanding of its central aim, its personal meaning and its ability to grasp the viewer. Hence, the central importance of this myth in May's deliberation of the

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[48]Aeschylus, op. cit., 136: My child, Fate played a part; I was not all to blame.

[49]Aeschylus, op. cit., 152: The fault's not ours. It lies with younger gods who rise In place of those that ruled before.

[50]May, Psychotherapy, p.30.

human condition.

The myth begins when Oedipus is in early manhood. He has been born to a regent and his wife but Oedipus has been in a foreign land from birth because it was foretold that he would upset the royal family by killing his father and marrying his mother. It seems that his life has been completely charted before it begins. So he is exposed on his father's command. However, a shepherd rescues the infant and brings him up in a nearby territory. Oedipus accidentally discovers the prediction made at his birth and sets off from his adoptive home for fear of carrying out his fated future.

One day after leaving his home Oedipus encounters on the road a stranger and his fellow travellers. When provoked by the strangers, Oedipus kills several of them. One of the men killed is his father Laius. Oedipus then makes his way to the realm of his birth and saves the land from a dreaded monster, the sphinx.

The sphinx has taken up a position along the road to ask a riddle of all travellers. When a traveller cannot answer correctly, then that traveller is killed. Oedipus in his turn hears the riddle. "What is it that has four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?" He answers correctly that this is man in his lifetime: crawling in his infancy, walking as a man in his prime, and hobbling with the aid of a cane in his old age. The answer to the riddle is "Man." Hearing this answer, the sphinx destroys itself and Oedipus becomes a hero who is given the throne out of

respect and gratitude. He even marries the widowed queen, his own mother.

All this happens before the opening scene of the trilogy. But the myth goes on to unfold further and the emphasis is different than one might believe if influenced by the 'Oedipus complex' of psychology.

The tragedy opens as Oedipus and the citizens commiserate on the sickness of the times. The action centres on Oedipus as he attempts to discover the murderer of the king. When it is unearthed that he himself is the offender, Oedipus denies the charge and fights the reality of his own existence with profound anger. Time after time he acts out violently against his own reality, until he finally accepts the fact that he has killed his father, has married his own mother, and has fathered his own sister and brothers. When his mother is overwhelmed by such tragic happenings and hangs herself, he takes his own sight and departs into voluntary exile. So ends Oedipus Tyrannus, the first part of the trilogy.

Oedipus at Colonus follows. This is the story of Oedipus' demise. Guided about the countryside by his faithful daughter, Antigone, he comes to rest at a shrine near Athens. His uncle still rules at home but Oedipus has now been exiled officially and his two sons are 'at each other's throat' for the rule of Thebes. Having faced the guilt of his life, there is a strong and certain sense of grace about this old man - Oedipus. He has about him a sense of strength and is able to bless those who come to him in honesty and love. His presence

itself is healing, even after his death.

Finally, in Antigone the relatives of Oedipus bring the royal line to an end and leave the issues in the hands of the citizens who have witnessed the drama. Jealousy and envy are countered by the love and devotion of Antigone[51] who risks her life for the love of her outcast and deceased brother. She points the way for those who would love with passion and follow in the steps of a true hero.

Now, it is startling to discover that the Oedipus of psychology's 'Oedipus complex' is not visibly present in the trilogy. Oedipus does not kill his father so that he might in turn be able to possess his mother. Sex and aggression do not constitute the core of the myth.

May's interpretation of this myth re-establishes the vitality of the myth and directs its impact into our study of freedom and the human condition. The central issue of the trilogy is the "individual's self-consciousness and his struggles with his fate in self-knowledge and self-consciousness. ...The only issue in the drama is whether he will recognize what he has done."[52] Even under the destructive threat of exile Oedipus does not refuse his responsibility for his passion. He resists and balks. He, the great solver-of-riddles, does his utmost to avoid the reality of his self; this at the

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[51]See note 15 above.

[52]May, Psychotherapy, p.12.

same time that he relentlessly pursues the riddle of his own existence.

Oedipus faces the threat of exile, that most extreme threat of 'castration' for contemporary man. Still he exerts himself and pursues life with passion, steadily affirming his responsibility to life. He achieves integration of his being and instructs his daughter concerning the mystery of life.[53] Love is identified as passion, the means of affirming one's life.

Those who would not face the reality of their own existence meet violent death. There is a sense of despair as they refuse to take into themselves the tragic element of life.[54] But old Oedipus stands out in sharp contrast. He has been blinded (not castrated!) by his own hands, so as to represent more solidly man's insightful activity. Like Moses who led the children of Israel up to the edge of the promised land,[55] Oedipus is taken from life in mysterious fashion and his grave remains unknown to this day. His stubborn courage is converted into blessing for those who follow in recognition.

These two myths are related by May not simply in order to divert the reader's attention. Rather, it is by means of

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[53]May, Psychotherapy: "'and yet one word frees us of all the weight and pain of life: that word is love.' But Oedipus and Sophocles do not at all mean love as the absence of aggression or as the absence of the strong affects of anger. We see here a significant interrelationship between love and self-assertion, between love and will" (p.18). See further Chapter IV below.

[54]See note 19 above.

[55]See Deuteronomy 34.

these two myths that May intends to establish a solid answer to that basic question: What is man?

It is noted that the creative aspect of life involves both a forward and a backward scanning. This function holds also for myths. A dual function exists in myths. We commonly recognize the "regressive" aspect but the value of these myths for our purpose is largely in terms of their "progressive" function.[56] We concern ourselves with both the weakness and the possibility of man.

The highest level of life is portrayed as consciousness. Each symbolic hero seeks to become conscious of himself. He seeks to know and face himself, even when this entails a tragic strain. Each is willing to take into himself that 'fated part of life' but this is not the same as saying that life can never be more than this 'given.' Here it arises

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[56]May, Symbolism, pp.45-48, distinguishes two vital functions of symbols and myths. The regressive function is that which is commonly recognized to give expression to past and unconscious content. There is, however, also a progressive function which is largely ignored. This is the function that leads one forward, into the future, toward integrated existence and the recognition of unaffirmed potency. See May, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XVIII:"Symbol and myth do bring into awareness the infantile, archaic, unconscious longings, dreads, and similar psychic content. This is their regressive aspect. But they also bring out new meaning, new forms, disclose reality which was literally not present before, a reality that is not merely subjective but has one pole which is outside ourselves. This is the progressive side of symbol and myth. This aspect points ahead; it is integrative; it is a progressive revealing of structure in our relation to nature and our own existence, a road to universals beyond discrete concrete personal experience. It is this second, progressive aspect of symbols and myths that is almost completely omitted in the traditional Freudian psychoanalytic approach" (p.374). Italics his.

that the basic issue is that of freedom. It is a most careful application of freedom; freedom with a special poignancy. When this freedom is faced in open responsibility, then man approaches fulfillment like Orestes and Oedipus achieved.

By means of the two symbolic representations of life that have already been cited, we can take into account the human condition in terms of its malaise and its possibilities. We shall direct our efforts toward man in the future where he may recognize or destroy himself.

From these myths we distinguish the major issue as the loss of potency and personal significance. This loss is represented by the term "fate". In the mythic background of Greece there is the certainty that man's life is regulated throughout and totally by the gods. The ordinary person is given a great sense of security in the knowledge that he is in the hands and under the care of the gods. But he also knows a capricious element so that man is the plaything of the gods and in the final analysis he simply does not count. Fate is a way out of facing personal responsibility for life.

Many clergymen and therapists today are confronted by similar ways of life. Fate is identified as the impersonal certainty in life that no matter what one might try, the end result will be the same. Fate is identified with personal determinism. The consequence is that there is no acknowledgement of the need to assume personal responsibility and face life as the one who is living it. This is quite distinct from facing time as though it were being lived by someone

else in our skin. The individual is reduced to helplessness and his religion, or more generally his weltenschauung, is reduced to magic.[57]

Indeed, there is no possible way to deny that each person must die. But refusal to face the fulness or the emptiness of one's days ought not to be permitted to go under this disguise of fatedness and personal impotence.

> Though fate is not a specific god, it is the necessity no human being can escape. Fate is the limitation and the trauma of childbirth experience, and the confining locale of our birth. Fate is my being an individual, an 'I' who can therefore never fully understand you as 'thou'....Fate is death, the eternal loneliness that none of us can escape.[58]

It is precisely at this point where Orestes and Oedipus stand firm. They will not simply accept the fate sentenced onto them at birth. Each will in turn know and take into himself the full significance of that fate. Each will transcend the impersonal certainty that has been stamped onto his life. Oedipus and Orestes are intent on becoming conscious of life and assuming responsibility for whatever is the outcome of their days. Each asserts his freedom.

The issue of freedom is introduced as the answer to the sphinx that entangles our life - the meaning of our humanity.

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[57]Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark, 1959):"magic desires to obtain its effects without entering into relation, and practises its tricks in the void" (p.83). This is in fact a reduction of consciousness and an ultimate denaturing and denial of personal response-ability.

[58]May, Psychotherapy, p.30.

> The capacity to be aware of these fateful conditions in itself makes possible a freedom in the face of fate. Not that we become free from fate; on the contrary, we still must die and we still are limited....Neither is it that man becomes 'master of his fate' as the Victorians fondly believed....It is, rather, that man is free to choose how he is to encounter his fate.[59]

The person who faces the sphinx (the one who binds life = the entangler) and answers "Man" to the sphinx's question is enabled to see man in his true perspective. This is the one who understands the uniquely human freedom, the one who refuses to be only the fated-one.

The human condition is unique in that man is the one who can know that his existence has certain limitations. He is also the being capable of taking a stand toward those fated parts of life in an effort to transcend their impact on his own existence.

This is not to say that freedom (the uniquely human experience) is the opposite of determinism. Freedom is not being without conditions. Freedom is, rather, being able to respond to the conditions of one's time.

> Freedom is the individual's capacity to know that he is the determined one, to pause between stimulus and response and thus to throw his weight, however slight it may be, on the side of one particular response among several possible ones.[60]

The more Orestes and Oedipus become aware of their fate, the more they are empowered to face their individual

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[59]May, Psychotherapy, p.30. Italics his.

[60]May, Psychotherapy, p.175. Italics his.

responsibility before that fate. The more each becomes aware of that which limits his life, the greater the freedom which he knows and the greater the fulfillment of his person.

Orestes and Oedipus are mythic representations of man in search for himself, a search which is granted some recognition in our day.

> As every period in history has its own 'contemporary age' -- its own now -- ours also has numerous particularities and, in fact, has been characterized in many ways. For instance, it has been described as 'The Age of Alienation,' 'The Age of Hunger and Poverty,' 'The Age of Nuclear Power,' 'The Age of the Universe,' 'The Age of Nihilism and Despair,' 'The Age of TV-Dinners,' 'The Age of Absurdity and Nonsense,' and so forth. Which phrase describes our 'now' most properly? It can never be understood as long as we take the 'now' for granted as a given and fixed reality. Each person has to have his own 'now' in himself. The 'now' should be created by each person rather than be experienced passively without one's 'engagement.'[61]

Note the similarity between the two myths already cited and the observation made by James Baldwin when he speaks of the anguish of our times.

> Something in the man knows - must know - that what he is doing is evil; but in order to accept the knowledge the man would have to change. What is ghastly and really almost hopeless in our ... situation now is that the crimes we have committed are so great and so unspeakable that the acceptance of this knowledge would lead, literally, to madness. The human being, then, in order to protect himself, closes his eyes, compulsively repeats his crimes, and enters a spiritual darkness which no one can describe.[62]

The dynamic is essentially the same, whether we are

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[61] Bryant & Weingärtner, op. cit., p.4.

[62] James Baldwin, Blues for Mr. Charlie (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1964), p.6. Italics his.

speaking with Baldwin of the racial situation in America, or speaking with May, Aeschylus, or Sophocles of the threat of non-being. Impotence is the basic experience.[63] The individual is thrown into competition,[64] his identity is questioned, and he is subjected to an all-pervading sense of loss. Confusion ensues and he enters the gnawing conviction that "no matter how covered up by diversions or frantic togetherness, 'I do not matter.'"[65]

We, like the symbolic representatives already noted, are confronted by the crisis of knowing what it means to be man. It is possible for us also to accept the past and to move on into the age of the person and freedom. We can define and describe freedom in a deeply moving and personal manner,[66]

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[63]Essentially the dynamic is that one experiences loss of significance. As this intensifies, the experience of impotence also intensifies. The effect generally witnessed is apathy and decrease of shouldered responsibility.

[64]See May, Anxiety, pp.177-181. See also Erich Fromm, Man For Himself, especially pp.67ff.

[65]May, Psychology, p.30. He continues (p.31):"the point I wish to make is that when people feel their insignificance as individual persons, they also suffer an undermining of their sense of human responsibility. Why load yourself with responsibility if what you do doesn't matter anyway, and you must be on edge every moment ready to flee?"

[66]May, Search:"as the person gains more consciousness of self, his range of choice and his freedom proportionately increase. Freedom is cumulative" (p.139). See further Ana Mazak, "Freedom," Footnotes, VII (July, 1970):"Freedom is responsibility. Liberty allows: it minimizes obligations, and holds you responsible only for that which you do. Freedom, on the other hand, commands: it maximizes obligations, and holds you accountable not only for what you do, but also for what you should have done, or could have done" (p.62).

or we can give in to massive fatalism. Either way, we know that we choose, for even to make no decision to change is already to have decided.[67] If we are not part of the solution, then we are part of the problem.

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[67]Frank Potter, "Life Is Only A Breath Away," Motive, XXX, No. 7-8 (April-May, 1970):"abstention is a decision to continue as we are" (p.83). Italics his.

CHAPTER II

CONSCIOUSNESS: THE PRECONDITION OF FREEDOM

> The crucial problem in understanding man is not what attributes the human being shares with the horse or dog or rat, but what constitutes him uniquely as man.[1]
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> The great difficulty of scientific research is that one cannot analyze concrete nature without abstracting, but that one must constantly keep in mind that 'the abstractions of science are entities which are truly in nature, though they have no meaning in isolation from nature.'... The emphasis on the creative element in nature introduces the element of freedom.[2]

Freedom is established as a basic human issue and concern. In the words of Rollo May, we acknowledge freedom as "man's capacity to take a hand in his own development. It is our capacity to mould ourselves. Freedom is the other side of consciousness."[3] This we have already noted in mythic form.

We have also observed that the malaise of our age is the "dislocation of human consciousness."[4] This is a time of

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[1]May, Psychology, p.143.

[2]Gotthard Booth, "Values in Nature and Psychotherapy," Archives of General Psychiatry, VIII, No. 1 (January, 1963), p.23.

[3]May, Search, p.138.

[4]May, Psychology, p.29.

most severe personal threat wherein man seems most in need of a centre from which to move. For it is the peculiar situation of man that he cannot move out into the world in health and integrity unless he acts from a position of self-affirmation.[5] "Freedom by its very nature can be located only in the self acting as the totality, 'the centered self.' Consciousness is the experience of the self acting from its center."[6]

Freedom is not created without struggle. Indeed, the first and second principles of freedom speak prophetically of the tension within which freedom evolves.[7] "First, freedom is a quality of action of the centered self."[8] Secondly, "freedom always involves social responsibility."[9] Truly, the distinction between freedom and license necessitates tension and conflict. For the dialectical nature of freedom is utterly contrary to license. "Freedom is limited by the fact that the self always exists in a world (a society, culture) and has a dialectical relation to that world,"[10] whereas license is a

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[5]K. M. Baxter, Speak What We Feel (London:S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1964):"If affirmation is asked of us, we must affirm valid images and new ones, not merely enshrine the old. We must be ready for our whole known world of symbols to disappear and be replaced" (p.85). See May, Existence:"Affirming one's own being creates the values of life" (p.31).

[6]May, Psychology, p.177.

[7]May posits three principles of freedom. The third principle comes to our attention in the next chapter.

[8]May, Psychology, p.176. Italics his.

[9]Ibid., 177. Italics his.

[10]Ibid., 178.

deliberate ignoring of conditions. This leads us directly to the study of man as a conscious being.

In the preceding chapter we referred to the impotence and insignificance of contemporary man. At that time we gave notice that this experience is considered equivalent to loss or distortion of consciousness. The corollary holds that through increased consciousness one is enabled to drive back the frontiers of impotence and insignificance. We turn our attention to this frontier.

When Pannenberg states that "man becomes lord of the world through an artificial world that he spreads out between himself and his surroundings,"[11] he gives voice to the uniquely human identity. One is reminded of the same identity when one reads the words of René Dubos on a poster: "We must not ask where science and technology are taking us, but rather how we can manage science and technology so that they can take us where we want to go." Both are speaking of man as the being who experiences a gap between himself and that over against which he appears. Both speak of the paradoxical nature of human life. Each gives expression to the fact that self-consciousness is a function which arises only in man and that "every new function forms a new complexity that reorganizes all the simpler elements in this organism."[12]

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[11]Wolfhart Pannenberg, What Is Man?, trans. Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia:Fortress Press, 1970), p.20.

[12]Rollo May, Existential Psychology (New York:Random House, 1969), p.78. In the same place he states that "the simple can be understood only in terms of the more complex."

Man is at one and the same time the being who experiences life as self-made and rigidly determined from the outside. He is the one who sees himself in the position of wanting, wishing, and feeling, while he is also the one who sees himself as driven and under necessity: the one who 'must,' who 'has to' do this or that. This dual experience is directly at the heart of the human dilemma.[13] But neither stands alone.

> Nor is it quite right to speak of our being subject and object simultaneously. The important point is that our consciousness is a process of oscillation between the two. Indeed, is not this dialectical relationship between experiencing myself as subject and object just what consciousness consists of? ...it is the gap between the two ways of responding that is important. My freedom in any genuine sense lies not in my capacity to live as 'pure subject,' but rather in my capacity to experience both modes, to live in the dialectical relationship.[14]

In order to clarify what is understood by "consciousness" we refer to May's own words. He states that

> we are using the term in the sense of Kurt Goldstein's (1939) description of the capacity of the human being to transcend the immediate situation, to use abstractions and universals, to communicate in language and symbols, and on the basis of these capacities, to survey and actualize in one form or another the greater range of possibilities (greater compared to animal and inanimate nature) in relating to oneself, one's fellows, and one's world.[15]

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[13]May, Psychology: "The human dilemma is that which arises out of man's capacity to experience himself as both subject and object at the same time" (p.8). Italics his. The stress is on the unity of man as being in the existential sense. May Examines this concept rigorously in Existence.

[14]May, Psychology, p.9. Italics his.

[15]May, Psychology, pp.96-97. One notes that this definition is divided into capacities and relational potential.

Thus, to accurately see man one must attend to his distinctive forms of functioning and relating. Man has distinctive capacities which permit him to actualize unique possibilities.

We turn first to the human capacities which distinguish man. Man is the being who, in a relative sense, has the capacity to move through time. He has a future and can know this. In being able to transcend the streams of reality, he is known as the 'time-binder.' This is not to imply that the human being is above time or beyond being limited by time. For of all creatures he is the one who knows that at some time in the future he will be no longer. Time is one feature of the dialectical nature of man's being. It is by virtue of this time-spanning ability that man can see himself as though from the outside. He can be conscious of himself as moving toward a point in time and can order his world appropriately.

We consider world as "the structure of meaningful relationships in which a person exists and in the design of which he participates."[16] This speaks of and points to man as con-

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[16]May, Existence, p.59. Italics his. See Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (London:Collins, 1964):"The fundamental fact of human existence is neither the individual as such nor the aggregate as such. Each, considered by itself, is a mighty abstraction. The individual is a fact of existence in so far as he steps into a living relation with other individuals. The aggregate is a fact of existence in so far as it is built up on living units of relation. The fundamental fact of human existence is man with man.... Language is only a sign and a means for it, all achievement of the spirit has been incited by it....It is rooted in one being turned to another as another, as this particular other being, in order to communicate with it in a sphere beyond the special sphere of each...the sphere of 'between'" (p.244).

scious being. He experiences a temporal gap in his existence and he knows two ways of relating to time. He can be the object of time and be regulated by the instruments of external time, such as the clock and the calendar. Necessity can bind him within its web. Yet, he is not limited to external time. For he can also relate subjectively to time in that he is not merely the slave of time. He is able tc choose how he will experience and employ his time.[17] He is able to transcend in possibility either pole in isolation by facing them together in a creative tension.

Man in creation is distinct in his relation to time by reason of mind. By 'mind' we mean the "capacity or the human being to be conscious of what he is experiencing. That is to say, to be aware of himself as having a world and being interrelated with it."[18] Thus, it is by means of his responsible

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[17]Rollo May, "Existential Psychiatry: An Evaluation," Journal of Religion and Health, I (October, 1961):"We never actually have a 'drive' or a 'force' or a stimulus and response in human behavior. What we have, rather, is always a man to whom the drive or force or stimulus is happening, and who, except in pathological situations, experiences this action upon him. The endeavor to understand phenomena by isolating out the simpler aspects of the behavior and making abstractions of them, such as drive and force, is useful in some aspects of science, but it is not adequate for a science of man that will help us understand human anxiety, despair, and other problems that beset the human psyche" (p.37). See also Aarne Siirala, Divine Humanness (Philadelphia:Fortress Press, 1970):"a basic temptation inherent in all research is the tendency to identify the part with the whole, to regard as most real the area of reality which is under research" (p.13).

[18]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962), p.42. Italics his. On the next page he adds:"Is not man's capacity to be conscious of himself as the experiencing individual actually also the psychological basis of human freedom? Hegel puts our point in one powerful sentence, 'The history of the

operation of mind that he relates as a total being both to himself and to the life he perceives and encounters. Our definition of man then expands to include man as "the being who can question his own being. Not only can, but must; as he must likewise ask questions of the world around him."[19]

Another capacity of man emerges as we see him moving from his centre outward to meet the world of his experience. In order to relate[20] to the world man establishes between himself and his experiences an invisible world of symbols[21] and language. He remains the centre of his experience. But centredness is not a permanent possession or ability. It is rather a capability that can be subverted at any moment as one moves or refuses to move out from his centre. For an example, we can look quickly at the uses made of language. The intermediating 'world' of language can be used in such a way as to present reality as relational experiences or as external forms and absolutes. The former use demands communi-

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the world is none other than the progress of consciousness of freedom.'"

[19]May, Symbolism, p.21. Italics his.

[20]In I and Thou Buber typifies man as the relational creature who knows two modes of relation. The personal mode is I-Thou, while the impersonal mode is I-It. I-It is imperative but must not be exclusive lest the person die. Here one is reduced to sheer causality and personal impotence. "only he who knows relation and knows about the presence of Thou is capable of decision" (p.51). Italics his.

[21]May, Symbolism:"the symbol is a 'bridging act', a bridging of the gap between outer existence (the world) and inner meaning" (pp.21-22).

cation and clarification as experiences are inter-related, whereas the latter use overrides the individual and obliterates his experience. In other words, when the abstractions lose their function as tools, man becomes a tool in turn and he is forced into fated-ness and must surrender his consciousness, the surrounding sphere of centredness.

The dictum of architects may be of value at this point: form follows function.[22] The uniqueness of man is his ability to experience and live in the tension of gaps, namely, the subject-object polarity, and still relate to the whole. Identity follows function. Identity is relationally based. But the relation is perverted and destroyed when one begins to consider 'nature' as external reality,[23] as an object out there. As soon as one separates perception from reality he destroys the relational basis and objectifies the person who relates.[24] Function and form reverse positions. The person is turned inside out. Conformity assumes great importance as

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[22]See and compare with quotation 12 above.

[23]One may wish to consider the presentation of Roger's principles of personality; Carl R. Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy (Boston:Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), pp.483ff. Great emphasis is placed upon the fact that 'reality' is the observer's perception of the observed phenomenon. Subsequent relations treat the perception as though it were in fact reality.

[24]See James E. Dittes, "Book Reviews," Encounter, XXI (Winter, 1960):"Science misses the very essence of personality, the driving force of its existence. Science analyzes, abstracts, intellectualizes, fragments, spins elaborate theories, but it is not fundamentally concerned about the real person in his world. It is 'more dedicated to its own consistency than to the consistencies within the developing person,' as one reviewer has put it" (p.102).

the person withdraws and shrivels. When one denies the function of consciousness and the goal of freedom, then he sells himself into the slavery of fate. Immediately one finds oneself in the realm of malaise.

We observe that when the individual denies his essentially relational nature, he begins to die and wither. He tends to surrender his time-binding ability and to display externally-imposed and conformist-oriented behaviour. As well, he seems inclined to be treated and to treat himself as a non-centred and strictly controllable and measurable entity. He disappears as a self or displays the general characteristics of our malaise: impotence, apathy, want of consciousness, denial of freedom. In brief, the one who dwells in a broken centre is the one who can be expected to reach after success, occupy himself with technique,[25] and give voice to emptiness. He simply lacks unity of being, even on a mythic level.

One can indeed point to the skyscraper as symbol for the meaninglessness that is increasingly observed and articulated. The skyscraper is symbolic of the trend toward separateness and striving which is directed away from community and

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[25]Paul Tournier, The Whole Person in a Broken World, trans. John & Helen Doberstein (New York:Harper & Row, 1964): "Science and technology enable us to treat the 'local disorders.' This does not demand of us the commitment of our own person; we can remain quite objective in the process. But the sickness of man, the break that occurred in his spiritual destiny, we can get at only as we ourselves are healed of it" (p.67). The split of the person is apparent. Tournier gives a good survey of the myths of power and progress. See also Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man (Boston:Beacon Press, 1970).

nature.[26] This driving toward finiteness and separateness sees man in a security-clawing activity which is indicative of the loss of symbols to unite outer existence and inner meaning. The man in this symbolic structure is precisely the one who must surrender himself and the life-spawning knowledge that freedom, like truth, "exists for the particular individual only as he produces it in action."[27] Freedom can never be an abstract absolute but is always an existential affair.

In this light we know that "only in this century has the distinction between guilty and innocent been systematically wiped out, [and] masses of people [have] been put to death for abstract, ideological reasons."[28] Indeed, man has been turned into an abstraction; the result of dealing with man as just another mechanism to be 'adjusted.'[29] Decision and will

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[26]May, Symbolism:"This standing on nature in order to move forever away from nature, upward toward ' a top' which never exists, is obviously parallel to the competitiveness in human life" (p.25). Italics his.

[27]Kierkegaard, Concept, p.123.

[28]Irving Layton, Balls for a One-Armed Juggler (Toronto:McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1963), p.xxi.

[29]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962):"Or if we accept the proposal sometimes made in psychological conferences that our computers can set our goals, our technicians determine our policies, we are abdicating in the face of lack of adequate goals. For this is the one thing our computers cannot tell us. In this day when people are so confused and anxious, it is not surprising they tend to abdicate in favor of the machine. We tend then more and more to ask only the questions the machine can answer, teach more and more only the things the machine can teach, and limit our research to the quantitative work the machine can do. There emerges then a real and inexorable tendency to make our image of man over into the image of the very machine by which we study and control man" (p.42).

are in fact removed from man's hands.[30] Consciousness is subverted. This demands of us the recognition of our capacity to "transcend the immediate situation, to use abstractions and universals, [and] to communicate in language and symbols."[31]

Consciousness is located in the centre of human existence just as it is at the heart of the six distinct and interrelated processes of the human being as given by May.[32] First, every existing person is centred in himself in such a way that an attack upon this centre is also an attack upon his existence. Illness is manifested when the centre is invaded. Secondly, each person has the character of self-affirmation, that is to say, the need to preserve his centredness. At this point courage is demanded of the individual to assert and fulfill the values of his centre.[33] The third characteristic is that "all existing persons have the possibility and need of going out from their centredness to participate in other beings.

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[30]May, Journal of Religion and Health, I (Oct., 1961): "The existential approach puts decision and will back into the center of the picture -- not at all in the sense of 'free will against determinism'; this issue is dead and buried" (p.38). We will deal with will and decision in Chapter IV.

[31]See quotation 14 above.

[32]See May, Existential Psychology, pp.74-83, where he discusses the "Existential Bases of Psychotherapy."

[33]May, Existential Psychology, pp.75f. Here he refers the reader to the masterpiece of Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (Digswell Place:James Nisbet & Co., Ltd., 1961).

This always involves risk."[34] Fourthly, centredness has a subjective aspect which is referred to as awareness.

Now, awareness is to be radically distinguished from consciousness. One need only follow May's observations.

> Awareness more easily fits the conventional scientific framework; it is more amenable to being broken into components, to being studied and experimented with in discrete situations and with mechanistic models in animals and man. Consciousness, on the other hand, is much harder to deal with in research, for it is characterized by the fact that if we break it up into components, we lose what we are studying. The word, 'awareness,' implies knowledge of external threats — that is, knowledge of danger, of enemies, knowledge requiring defensive strategies.[35]

Awareness is a primitive form of world-acquaintance which makes way for consciousness. But awareness is not restricted to the animal realm. Truly, it is a characteristic that is shared by man, though man goes beyond simple awareness.

This brings us to the fifth human characteristic, namely, that "the uniquely human form of awareness is self-consciousness."[36] Consciousness is not to be identified or confused with awareness for consciousness refers to "knowledge which is felt inwardly, that is to knowing with, not only with others but with oneself in the sense of consciousness

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[34] May, Existential Psychology, p.76. Italics his.

[35] May, Psychology, p.96.

[36] May, Existential Psychology, p.77. Italics his. The sixth characteristic of the human being is that he experiences anxiety. We deal with this characteristic in greater detail in Chapter III.

of the fact that I am the being who has a world."[37] A new dimension and sense of self may be seen in life by reason of consciousness.

Ross Snyder poignantly distinguishes awareness and consciousness in a personally meaningful manner.

> Taken into the world of person, the things of the world become so much more than they are in-and-of themselves. Yet we persist in looking at their customary surfaces - as if they were just packages which we handle but never open. We keep looking for a cataclysmic revelation of the meaning of life. Whereas we are being nudged all the time. If we were not so dull and lumpy, we could sense the potentials present in the situations of our life. Once in a while, we see the uncommon meanings of the common things of life. And we are never quite the same afterward. Nor are the 'things' of the world.[38]

Thus, the conscious person acts on the basis of his perception of his own significance. His existence is made meaningful by his experience of himself as a centre of life. He is the one who is able to recognize the sixth human process which is dealt with more extensively in the following chapter. So, let it suffice to note that anxiety is the state of the human being who is engaged in the struggle against that which would destroy his being.[39]

We assert that a person cannot be met or understood apart from his conscious functioning, for it is only in terms of the higher function that the total person can be truly seen. At the same time, one does not assume his rightful

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[37] May, Psychology, p.96. Italics his.

[38] Ross Snyder, Inscape (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1964), p.50. Italics his.

[39] May, Existential Psychology, pp.81f.

place in the human dilemma until one comes to grips with his consciousness, his personal identity and meaning. In brief, "man is the being who can be conscious of, and therefore responsible for, his existence. It is this capacity to become aware of his own being which distinguishes the human being from other beings."[40] As a consequence we now have our being in the creative tension which knows that values do not drive or push a man, but rather pull him. For consciousness dictates that man lives in terms of the possible.

Charles Dickens provides an illustration which draws together the fibres of our discussion thus far. In A Christmas Carol[41] we see Ebenezer Scrooge as the central character. He is a shrivelled miser who contains within himself the hurt and anguish of an unfortunate youth. He has felt himself driven into a corner and has been scarred. As a result he goes through life treating every person as if that person were trying to push Scrooge himself further into his lifelessness.

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[40]May, Existence, p.41. See May, Search: "To be sure, the continuum between man and animals should be seen clearly and realistically; but one need not jump to the unwarranted conclusion that therefore there is no distinction between man and animals. We do not need to prove the self as an 'object.' It is only necessary that we show how people have the capacity for self-relatedness. The self is the organizing function within the individual and the function by means of which one human being can relate to another. It is prior to, not an object of, our science; it is presupposed in the fact that one can be a scientist" (p.79).

[41]Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1869).

Life for him has become a possession, an object, but life is not to be lived. Indeed, his is a pitiful existence and he threatens every person with his own form of diminutive being.[42]

However, Ebenezer is not simply an animal rolled up in time. In a moment of personal insight he is bombarded by his unfulfilled potential, by his daily form of 'un-life.' It is only when he can see beyond his own corner that he can begin to recognize new life. The continuum of his past and present fly into the future where he meets intolerable agony. At the moment when he transcends his own present, he begins to be more than a dried prune of a man. The rest of the tale is well known as he in self-consciousness chooses to fulfill himself in the future rather than permit himself to be bound up within the past. New life emerges as he fights his way into and through the anxiety of non-being.

This abbreviated account sufficiently clarifies and illustrates a truth about man. Man is able to see himself by entering into the painfulness of the dilemma (subjective and objective awareness) which grows in intensity, rather than diminishes. So when Scrooge sees himself projected through time he observes an unpleasant object which is cast over

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[42]Perhaps one person escapes from his clutches and receives different treatment from Scrooge. Like one who can pose no threat, Tiny Tim meets Ebenezer in a more or less open relationship; cripple meeting cripple. Is the same sort of action not frequently seen in our own day and relationships!

against his own subjective awareness. In the hiatus between the two he is able in consciousness to grasp his lack of freedom. At this point he chooses to commit himself to a new way of living, a move which has brought delight and renewal to all who have known him. In the exercising of his consciousness he can reach into new freedom and fulfillment.

For Scrooge, as for anyone else, it is the experience of a distance between subject and object, a creative void, which must be taken account of and filled.

> It is by virtue of the emergence of consciousness that man possesses this radically new dimension of world openness, freedom of movement in relation to the objective environment. And particularly important for our discussion here, man's capacity to be self-aware of the fact that he is both bound and free gives the phenomenon the genuine character of a dilemma, in which some decision must be made, if only to refuse to take responsibility for the freedom involved in this world openness.[43]

If he had been unable to form symbols for his own existence, and if he had been unable to transcend his immediate moment of life in the now and in terms of the possible, then Ebenezer Scrooge (as all humans) would never have been able to experience freedom, hope, or new life. Without the distinctively human capacities already cited personal fulfillment is impossible.

We here employ 'fulfillment' in a particular sense as suggested by the definition of consciousness above,[44] where

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[43] May, Psychology, pp.11f.

[44] See quotation 14 above, in conjunction with 15.

it is stated that man fulfills himself in relating first of all to himself, then to his fellows, and finally to his world. These three relational modes of world are referred to as Eigenwelt, Mitwelt, and Umwelt respectively.[45] We look at these three modes in order to clarify further a sense of direction through our dilemma and to extend our image of man in its operational uniqueness.

The first mode represented is Umwelt. This is the world of given environmental conditions. Fatedness arises in this sphere and the appropriate action is adjustment and adaptation.[46] Animals exist at this level but man can exist at this level alone only by destroying or thwarting his individual potential and fulfillment. This is the realm of technological achievement. It is the current pre-occupation witnessed in this sphere that leads May to caution us that

> the ultimately self-destructive use of technology consists of employing it to fill the vacuum of our own diminished consciousness. And conversely, the ultimate challenge facing modern man is whether he can widen and deepen his own consciousness to fill the vacuum created by the fantastic increase of his technological power.[47]

Persons do not exist only in the Umwelt but also have their being in the Mitwelt. This is literally the 'with-world.' It is in this sphere that one senses that he has a

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[45]The modes of world are dealt with extensively in May's Existence, especially pp.61-65.

[46]One need only think of the frequency of efforts to have people conform, not 'rock the boat,' 'get with it,' and so on. A surprising amount of energy is dedicated to reducing people to static proportions.

[47]May, Psychology, p.37.

world and can in fact relate to other beings who also have worlds. One's meaning is decided within the relationship with other beings. Here one cannot rightly speak of adjustment and adaptation without reducing the person to the status of object or environment. In essence this is to say that

> animals have an environment; we have a world, and this world includes the meaning of these other people to us - whether they are members of our family, or friends, loved ones, people we can trust; whether they are hostile or are our enemies. The meaning of the group depends upon how I put myself into it. I never can experience its members as friends except as I commit myself to friendship. And thus human love can never be understood on a purely biological level, but always depends upon such factors as personal decision and commitment to the other person.[48]

Meeting and relation are central to this mode of world.

Umwelt and Mitwelt, however, do not totally represent the human reality. This deficiency is met in the existential schema through the Eigenwelt, "the 'own-world', the world of my relationship with myself."[49] Here one completes his acts of valuing and meaning. One establishes the basis on which the real surrounding world is seen for that individual person. To omit or neglect this mode of existence[50] is to beg a sense of alienation, loneliness, and separation from the person's own world. This results ultimately in a decreased sense of

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[48]May, Psychotherapy, p.6. [49]Ibid., 7.

[50]May, Existence: "Eigenwelt presupposes self-awareness, self-relatedness, and is uniquely present in human beings. But it is not merely a subjective, inner experience; it is rather the basis on which we see the real world in its true perspective, the basis on which we relate. It is a grasping of what something in the world...means to me" (p.63). Italics his.

reality and a loss of personal vitality, for one's ability to be aware of others is reduced as awareness of oneself is reduced.

So, we arrive at the operational conclusion that "a human being is not an object ultimately to be analyzed; rather he is an existential expression of reality who, as a human being, is always in the process of becoming."[51] 'Becoming' is far from being a static conception of man.

This vital dynamic is easily denied and the person is readily lost if one does not bear in mind the observation of Susanne Langer.[52] She stresses that in order to arrive at viable conclusions one must recognize that the questions put to life do in fact contain in themselves the boundaries for the anticipated answers. One must constantly bear in mind the image of man and his potential or risk the destruction of man as <u>being</u>. Man can be reduced to the status of an object if he is willing to surrender his consciousness. On the other hand, he can experience himself as significant being if he will assert his consciousness or refuse to deny consciousness.

Consciousness, freedom, and creativity are achieved at the cost of vulnerability. Consciousness is the experience of being open to life in such a way as to be able to take into

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[51] May, <u>Psychotherapy</u>, p.10.

[52] Susanne K. Langer, <u>Philosophy in a New Key</u> (New York: Mentor Books, 1951).

oneself the incongruities and tensions experienced, for the individual knows that "to venture causes anxiety, but not to venture is to lose one's self...And to venture in the highest sense is precisely to become conscious of one's self."[53]

Consciousness is the facility of centredness.[54] By means of consciousness one can face impotence and seek to actualize new possibilities for life. Consciousness is the precondition of freedom.

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[53]May, Search, p.10. In Psychology May notes that "the capacity to confront death is a prerequisite to growth, a prerequisite to self-consciousness" (p.103).

[54]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962):"Consciousness is the experience of the self acting from its center. The individual's neuromuscular apparatus, his past genetic experience, his dreams, and the infinite number of other aspects of himself as a living being, are in their various ways related to this center and can only be understood in this relationship" (p.45).

CHAPTER III

ANXIETY: VOICE FOR FREEDOM

> Love looks forward; hate looks back; anxiety has eyes all over its head.[1]
>
> Human potentiality is not exhausted in the present though it may be arrested or denied by the present.[2]
>
> One cannot imagine non-being; one can only experience its threat.[3]

In our efforts to produce an image of man that will be an adequate starting point for life in this decade we have come to the tentative conclusion that man is that being who can know freedom as possibility. This, of course, introduces difficulties in as much as the very concept of possibility presupposes the centred self. The individual must stand on his own and apart from the crowd. This separation and individualization aspect of freedom suggests conflict. However, we tend culturally to consider conflict as an undesirable state and we forget that "conflict is the very nature in which

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[1] Anonymous.

[2] M. Darrol Bryant, A World Broken By Unshared Bread (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1970), p.44.

[3] Paul Tillich, My Search for Absolutes (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), p.81.

man meets man."[4]

In conflict the individual searches for a centre or a refuge that will help him to weather the storm. This is not to permit him to draw up his feet underneath himself, for it has been astutely observed that "any complete protection is also a prison."[5] There is no escape from conflict if freedom is to be one's goal and destination. Dietrich Bonhoeffer arrived at the same conclusion and went beyond the conflict to the goal of freedom and fulfillment when he observed that "we have learnt too late in the day that action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility."[6] This prophet of our century has indicated the direction for our advance.

We have concluded thus far that man lives in a dialectical or polar tension. He consciously knows that life experience consists of working through the gap that is known between self and other. It is true that

> self implies world, and world, self; each concept — or experience — requires the other. Now, contrary to the usual assumption, these vary upward and downward on the scale together: the more awareness of self, the more

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[4]Erich Weingärtner, "In Search for Alternatives to the Educational Establishment," Lutheran World, XVII, No. 2 (Summer, 1970), p.159.

[5]K. M. Baxter, Contemporary Theatre and the Christian Faith (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1964), p.59.

[6]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, ed. Eberhard Bethge (London:Collins Press, 1959), p.158.

> awareness of the world, and vice versa. Patients on the verge of psychosis will often reveal overwhelming anxiety which is the panic at losing awareness of themselves and their world simultaneously. To lose one's self is to lose one's world, and again, vice versa.[7]

We know that "it is a peculiarity of man that he can only live by looking to the future - sub specie aeternitatis."[8] This is the starting experience for Frankl's logotherapy, as evidenced from his prison-camp records. It is this same time-binding ability to which May looks when he advises us that "a person can meet anxiety to the extent that his values are stronger than the threat."[9] This builds upon and strengthens our developing image of man as graphically presented in the form of a triangle of relationships. The points of the base are subjective and objective awareness,[10] while the vertical dimension is the time dimension which is given one form of human expression in the act of valuing. It is in this vertical dimension that fulfillment and human uniqueness evolve, for

> man (or Dasein) is the particular being who has to be aware of himself, be responsible for himself if he is to become himself. He also is the particular being who knows that at some future moment he will not be; he is the being who is always in a dialectical relation with

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[7]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962), p.43.

[8]Viktor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1968), p.115. Italics his.

[9]May, Psychology, p.51. Italics his. He continues:"to be free means to face and bear anxiety; to run away from anxiety means automatically to surrender one's freedom" (p.179).

[10]May, Psychology, notes:"My freedom, in any genuine sense, lies not in my capacity to live as 'pure subject,' but rather in my capacity to experience both modes, to live in the dialectical relationship" (p.9). Italics his.

non-being, death.[11]

Through valuing one is able to take a stand relative to non-being. Freedom moves toward actuality.

Valuing is the act of assuming personal responsibility and experiencing commitment to meanings which give coherence to the adventures of life. Valuing is the act of moving outward from one's centre to incorporate and make sense of the various aspects of one's experience and existence. In this act man knows that he stands at a point where no one else can stand and that he is the only one who can assume the responsibility implied in the situation. To value is to perform an act which demands great humility on the part of the person who chooses, for

> it involves the giving up of childhood omnipotence; we are no longer God, to put it symbolically. But we must act as though we were; we must act as though our decisions were right. This is the reaching out into the future that makes all of life a risk and makes all experience precarious.[12]

Through conscious valuing one moves into and beyond the gap of the human dilemma. One establishes and preserves personal identity in a developmental and cumulative manner.

The struggle toward being and personal identity is undeniably painful, which painfulness we refer to as anxiety.

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[11]May, Existence, p.42. "Death" appears on occasion throughout this study. The meaning implied on each occasion is suggested in the parallel experience or threat of non-being. Reference is to the border experience where one enters a type of noman's land; one is between worlds and selves.

[12]May, Psychology, p.104.

It is the experience of knowing the threat of "diminution or loss of personal identity."[13] Anxiety is a personally threatening pain which may assume either constructive or destructive proportions, depending upon the person's naming of and stand towards that threat.[14]

Etymologically, anxiety is a word which "comes from the Latin angustia, which means shortness of breath.... Anxiety, it may be said, is a symptom of existence in a bottleneck."[15] Kierkegaard accurately followed this etymological meaning when he referred to anxiety (particularly in its neurotic manifestation) as "shut-upness."[16] Freud, in turn, made the suggestion that "anxiety is modelled upon the process of

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[13]May, Psychology, p.40.

[14]Seward Hiltner, "Some Aspects of Anxiety:Theological," Constructive Aspects of Anxiety (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1963), follows May's lead in stating that "it would be equally false to Freud and Kierkegaard to say that anxiety is constructive or to say that it is destructive. Both would say that the intent of anxiety is constructive; that is, the purpose for which man possesses the signalling or prodding apparatus is constructive. But whether it is constructive or destructive in outcome depends upon the response made and executed by ego, self, or person. If the intensity of the person's affect is such that he is paralyzed or retreats, then what concretely follows is negative and destructive. But if it is said that the 'anxiety' is destructive, then it should be understood that this refers to the affect in the process where anxiety has already failed to perform its normative function" (p.58). We distinguish normal and neurotic anxiety in the following pages.

[15]Helmut Thielecke, Nihilism: Its Origin and Nature - With a Christian Answer, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p.118. Italics his.

[16]Kierkegaard, Concept:"Shut-upness eo ipso signifies a lie: or, if you prefer, untruth. But untruth is precisely unfreedom. It is dread of revelation" (p.114). Italics his.

birth."[17] However, he then proceeded to deal with man and anxiety in the restricting terms of Umwelt, thereby reducing man to the status of another mechanism out of adjustment. But anxiety is not simply an objective event. Rather, anxiety has symptomatic (as distinct from pathological) proportions in terms of the centred person.

Since he has contributed most towards our understanding of this personally-threatening and -challenging experience, Kierkegaard assumes a central position in any discussion or consideration of anxiety. He spoke of angst[18] at a time when feelings were not readily discussed. Indeed, we have not yet passed this reluctance as demonstrated in our cultural habit of avoiding emotionally expressive terminology.[19]

The constructive aspect of anxiety and the vital relationship of anxiety to freedom become apparent when one observes that Kierkegaard considered angst to be "the dizziness of freedom."[20] Furthermore, "dread is constantly to be under-

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[17]Sigmund Freud, Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety, trans. Alix Strachey (London:Hogarth Press, 1961), p.48. In practice Freud performed services that are much beyond his final verbal explanations. One might say that he was trapped within the need to explain therapeutic contact within the predominant technological terminology.

[18]Professor Lowrie has translated Kierkegaard's word angst as "dread." We prefer "anxiety" to "dread," though we are aware that even this term is culturally coloured and somewhat limited. We employ "dread" and "anxiety" synonymously with angst.

[19]One speaks of being anxious in situations ranging from eagerness to gut-knotting frustration. Verbal forms tend to be avoided in our culture.

[20]Kierkegaard, Concept, p.55.

stood as oriented towards freedom."[21] Anxiety is initially constructive but its effect upon the person experiencing this angst is to cause him to recoil because anxiety is an ambiguous situation wherein one may detect "freedom's appearance before itself in possibility."[22] The challenge is to move through and beyond anxiety towards the freedom implied within the threat. One's world-relational position is called into question.

Kierkegaard touched both the biological and the existential aspects of angst. Anxiety is a distinctively human phenomenon by virtue of consciousness, wherein one perceives both himself and his world. The disrupting function of angst is so enormously felt precisely because it appears to stand over against one's conscious experience and threaten the degree of equilibrium that the person knows. The self-world relation is shaken. The person so shaken is the one who must decide for himself what is the purpose of the upset.

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[21] Kierkegaard, Concept, pp.59f.

[22] Kierkegaard, Concept, p.99. Earlier in this masterpiece Kierkegaard observes that "one almost never sees the concept dread dealt with in psychology, and I must therefore call attention to the fact that it is different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite, whereas dread is freedom's reality as possibility for possibility. One does not therefore find dread in the beast, precisely for the reason that by nature the beast is not qualified by spirit. When we consider the dialectical determinants in dread, it appears that they have precisely the characteristic ambiguity of psychology. Dread is a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy....He cannot flee from dread, for he loves it; really he does not love it; for he flees from it" (pp.38-40). Italics his.

> Anxiety occurs at the point where some emerging potentiality or possibility faces the individual, some possibility of fulfilling his existence; but this very possibility involves the destroying of present security, which thereupon gives rise to the tendency to deny the new potentiality.[23]

One's whole previous world is threatened with upset and disarray in the presence of new possibilities.

It becomes clear that anxiety is "the experience of the threat of imminent non-being."[24] Anxiety is such as to always drive in threat at the foundation and centre of one's existence. It is the nature of angst to be felt acutely throughout one's being for it seeks to smother each new shoot of life that sprouts outwards from one's centre. Beyond the threat itself, anxiety is "the state of the human being in the struggle against that which would destroy his being."[25]

Existentially, angst is "the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality."[26] The value may be physical existence and survival itself or it may be perceived as directed against some moral, emotional, psychological, or economic value.

Biologically speaking, anxiety is an intermediate stage between the startle reflex and the objectifying act of fear.

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[23]May, Existence, p.52.

[24]May, Existence, p.50. Italics his.

[25]May, Existential Psychology, p.81.

[26]May, Anxiety, p.191. Italics his.

The startle is generally agreed to be the earliest response to sudden personal threat.[27] In the startle reaction the individual involuntarily withdraws from menace. This is to say that the startle pattern is a "pre-emotional, innate reflexive reaction"[28] to danger. But one does not react only reflexively.

As the person matures he begins to respond to threats in a progressively differentiating fashion. This leads to the object-fixing behaviour known as fear. Because the threat can be objectively located and identified the danger can be placed on the periphery of one's existence.

Anxiety, however, is not so readily or objectively handled as fear, for "the awareness of the relationship between the self and objects is precisely what breaks down in anxiety."[29] It is an emotion that has no object as it strikes full force at the individual's efforts towards self-actualization. Individuation of threat is not carried out and this places angst between startle and fear in terms of development in consciousness and object-fixing ability.

The person who experiences anxiety discovers that instead of being able to hold off the threat, he is attacked on

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[27]May, Anxiety, pp.46-48; a summary presentation.

[28]May, Anxiety, p.201.

[29]May, Anxiety, pp.52f. Italics his. He points out that there is a "general uncriticized assumption in much psychological thinking that somehow fears must be the first to emerge and anxiety must be a later development" (p.202). See Kierkegaard above; note 22.

all sides and in his very centre. A value which the individual identifies with his being is threatened.[30] This establishes anxiety as distinct from fear.

> Anxiety strikes at the center core of his self-esteem and his sense of value as a self, which is one important aspect of his experience of himself as a being. Fear, in contrast, is a threat to the periphery of his existence; it can be objectivated, and the person can stand outside and look at it. In greater or lesser degree, anxiety overwhelms the person's awareness of existence, blots out the sense of time, dulls the memory of the past, and erases the future....Anxiety is ontological, fear is not. Fear can be studied as an affect among other affects, a reaction among other reactions. But anxiety can be understood only as a threat to Dasein.[31]

We agree with May's conclusion that

> in fine after the first reflexive protective reactions, there emerge the diffuse, undifferentiated emotional responses to threat, namely anxiety; and last to emerge in maturation are the differentiated emotional responses to specific localized dangers, namely fears.[32]

Seen only in this developmental and biological manner one would conclude that anxiety is destructive of the person who experiences the threat. But the case is not closed here, as May indicates when he comments that "if there were not some new possibility, there would be no crisis."[33] This is evi-

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[30]This identification process is not restricted to rational or strictly conscious terms.

[31]May, Existence, p.51. Italics ours.

[32]May, Anxiety, p.203. Italics his.

[33]Rollo May, Love and Will (New York:W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1969), p.18. This work is hereafter referred to as Love.

denced in the note that the existence of a person is no longer adequate before new experiences and conditions. For this reason of challenge to grow one experiences anxiety. It is a form of growing pain or indicator to the experiencing person that a change is in order, that his life at this moment is inadequate and can be open to new possibilities of freedom. Anxiety is the knocking of possibility and future freedom.

> The possible corresponds precisely to the future. For freedom the possible is the future; and for time the future is the possible. Corresponding to both of these in the individual life is dread. A precise and correct linguistic usage associates therefore dread and the future. It is true that one is sometimes said to be in dread of the past, and this seems to be a contradiction. Nevertheless, upon closer inspection it appears that this manner of speaking points in one way or another to the future. The past of which I am supposed to be in dread must stand in a relation of possibility to me. If I am in dread of a past misfortune, this is not in so far as it is past, but in so far as it may be repeated, i.e. become future. If I am in dread of a past fault, it is because I have not put it in an essential relation to myself as past. For in case it is really past, I cannot be in dread but only repentant. If I do not repent, then I have first taken the liberty of making my relation to it dialectical, but thereby the fault itself has become a possibility and not something completely passed. If I am in dread of punishment, it is only when this is put in a dialectical relation with the fault (otherwise I bear my punishment), and then I am in dread of the possible and the future.[34]

Freedom is something into which one grows and anxiety may be considered constructive in this growth.

Now, we have stated that anxiety is distinct from fear in that the former is objectless. This

objectless nature of anxiety arises from the fact that

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[34]May, Existential Psychology, p.82.

> the security base itself of the individual is threatened, and since it is in terms of this security base that the individual has been able to experience himself as a self in relation to objects, the distinction between subject and object also breaks down.[35]

Before such threat there are two possible actions.

The first response is to affirmatively confront the anxiety. This involves turning one's attention to the threat of impending meaninglessness and taking a stand toward it so as to be able to integrate the experience. "The result is the strengthening of the individual's feeling of being a self, a strengthening of his perception of himself as distinct from the world of nonbeing, of objects."[36] In this constructive solution of conflict the individual moves outward from his centre and progressively actualizes his capacities in expanding community. Through confronting non-being and taking it into himself an individual discovers that his existence takes on vitality and immediacy and he experiences a heightened consciousness of himself, his world, and other people around him.[37] In essence this is to say that "anxiety is used constructively as the person is able to relate to the situation, do his valuing, and then commit himself to a course of action,

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[35]May, Anxiety, p.193. Italics his. He adds:"anxiety is the psychic common denominator of all diseases as well as of all behavior disturbances" (p.223). Italics his. Also: "all forms of disease are in one way or another endeavors to cope with a conflict situation, generally by means of shrinking the scope of the conflict to an area in which there is a greater chance of coping with it" (p.225).

[36]May, Anxiety, p.13.

[37]May, Psychology, p.50:"the widening of consciousness is itself the fundamental way to meet anxiety."

a way of life."[38]

The second possibility before anxiety is to evade or deny it. The individual tends to choose this avenue more readily when his values are in disarray and when his conviction of his own impotence increases. This self-aspect is seen culturally as we witness the violent questioning and shaking of the values upon which our culture is built. One is often required to carry the burden of freedom without support. This makes it considerably more difficult to stand on one's own feet and easier to retreat from or refuse to face the stress.[39]

The way out of this neurotic anxiety and into freedom is not easy. The pressures against personal originality are great because the cultural attitude toward anxiety is to face in the opposite direction. Anxiety has both a personal and a cultural side, just as angst always has an inside and an outside.

> Freedom requires the capacity to accept, bear and live constructively with anxiety. I refer of course to the normal anxiety all of us experience at every step in our psychological growth as well as in this upset contemporary world. I believe the popular definition of mental health, 'freedom from anxiety,' has played into the tendencies of the individual to surrender his originality, take on 'protective coloring' and conform in the hope of

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[38] Ibid., 52. See quotation at note 9 above. In the same vein Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning, adds that "What man actually needs is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for some goal worthy of him" (p.166).

[39] May, Psychology: "In periods when the values of a culture have unity and cogency, the citizen has means of meeting and coping with his anxiety. When the values are in disunity, the individual feeling himself without moorings, tends to evade and repress his normal anxiety" (p.71).

> gaining peace of mind. This emphasis on freedom from anxiety has actually tended to undermine freedom.[40]

It is undeniably convenient to establish the goal of health as freedom from anxiety. However, this lays open the person to treatment by means of medication and reduces him to the realm of Umwelt.[41] Little does one want to behold oneself as one who hides in bad faith.[42] To see oneself thus would lead one wildly astray by denying the future aspect of the threat or humbly toward facing his angst. But, as Paul Tournier has repeated, "Chase nature away, and it returns at a gallop."[43] This speaks of the need to face normal anxiety and of the nature of neurotic anxiety as unfaced normal anx-

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[40]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962), pp.45-46. Italics his.

[41]May, Psychology:"The harmful effect of the general use of [anxiety relieving] drugs is obvious, for to wipe away the anxiety is in principle to wipe away the opportunity for growth, i.e., the possibility of value transformation, of which anxiety is the obverse side. By the same token, neurotic anxiety is a symptom of the fact that some previous crisis has not been met, and to remove the symptom without helping the person get at his underlying conflict is to rob him of his best direction-finder and motivation for self-understanding and new growth" (pp.81f.).

[42]May, Psychology, tells us that "bad faith means self-deceit" and "to be in bad faith means to be guilty of not accepting one's self as a free person but taking it as an object" (p.145). The similarity to Kierkegaard's "shut-upness" is quite apparent.

[43]Tournier, The Whole Person in a Broken World, p.33.

iety.[44]

Neurotic anxiety is destructive exactly because it "consists of the shrinking of consciousness, the blocking off of awareness; when it is prolonged it leads to a feeling of depersonalization and apathy."[45] Apathy, the inability to feel or the denial of the ability to feel, leads to emptiness and this in turn is destructive for we know that "the human being cannot live in a condition of emptiness for very long; if he is not growing toward something, he does not merely stagnate; the pent-up potentialities turn into morbidity and despair, and eventually into destructive activities."[46]

Perhaps now one can see how several of our societal trends are in fact being destructive of the person. First, there is the dichotomy of reason and emotion. This, as already noted, tends progressively to rob man of consciousness and his ability to experience himself as a centred person of significance. Technology, when offering a panacea of certainty, brings alienation and loneliness. The net effect is to increase the burden of anxiety, as the person's own experiences are played down. Hostility may be expected as a consequence

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[44]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962):"All of us, to be sure are in favor of freedom from neurotic anxiety - the kind which blocks people's awareness and causes them to panic or in other ways act blindly and destructively. But neurotic anxiety is simply the long-term result of unfaced normal anxiety" (p.46).

[45]May, Psychology, p.41. Italics his.

[46]May, Search, p.22. Italics his.

of obliteration of the self.[47]

A second difficulty is that of the individual's isolation from his community. This is reflected in the steadily-decreasing visible community value of a worker's products as he counts his value in dollars. This is but one aspect of a vast retreating action that removes one more and more from participation in vital relationships. Marshall McLuhan puts it this way.

> Literate man, civilized man, tends to restrict and enclose space and to separate functions, whereas tribal man had freely extended the form of his body to include the universe. Acting as an organ of the cosmos, tribal man accepted his bodily functions as modes of participation in the divine madness.[48]

Thus, before technological pressures, the individual who wants to protect his threatened unity has to "block off, refuse to actualize, some potentialities for knowledge and action."[49] The alternative - facing into angst - may well see standing out like a centre of sanity in an ocean of madness

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[47]May, Existence, p.5:"Perhaps the most handy anxiety-reducing agent is to abstract one's self from the issues by assuming a wholly technical emphasis." The suggestion is that reduction of feeling is a defence.

[48]Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media:The Extensions of Man (New York:McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964), p.124. The implication is that man makes tools as extensions of body functions. The mind-body split alters this so that man becomes a tool rather than a tool-maker. Values, then, tend to be given and not chosen or affirmed. See May, Existence:"Our preoccupation with objective time is really an evasion; people much prefer to see themselves in terms of objective time, the time of statistics, of quantitative measurement, of 'the average,' etc., because they are afraid to grasp their existence directly" (p.48).

[49]May, Psychology, p.97.

as the way to personhood. In this movement guilt will play a role proportional to a person's openness of relation.[50]

It is truly unfortunate that so few people recognize that the presence of anxiety does in fact imply a lack of serious disintegration, unless of course it has progressed to neurotic proportions.[51] Still, he who decides to face into angst can do so in courage,[52] as he is prepared to acknowledge that

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[50]All men are guilty in that no one completely fulfills all his potentialities; his as distinct from social expectations placed upon him. May deals with guilt in both its normal and neurotic roles in Existence, pp.52-55. By way of definition, May advises us that "experiences that the person can not permit himself to actualize" (Psychology, p.97) constitute unconsciousness. The intimate relation of guilt and unconsciousness is apparent. May's comments, Psychology, p.180, are helpful:"Guilt is the subjective experience of our not having fulfilled responsibility, that is, not having lived up to our own potentialities or our potentialities (for example, in love and friendship) in relationships with other persons and groups. Our discussion of freedom indicates, however, that we should not as therapists and counselors transfer our guilt and our value judgments to the counselee and patient, but endeavor to help him bring out and confront his guilt and its implications and meaning for him. Certainly our aim is to relieve neurotic guilt feelings, but neurotic guilt is, like neurotic anxiety, the end result of unfaced earlier normal guilt. Permit me to state without here giving the reasons supporting my statement, that the constructive confronting of normal guilt releases in the counselee and patient both his capacities for freedom and his capacities for assuming responsibility." Italics his.

[51]May, Psychology:"Normal anxiety is anxiety which is proportionate to the threat, does not involve repression, and can be confronted constructively on the conscious level (or can be relieved if the objective situation is altered). Neurotic anxiety, on the other hand, is a reaction which is disproportionate to the threat, involves repression and other forms of intrapsychic conflict, and is managed by various kinds of blocking-off of activity and awareness" (p.80).

[52]See Tillich's Courage To Be, Chapters II and III.

> anxiety is an understandable concommitant of the shaking of the self-world relationship which occurs in the encounter [with non-being]. Our self-system and sense of identity are literally shaken; the world is not as we experienced it before, and since self and world are always correlated, we are not what we were before. Past, present and future form a new gestalt.[53]

All this leads to the clarification of the dynamic and essential nature of angst as explained by May. He relates how in preparing for his doctoral dissertation he had to revise his approach to the problem of anxiety.[54] His thesis did not adequately explain the behaviour of the persons who had been studied. Whereas he had expected to discover that anxiety was highest in those who had been rejected by their parents, he had to alter his hypothesis when he observed that anxiety was most pronounced in those who repressed parental rejection. Therefore, he concluded for that case and for our general situation that "anxiety comes from something different than sheer rejection; it comes from not being able to know the world you are in, not being able to orient yourself in your own existence."[55]

Clearly anxiety is the want of a world in which to live in freedom. Angst can be the deep longing for personally fulfilling freedom and relationship, that is, community and selfhood. Consciousness is basic to having a world. But it is in

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[53] May, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XVIII (May, 1963), p.374.

[54] May, Psychotherapy, pp.43f.

[55] Ibid., 44. Italics ours.

fact this central facility of consciousness that is attacked and denied its legitimate function when the anxious person represses his anxiety and refuses to come face to face with his partial existence.

To face this experience of anxiety is always to heighten one's condition of tension for in this act one places oneself in part on the side of death and nothingness. The threat is then directed point-blank at one's centre. The goal is a heightened sense of consciousness but "consciousness itself implies always the possibility of turning against one's self, denying one's self."[56] It becomes clear that it is a matter of how the individual person sees his own time and how his values are arranged.

On the one hand, we noted that one experiences a heightened sense of anxiety as one's own conviction of impotence increases. On the other hand, we discover that

> a person is subjectively prepared to confront unavoidable anxiety constructively when he is convinced (consciously or unconsciously) that the values to be gained in moving ahead are greater than those to be gained by escape.[57]

Indeed, the essence of anxiety is the discrepancy that arises between reality and one's expectations thereof. Conscious communication[58] is the very creative power which enables one

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[56]May, Existential Psychology, p.82. Italics his.

[57]May, Anxiety, p.229. Italics his.

[58]Kierkegaard, Concept:"freedom is constantly communicating...; unfreedom becomes more shut-up and wants no communication" (p.110). See May, Anxiety, pp.355f.

to cope with anxiety. "To be creative means to respond positively rather than destructively to the anxiety of freedom which is the basis of our humanity; to celebrate freedom rather than to kill it."[59]

Having studied some aspects of anxiety one can now see greater significance in May's reference to the two myths of Greece. These dramatic presentations involve the viewer in the direction of health as "the myth, by drawing out the various levels of unconscious experiences, lifts the person out of his simple oppositions and makes of the hopeless antinomy a creative dialectic."[60] In addition, the sense of the tragic is revitalized with the clarification that it is not a simple pursuit of justice, of adding the facts and automatically falling into the answer. Rather,

> tragedy is the clash of two rights. Its outcome is not a simple solution of justice. Its impact and its outcome are, rather, a widening and a deepening of consciousness so that the participants can incorporate both the antinomies, that is, the opposites into their psychological and spiritual experience and can live constructively with them.[61]

Anxiety is an important feature of the myths.

As May has noted, "the tragic issue is the issue of seeing the truth and reality about oneself."[62] Oedipus is not

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[59]Roy J. Enquist, "On Creativity," Christian Century, LXXXVI, No. 1 (Jan. 1, 1969), p.10.

[60]May, Psychotherapy, p.28. [61]Ibid., 27.

[62]May, Psychology, p.99.

concerned with sex and aggression as such so much as he is deeply engaged in the struggle to discover the truth about himself.[63] He seeks out the truth about his objective situation and the death of his father. Then, moving through classic forms of hostility, denial, and projection, he uncovers the inward truth about himself. In this strength of standing united with his own depths, Oedipus stands out in truly heroic proportions. He has come to grips with the tragic conflict within himself, and in his relations with other human beings and his world. The net result is the emergence of consciousness of himself.

In a similar manner Orestes cuts through the maternal facade of smothering love in order to "assert his own biological independence and psychological and spiritual freedom."[64] He follows the same three basic steps of frankly admitting what he has done, clarifying and confronting his motives (even hatred and destruction), and cutting through the rationalization about his own nobility. In this tragic aloneness he moves out into life in such a manner as to present grace to those who receive him.

The summary truth of the situation of anxiety stands as May has expressed it.

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[63]May, Psychology: "The drama is the tragedy of seeing the reality about oneself, confronting what one is and what one's origin is, the tragedy of a man knowing and facing in conscious self-knowledge his own destiny. The verbs all the way through, we observe, are knowing, hearing, discovering, seeing" (p.101). Italics his.

[64]May, Psychotherapy, p.25. See May, Anxiety, 232-4.

> Anxiety (loneliness or 'abandonment anxiety' being its most painful form) overcomes the person to the extent that he loses orientation in the objective world. To lose the world is to lose one's self, and vice versa; self and world are correlates. The function of anxiety is to destroy the self-world relationship, i.e., to disorient the victim in space and time and, so long as this disorientation lasts, the person remains in the state of anxiety. Anxiety overwhelms the person precisely because of the preservation of this disorientation. Now if the person can reorient himself - as happens, one hopes, in psychotherapy - and again relate himself to the world directly, experientially, with his senses alive, he overcomes the anxiety.[65]

Freedom is constantly the struggle for and the possibility of authentic existence. However,

> authentic existence is the modality in which a man assumes the responsibility of his own existence. In order to pass from inauthentic to authentic existence, a man has to suffer the ordeal of despair and 'existential anxiety,' i.e., the anxiety of a man facing the limits of his existence with its fullest implications: death, nothingness. This is what Kierkegaard calls the 'sickness unto death.'[66]

There can be no hiding from anxiety on the way to freedom, for

> he who is educated by possibility remains with dread, does not allow himself to be deceived by its countless counterfeits, he recalls the past precisely; then at last the attacks of dread, though they are fearful, are not such that he flees from them. For him dread becomes a serviceable spirit which against its will leads him whither he would go.[67]

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[65] May, Love, p.152.

[66] Henri F. Ellenberger, "Clinical Introduction to Psychiatric Phenomenology and Existential Analysis," Existence, p.118.

[67] Kierkegaard, Concept, p.142. He adds: "With the help of faith dread trains the individual to find repose in providence. So also it is with regard to guilt, which is the second thing dread discovers.... He who with respect to guilt is educated by dread will therefore repose only in atonement" (pp.144-145).

This, then, is the role of anxiety: to educate one for personal responsibility and freedom.[68]

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[68]We employ "educate" here in all its etymological impact and significance of "drawing out" and "leading out", thereby implying personal fulfillment and freedom as the goal toward which one moves.

CHAPTER IV

INTENTIONALITY: FREEDOM RESTORED

> All of us, among the ruins, are preparing a renaissance beyond the limits of nihilism. But few of us know this.[1]
>
> Nothing great is ever achieved without passion.[2]
>
> It is doubtful whether anyone really begins to live, that is, to affirm and choose his own existence, until he has frankly confronted the terrifying fact that he could wipe out his existence but chooses not to. Since one is free to die, he is free also to live.[3]

We have been attempting to deal with the issue of man's nature and his freedom, with particular regard to the existential and psychotherapeutic work of Rollo May. However, each time we have approached the issue of freedom, we have come face to face with the root question: What is the person's relation to his own potentialities? This question has been touched on in the three preceding chapters about the human condition, consciousness, and anxiety. Now we turn our attention to the study of intentionality as the launching pad for freedom and the functioning goal towards which May directs his efforts in

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[1]Albert Camus, The Rebel:An Essay on Man in Revolt, trans. Anthony Bower (New York:Random House, 1956), p.305.

[2]Pablo Picasso.

[3]May, Search, p.146. Italics his.

therapy.

While man is a centred being, pressure increases and threatens to destroy his centre. Before him lies the challenge to restore and assert his centredness so as to surmount this destructive and depersonalizing pressure. The answer that May proposes is essentially that of re-orienting love and will in intentionality and community. Love and will are given revitalized meaning when intentionality is introduced as the operating centre from which man lives. Since man is that being who derives his life directly from the future,[4] it is apparent that the one who lacks the courage to care and to be actively directed towards the future is also the one who is most lacking in centredness and who tends to be the victim of impotence.

By way of introductory, illustrative reference, May draws our attention to Oedipus who in his parting moments of grace reviews the answer to his life-long search. He gives his answer and walks away unsupported into the land of no horizons. He says:

> For all my life is done;
> your double burden of me done.
> It was not easy, children, that I know,
> and yet one little word can change all pain:
> that word is LOVE.[5]

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[4]May, Existence: "What an individual seeks to become determines what he remembers of his has been. In this sense the future determines the past" (p.66). Italics his. This is a vital therapeutic premise.

[5]Sophocles, The Oedipus Plays, p.154.

He suggests that there is in love a unification of meaning and being. He who can love may stand fulfilled, a dispenser of grace and courage for those who would know this fulfillment in their own life.

But it is love which is so sadly missing in our day.[6] This is the result of forgetting that "freedom is not the opposite of determinism; freedom is the individual's capacity to know that he is the determined one, but able to choose one particular response among several possible ones."[7] The nature and function of love have been denied or lost.

While it may be known intellectually that "the points of commitment and decision are those where the dichotomy between subject and object is overcome in the unity of readiness for action,"[8] we detect that the schizoid features of life in this century point to massive avoidance of close relationships and the ability to feel. This loss of centredness is represented in impotence[9] and widespread apathy (the withdrawal of

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[6]Pannenberg, What Is Man?:"Where love is missing, the self-seeking interests of the individuals immediately spread out" (p.103).

[7]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII (Nov., 1962), p.41.

[8]May, Existence, p.88.

[9]May, Psychotherapy:"Indeed I believe a central core of modern man's 'neurosis' is the undermining of his experience of himself as responsible and the sapping of his willing and decision. This lack of will is more than an ethical problem, for the modern individual so often has a conviction that even if he did exert his 'will', his efforts would not make any difference anyway" (p.32). Italics his.

feeling)[10] which in turn lead to emptiness and morbidity.[11] The person surrenders his freedom and denies his ability to love and to will.

Will is not properly to be thought of as a separate faculty of the person but is rather the person's ability to function as a totality.[12] The situation takes on new dimensions, for we see man as a total being who lives and becomes in the face of polar tensions. We discover that

> hate is not the opposite of love; apathy is. The opposite of will is not indecision...but being uninvolved, detached, unrelated to the significant events. Then the issue of will never can arise. The interrelation of love and will

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[10]This is the exact opposite of caring, whereby we assert ourself and move into intimate contact with others. In care we go beyond ourselves.

[11]Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (Nashville:Abingdon Press, 1939):"For in the end the person has only himself through which to live and face the world. If he cannot be himself he certainly cannot assume any other self no matter how greatly he may wish to do so. His self is different from every other self; it is unique, and healthiness of mind depends upon his accepting this uniqueness.... The mistakes in life occur when the individual tries to act some other role than his own" (p.53). This work is hereafter referred to as Art. May poses this challenge, Love, p.74:"you can't outwit death anyway by 'progress' or accumulating wealth; so why not accept your fate, choose values which are authentic, and let yourself delight and believe in the meaning you are and the Being you are part of?" Italics his.

[12]May, Meaning:"To will to be himself is man's true vocation. Kierkegaard holds that one cannot define specifically this self one is to be, for the self is freedom; but at considerable length he points out how people try to avoid willing to be themselves: by avoiding consciousness of the self, by willing to be some one else or simply a conventional self, or by willing to be oneself defiantly, which is a form of tragic, stoic despair and therefore doomed to fall short of full selfhood.... This willing is a creative decisiveness, based centrally on expanding self-awareness" (p.35). Italics his.

> inheres in the fact that both terms describe a person in the process of reaching out, moving toward the world, and opening himself to be affected; molding, forming, relating to the world or requiring that it relate to him.[13]

The answer presented to this problem of non-centredness, of lost love and will, of surrendered freedom, becomes clearer as we look at May's masterful efforts to establish personally fulfilling concepts of love and will. These in turn are united and fortified in and through intentionality. The task of the individual is to unite love and will in the true depths of his being.

Love and will have both fallen victim to our cultural tendency to treat man in terms of Umwelt and to examine him by means of the techniques by which nature is studied. The result has been that manipulation has appeared as will has been divorced from love and sentimental and experimental love-making has emerged as love has been divorced from will. The overall effect has been to "sap the individual's sense of worth and responsibility."[14] Freedom has been scrapped.

One example of this is evident in our societal treatment of and pre-occupation with sex as the supposed equivalent of love. People in our culture are vastly attentive to sexual matters. The preoccupation with the orgasm and the ability to stimulate another reduces the most intimate self-giving to the

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[13]May, Love, p.29.

[14]May, Journal of Religion and Health, I (Oct., 1961), p.32. Most frequently we equate "responsibility" and "response ability."

ability to perform for and manipulate someone else. This at least proves the manipulator alive and able to move someone else.

Man, who is unique in his face-to-face 'love-making,' shies away from the passionate feeling-with and the commitment that this posturing facilitates. His wariness is not of physical nakedness so much as it is of the spiritual and psychological nakedness implied in the human act of love, the co-creative expression of response-able being.

In essence this suggests a new "puritanism"[15] which is typified by the person's "alienation from [his] body, ... separation of emotion from reason, and use of the body as a machine."[16] The lover so-viewed becomes strait-jacketed and, reversing the Victorian standard of love without sex, seeks "sex without falling into love."[17] How emotionally impoverishing to disregard the truth that "if we are conscious of what is going on, we can, in however slight a way, influence the direction of the trends."[18] How denigrating and intensely antiseptic to obliterate one's identity by placing one's value

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[15]May, Love, note 10, pp.328-329.

[16]May, Love, p.45. Italics his.

[17]Ibid., 46. Italics his. One notes the expression "falling into love" with its obvious implications of love being undesirable and a trap which one enters in a state of powerlessness and impersonality. The image is more fitting for a stone than a person.

[18]May, Love, p.51.

on external performance and thereby be measured as another mechanism to be regulated.[19] The overall effect is to increase impotence as one decreases centredness, integrity, and identity. In this setting love must be redefined and rediscovered.

Love, which normally consists of varying combinations of sex, eros, philia, and agape,[20] is reduced to sex alone as one seeks to evade the sensitivity of eros in favour of sexual sensation. Sex is employed to counter anxiety and to reassure oneself that one is still alive and not alone, even if one does so at the risk of using another. It is imperative to distinguish between sex and eros.

May suggests that "sex can be defined fairly adequately in physiological terms as consisting of the building up of bodily tensions and their release. Eros, in contrast is the experiencing of the personal intentions and meaning of the act."[21] The goal of sex is gratification and sensation, whereas the goal of love (eros-investing) is growth, expansion of

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[19]May, Love: "The upshot of this self-defeating pattern is that, in the long-run, the lover who is most efficient will also be the one who is impotent" (p.55).

[20]May, Love, pp.37-38, speaks of these forms of love. Sex is equated with lust and may well be other-abusing. Eros is equated with a forward-reaching relation-seeking urge of becoming. See pp.317-319 on philia which approximates friendship. Agape (see pp.319-320) corresponds with Christian self-giving.

[21]May, Love, p.73.

self in community, and sensitivity. Eros is the awareness that the individual himself is responsible for what is happening. It is distinguished by its forward-reaching nature, which is expressed in the creative act that is both imaginative and opening.[22] In essence, "eros is the drive toward union with what we belong to - union with our own possibilities, union with significant other persons in our world in relation to whom we discover our own self-fulfillment."[23] Whereas sex is self-seeking,[24] eros is self-transcending and the source of tenderness. Through eros, as opposed to sex, one is drawn toward life.

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[22]A characteristic of eros is encounter. See May, Union Seminary Quarterly Review, XVIII:"one distinguishing characteristic of the encounter is some degree of intensity, or what I would call passion....I am not referring here to the quantity of emotion. I mean a quality of commitment, which may be present in little experiences...which do not necessarily involve any great quantity of affect" (p.371). Italics his. See quotation 2 above.

[23]May, Love, p.74. See p.148 on eros and hate.

[24]See May, Love:"It is possible to have sexual intercourse without any particular anxiety. But by doing this in casual encounters, we shut out, by definition, our eros - that is, we relinquish passion in favor of mere sensation; we shut out our participation in the imaginative, personal significance of the act. If we can have sex without love, we assume that we escape the daimonic anxiety known throughout the ages as an inescapable part of human love. And if, further, we even use sexual activity itself as an escape from the commitments eros demands of us, we may hope to have thus gained an airtight defense against anxiety. And the motive for sex, no longer being sensual pleasure or passion, becomes displaced by the artificial one of providing identity and gaining security; and sex has been reduced to an anxiety-allaying strategy. Thus we set the stage for development of impotence and affectlessness later on" (p.105).

The utter contrast and conflict between sex and eros is drawn before our eyes when we read May's conclusion that

> we can 'emote' and have sexual relations from now till doomsday and never experience any real relationship with another person, only literally a doomsday. It does not decrease the horror of the situation to realize that a great many people, if not most in our society, experience their emotions in just this lonely way. To feel, then, makes their loneliness more painful rather than decreasing it, so they stop feeling.[25]

Thus, we state that to love and to experience life demand that we respond with intensity and in disciplined openness. This responding as a total person is understandably not easy to sustain, for one is suddenly subjected to the dizziness of freedom and the shock of being hurled into a new continent of experience. This contains all the ingredients of anxiety. As the individual gives himself, he is both opened and subjected in a similarly positive manner to questions concerning the preservation and expansion of his centre. At this point he must be careful to avoid confusing anxiety about the vastness and the dangers of the new territories that appear before him, with the loss of self-esteem.

The role of love emerges (as Oedipus indicates in his way) as "the bridge between being and becoming, and it binds fact and value together."[26] It is formed in the imaginative interplay of the future with the confrontation of the past.

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[25]May, Love, pp.90-91.

[26]May, Love, p.79.

The lover is drawn together and experiences centredness as the full course of life is unified. He knows that "death and delight, anguish and joy, anxiety and the wonder of birth - these are the warp and woof of which the fabric of human love is woven."[27] Between these poles his own love and life unfold, consciously and unconsciously.

May puts his finger on the dynamics of love. "One cannot love unless he let himself go, abandon himself, give himself, go through the abyss of the loss of a previous state of existence, with the hope and the expectation of new meaning in his human relationship."[28] All the uniqueness of the human character is asserted as one draws together his wishes and will in the act of decision and commitment, for none of the critical experiences of life, such as, love, peace, and war, can come into being until one commits oneself to those experiences in the freedom of creativity.[29]

It is accurate to say that

> we participate in the forming of the future by virtue of our capacity to conceive of and respond to new possibilities, and to bring them out of imagination and try them

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[27]May, Love, p.100.

[28]May, Psychotherapy, p.57.

[29]May, Psychotherapy: "Decision always brings in some element that is not only not determined by the outside situation, but is not even given in the external situation. It involves some element of leap, some taking of a chance, some movement of one's self in a direction the ultimate outcome of which you never can fully predict before the leap" (p.36). Italics his.

in actuality. This is the process of active loving.[30] Wish and will merge in decision.[31] As one progresses in this manner toward centredness, one discovers that both behaviour and consciousness become united.

The danger of the bifurcation of reality is pointed up in summary form by Wheelis, as he articulates the hazard in refusing to put oneself into the total act of willing.

> As will has been devalued, so has courage; for courage can exist only in the service of will, and can hardly be valued higher than that which it serves. In our understanding of human nature we have gained determinism, lost determination.[32]

Over against this we place May's observation which points to the positive willing action and the threat implied therein.

> We cannot will to have insights, we cannot will creativity; but we can will to give ourselves to the encounter with intensity of dedication and commitment. The deeper aspects of awareness are activated to the extent that the person is committed to the encounter.[33]

Will and wish are distinctively different from each other. "Will is the capacity to organize one's self so that movement in a certain direction or toward a certain goal may

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[30]May, Love, p.92. Italics his.

[31]May, Psychotherapy: "Decision forms together the two previous levels into a pattern of acting and living which is empowered and enriched by wishes, asserted by will, and is responsive to and responsible for the significant other persons who are important to oneself in the realizing of long-term goals" (p.40). Italics his.

[32]Alan Wheelis, "Will and Psychoanalysis," Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, IV, No. 2 (April, 1956), p.289.

[33]Rollo May, "The Nature of Creativity," Creativity and Its Cultivation, ed. Harold H. Anderson (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), pp.62-63. Italics his.

take place."[34] Over against this will is wish which is the "imaginative playing with the possibility of some act or state occurring."[35] Wish and will are interdependent in that wishing cannot occur until one is prepared to will. Willing in turn is impossible before one is prepared to confront the decision implied. Each presupposes the other.[36] Decision unites them, in the leap implied in the very nature of decision. For decision is the creative leap which introduces or moves toward an element which cannot be externally predicted.

Therapy comes on the scene precisely at this point in order to help the subject know and experience himself and his own existence as real. The three distinct stages of therapy aim at clarifying the patient's powers of wish, will, and decision. By doing this the therapist is enabled to avoid "inadvertently and subtly pushing the patient in one direction

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[34] May, Love, p.218. Italics his.

[35] Ibid., 218. Italics his.

[36] May, Love: "'Will' and 'wish' may be seen as operating in polarity. 'Will' requires self-consciousness; 'wish' does not. 'Will' implies some possibility of either/or choice; 'wish' does not. 'Wish' gives the warmth, the content, the imagination, the child's play, the freshness, and the richness to 'will.' 'Will' gives the self-direction, the maturity, to 'wish.' 'Will' protects 'wish,' permits it to continue without running risks which are too great. But without 'wish,' 'will' loses its lifeblood, its viability, and tends to expire in self-contradiction. If you have only 'will' and no 'wish,' you have the dried-up, Victorian, neopuritan man. If you have only 'wish' and no 'will,' you have the driven, unfree, infantile person who, as an adult-remaining-an-infant, may become the robot man" (p.218).

or another."[37]

In therapy the client exercises a measure of freedom as he looks at his problems. He attempts not to intellectualize by merely naming his illnesses, for this using of words as substitutes for feelings and experiences is a defensive behaviour. The first stage of therapy accordingly occurs in the realm of awareness. The attempt is to become aware of one's body, desire, and wishes. The direction is toward meanings that are inherent in the act of wishing. The initial stage of therapy thus endeavours to "help the patient achieve some emotional viability and honesty by bringing out his wishes and his capacity to wish."[38] Conflicts are to be expected as denied parts of life are brought into awareness.

From awareness and wish, one progresses in therapy to self-consciousness and will.[39] At this level the individual comes to recognize that his behaviour has possibilities for change. The nature of self-consciousness appears when we observe that

> the previous bind of repressing wishes because I cannot stand the lack of their gratification on one hand, or being compulsively pushed to their blind gratification on the other, is replaced by the fact that I myself am involved in these relationships of pleasure, love, beauty, trust.[40]

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[37] May, Love, p.204. [38] May, Love, p.265.

[39] By way of repetition we note that consciousness is the uniquely human form of awareness and that self-consciousness is the knowledge that I am the one who has a world.

[40] May, Love, p.266.

One sees oneself and others in relation. Insight becomes possible as "will enters the picture not as a denial of wish but as an incorporation of wish on a higher level of consciousness."[41] It is here that creativity emerges, but therapy goes forward to the third and final stage.

Therapy advances from wish and will to decision and responsibility.[42] The direction is towards openness and inclusiveness. This decision-making is not simply an "additive combination"[43] of wish and will. It is rather a self-commitment which involves one's total being and suggests the possible risk of failure. It is an act of freedom which consists of our planning, forming, activating our imagination, value choosing, and intentionality. Decision is "our one contribution to the world which is original and underived."[44] It is the act of grasping our freedom and moving out from our centre to encounter the world in mutual relationship.[45]

When a part of the self is denied or when non-self

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[41]May, Love, p.267. Italics his.

[42]May, Existence: "knowledge and insight follow decision rather than vice versa" (p.88). Italics his.

[43]May, Love, p.268.

[44]May, Love, p.271. He stresses that the act of decision is not derived but is an act of freedom.

[45]May, Love: "there is required a self-assertion, a capacity to stand on one's own feet, an affirmation of one's self in order to have the power to put one's self into the relationship. One must have something to give and be able to give it.... For if one is unable to assert oneself, one is unable to participate in a genuine relationship" (p.146).

appears over against oneself, the method of growth in freedom and health is to confront that non-self, come to terms with it, and finally integrate it into the self-system where it becomes through consciousness "the course of energy and spirit which enlivens you."[46]

Verbally this process of growth may appear to be simple but it leads invariably to intentionality, a concept which is largely discarded in this century. Intentionality is vital to psychotherapy in that it is through attention to one's intentionality that the person is enabled to move towards freedom and fulfillment.

Now, intentionality goes beyond intention, which is something more than reaching after a desired goal or achievement.[47] While intention is a "psychological state,"[48] intentionality underlies intentions in both consciousness and unconsciousness. For intentionality is "the structure of meaning which makes it possible for us, subjects that we are, to see and understand the outside world, objective as it is."[49]

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[46]May, Love, p.133.

[47]Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1951), I:"'intentionality,' which means being related to meaningful structures, living in universals, grasping and shaping reality. In this context 'intention' does not mean the will to act for a purpose; it means living in tension with (and toward) something objectively valid" (p.180).

[48]May, Love, p.234.

[49]May, Love, p.225. Italics ours.

Being "at the heart of consciousness,"[50] and being the structure which gives meaning to experience, intentionality precedes and makes impossible the Cartesian mind-body bifurcation which we have encountered so persistently in our attempts to study the human condition. In short, intentionality is that unique aspect of man which permits and demands him to live as a "total self - the thinking-feeling-choosing-acting organism."[51]

However, one encounters difficulties in attempting to deal with intentionality for the very reason that it "cuts across and includes both consciousness and unconsciousness, and both cognition and conation."[52] It includes both meaning and knowing inasmuch as in the process of knowing, "we are informed by the thing understood, and in the same act, our intellect simultaneously gives form to the things we understand."[53] Intentionality is implied in our acts of knowing as they presuppose an earlier participation in, or relation to, that which is known. In other words, in order to perceive (an act of will) a thing we must first be able to conceive (an act of wish) its existence and our participation in it. In summary, May puts it like this:

> the act of perceiving also requires the capacity to bring to birth something in one's self; if one cannot, or for some reason is not yet ready, to bring to birth in himself some position, some stance toward what he is seeing

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[50]May, Love, p.224. [51]May, Love, p.199. Italics ours.

[52]May, Love, p.222. [53]May, Love, p.225. Italics his.

> he cannot perceive it. From our examples in psychoanalysis, it is clear that the patient cannot get insights, perceive truths about himself and his life, until he is ready to take some stand toward the truth, until he is able to conceive them.[54]

Intentionality lies at one's centre and is the launching pad for the future, for it is in this dimension that one experiences one's potentiality for freedom and is able to move toward it by asserting one's intention and ability to effect one's meaning. Intention limits one's perceptions at the same time that intention has implied within it the experience of I-can. Psychotherapy attempts to take cognizance of these two facts as it pushes "'intention' toward the deeper, wider, organic dimension of intentionality."[55] Since the goal of psychotherapy is to help one to experience one's existence as real and to assume responsibility therein, it is imperative that therapy's drive towards identity take note of the fact that "it is in intentionality and will that the human being experiences his identity."[56]

It is not enough to settle into the conscious aspect of intention, since this leads us to the very split that we seek to eliminate. Rather, we must be able to see the person as a totality and this means that we have to incorporate consciousness and unconsciousness. For this reason psychotherapy em-

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[54]May, Love, pp.236f. Italics his. To conceive is etymologically based in the ability to become pregnant with meaning. It is no accident that such moving symbols as pregnancy and birth are here mentioned, for this is the very direction of movement of which we speak. Hence, to perceive is the ability to grasp the delivered pregnancy in its born entirety.

[55]May, Love, p.233. [56]May, Love, p.243.

ploys free association as a method for moving beyond intention to intentionality. Nor is intentionality to be confused with introspection, since introspection is the act of standing away from one's self and looking over and into that which one beholds. One discovers that, on the contrary, intentionality is demonstrated and known by a person's acts and responses into which he puts his total self.

The implications for intentionality seem clearly to be that it is rooted within consciousness and within the polar tension that typifies the human ability to encounter and integrate non-self into self. So it is that as the individual attends to this tension or conflict, he is enabled to experience, conceive, and move toward the situation - the ultimate intention being to reconcile the situation with his meanings or to alter his meanings so as to integrate the experience. Hence, to the extent that the person is closed to conflict in intentionality, he is unable to move past or through conflict. To the extent that he hides from his true self, he builds weakness into his existence. The effect is to tie up and immobilize energy in an experience that can be overwhelming, that is, neither escapable nor able to be interpreted by way of a stand in commitment. To the extent that the individual is tied away from himself, he is unable to exercise freedom or experience fulfillment. The effects on love and will are destructive.

On the other hand, as the individual is able and encouraged to move into his potentialities and from them into actuality, he is able to experience himself as one who is no longer impotent. He experiences his identity as he becomes aware of his ability and is willing to implement his intentionality in integrated consciousness.[57]

From his vast experience May has distilled the goal of psychotherapy into a simple expression that destroys and yet replaces the Cartesian dictum: "I think, therefore I am." It is, says May, the whole aspect of intentionality that has been omitted in this expression. For this reason therapy falters. In order to be honestly representative of the total human experience in freedom and consciousness, the new summary reads progressively: "I conceive - I can - I will - I am."[58]

Impotence and un-freedom are radically challenged in this new stance. The future is no longer simply fate but it is expanded to include the personal element of "I am able to effect this meaning for me and those related to me and therefore I will make it thus and so." In this assertion and commitment, identity is established and experienced. Identity is established in action and not prior to the action, for it is in that act that the person in fact commits himself. The experience displays the cumulative nature of freedom. It also

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[57]See May, Love, pp.248-262.

[58]May, Love, p.243.

involves anxiety which means being sensitive to the fact that one has not yet arrived in a world that can be termed one's own.

To accept and assert one's freedom is to recognize that intentionality is the personal sphere of one's meanings and responses. Each person takes a personal stand toward life by means of his commitments. Indeed, we can even go so far as to state that a person cannot permit himself to perceive a situation until he is ready to take a stand toward it. That is to say that it is without meaning and significance until he can put himself into it.[59] This is of the essence of therapy where one remembers and moves through traumatic situations, which have not yet been integrated into the self, to the degree that the person in therapy is prepared to commit himself and take a stand toward these traumata.[60] Tillich brilliantly

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[59]May, Psychotherapy, speaking of death, notes that "there is also greater objective choice when we can make the inner subjective choice. The question no longer is simply: What do we have to do? It is, rather: What can we do? What do we wish to do? It does not change the fact that I live in a world with other people and have my responsibilities, and it certainly does not change the fact that some day I shall die. But it does change my attitude toward the hours that I have between now and the time of my death, and thereby changes to some extent my objective choices. The shift is possible because time is now a gift and not a slave-driver. It is ours to use, rather than a straitjacket to confine us" (pp.61-62). Italics his.

[60]Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek, The Individual and the Crowd: A Study of Identity in America (Toronto:Mentor Books, 1965): "Identity is not to be achieved by the patient's sitting back and talking himself out to the analyst. Rather, it is a matter of beginning to realize what the 'I' (which is Me) can do and has the potentiality to do. This realization implies growth, but growth that is visible and most exciting to patient and analyst" (p.69). Italics his.

summarizes the value of therapy and the significance of intentionality when he writes, "Man's vitality is as great as his intentionality."[61]

The person who comes for therapy comes precisely because he has lost a clear sense of himself in the forming and updating of his values. He has attempted to preserve his centredness by means of illness.[62] So he seeks therapy which is synonymous with the provision of a "situation in which the patient's sense of identity, significance, and responsibility may be discovered and developed."[63] Therapy is directed towards intentionality as freedom is based on intentionality. The goal is to experience one's existence as real and to assume personal responsibility therein.

Thus, we see that in therapy

> the insights emerge not chiefly because they are 'rationally true', or even because they are helpful, but because they have a form that completes an incomplete gestalt, this person's life - a form that changes the meaninglessness of his existence to a life of meaning.[64]

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[61] Tillich, The Courage To Be, p.76.

[62] Gotthard Booth, "Self-Understanding in the Light of Psychosomatics," in an unpublished paper, p.9: "the popular self-image of man as the conqueror of nature...implies that man can separate his own nature scientifically from non-human nature." He continues that when "deprived of self-fulfilling object relationships on the conscious level, the organism becomes sick."

[63] May, Psychology, p.211.

[64] May, Psychotherapy, p.50.

This is the effective embodiment of our contention that "freedom depends on how one relates oneself to oneself at every moment in existence."[65] Love and will are drawn together in intentionality as one struggles towards one's identity in freedom.

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[65]May, Meaning, p.35. May adds, Love:"My own conviction has always been to seek the inner reality, with the belief that the fruits of future values will be able to grow only after they are sown by the values of our history" (p.10).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

> The future lies before us as burden and promise. The task of giving human shape to that future is ours.[1]
>
> Rebellion is not against the basic principles of our nation, but rebellion is against the failure to implement those principles. Revolution is not for the means of living, but revolution is for the values of living.[2]
>
> You shall know the truth, and the truth will set you free.[3]

The human condition in this age as described by Rollo May is typified by the fact that people are seen to be more and more independent at the same time that they increasingly lose their real relation with themselves and adopt a conformist orientation towards others. The net effect is the weakening and impoverishing of the individual and the destruction of community. 'Having' tends to replace 'being,' and 'fullness' replaces 'fulfillment.' Depersonalization is a supremely real threat in view of the observation that "the structure of modern society affects man in two ways simultaneously: he becomes

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[1]Bryant, A World Broken By Unshared Bread, p.78.

[2]Anonymous.

[3]John 8:32.

more independent, self-reliant, and critical, and he becomes more isolated, alone, and afraid."[4]

The one who detects this direction in another may feel like telling the person to be himself. But the problem is precisely that the person "does not know which self he really is."[5] He loses a positive sense of self as he turns himself outward in conformity.

Man has lost (or is in the process of losing) his sense of direction with the result that commitment is seen as a threat that sets him outside and over against the group. He is subject to panic as he forgets that personal commitment is measured by the acts into which a person puts himself rather than by the number of words that he utters.[6] The individual finds himself to be impoverished within himself and fears the worst, namely, that he is totally impotent.

Before this situation "one needs the courage of imperfection to live creatively."[7] Courage is essential to the attempt to stand on one's own legs and where necessary to be a person who can stand apart from the group. This potentially restores a vital sense of community and implies the possibility of making erroneous decisions. Personal life becomes a meaningful and desirable choice of self-investment.

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[4]Fromm, Escape From Freedom, p.124.

[5]May, Art, p.56.

[6]See Tournier, The Meaning of Persons, p.135.

[7]May, Art, p.141. Italics ours.

To face freedom as one's own experience demands individualization.[8] One assumes personal responsibility and goes out to meet the world, knowing that world is in fact relationship. Any effort to deny relationship has the effect of removing one further from the possibility of freedom. For freedom from and freedom to can never be equated (not even superficially or momentarily) if fulfillment in freedom is one's goal.

The effect of this individualization process is to take one back to one's birthplace so as to be able to move off in unity with one's depths. Here one is encountered in one's intentionality which establishes the image of man that is held. Depersonalization can be challenged at its roots where love is redefined as eros (passion) and anxiety is construed as a positive indicator that one's world is too small for fulfillment of the person.[9]

This speaks vividly of the struggle witnessed in the life of Oedipus. One can only imagine the interior life of Oedipus as he approached the land of his birth, the land in which initially he was hidden from himself. He entered on the opening edge of his eros, his passion for life. In order to

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[8]We here refer to May's terse summary of personal life and growth as seen on page 94 above:"I conceive - I Can - I will - I am." The importance of this progressive process can not be overemphasized in the therapeutic work of May.

[9]Tillich, Systematic Theology, III, 50:"Every new form is made possible only by breaking through the limits of an old form. In other words, there is a moment of 'chaos' between the old and the new form, a moment of no-longer-form and not-yet-form."

enter into that land and stand united within himself he first needed to face the sphinx which terrorized the inhabitants with a life-riddle. Nothing less than the courage of imperfection was demanded of him as he put his life on the line before the entangler. Having conceived the possibility of freedom and fulfillment, he moved into the situation of calling forth his ability and will on the way to identity.

Man today is like Oedipus in that he too is faced by a sphinx. Depersonalization and impotence form the entanglement in which man finds himself enmeshed. To face this entangler demands that he too should answer the question that is put to him. In order to return to the land of his birth and identity he must first answer the sphinx's question. He answers by asserting the identity and image of man.[10]

It is only as we begin to come to grips with the significance and wholeness of our life that we too can enter into the land of our birth. To be able to take this initial step is to move past the idea that depersonalization is a sign of advanced pathology. Rather, we can identify this threat as a reaction to stress among normal persons. The implications

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[10]Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations (Harmondsworth:Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), provides this precise theological insight: "Faith in divine Providence is the faith that nothing can prevent us from fulfilling the ultimate meaning of our existence. Providence does not mean a divine planning by which everything is predetermined, as is an efficient machine. Rather, Providence means that there is a creative and saving possibility implied in every situation, which cannot be destroyed by any event. Providence means that the daemonic and destructive forces within ourselves and our world can never have an unbreakable grasp upon us, and that the bond which connects us with the fulfilling love can never be disrupted" (p.111).

are great when we perceive that man is a social being who can know freedom in the dialectical process of becoming. As one begins to loosen the hold of this sphinx he can begin to sense and assert the identity of man in the seasons of life.

May indicates that the individual in this search for freedom is enabled to stay on course by keeping in mind two basic issues. First, one must determine the image of man that is operative at any given time. This holds true in all areas of experience. For example, in the correctional services one notes that the stated goal is the integration of the offender into society and community. This suggests the responsibility to constantly examine the image of man that is being employed. Where the image is false to man's uniqueness and fails to take into account his personal search for fulfillment in freedom, there the correctional structure is operating in a dehumanizing and demonic fashion so as to merit the corrective opposition of all concerned persons. This same principle applies to all areas of life. The effect will be both rebellious and revolutionary in the stated sense.[11]

The second issue arises as one asserts freedom as the uniquely human possibility. Once the effective image of man has been established one must ask the individual's relation to his own potentialities. Here on the growing edge of personality the person takes account of his ability to symbolize and exercise consciousness before the experience of gaps in

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[11]See note 2 above.

his existence. To experience a gap in one's life is to be enabled to choose creatively to bridge the gap and to live in freedom. To wrestle with this issue is to come to terms with the deeply-engaging personal question that does not permit personal responsibility to be regarded lightly. As a matter of fact, to answer this question one needs to be willing to go beyond the why's of life and to confront the what's in which one invests oneself.

> We must know what we are talking about. This is not to rule out causation and genetic development, but rather to say that the question of why one is what one is does not have meaning until we know what one is.[12]

This suggests that a person will engage himself responsibly and recognize that "personality is characterized by freedom, individuality, social integration, and religious tension."[13] Such engagement becomes possible as one comes to

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[12]May, Psychology, p.88. Italics his. See further May, Existence: "Is not the why asked so much in our culture precisely as a way of detaching ourselves, a way of avoiding the more disturbing and anxiety-creating alternative of sticking to the end with the what? That is to say, the excessive preoccupation with causality and function that characterizes modern Western society may well serve, much more widely than realized, the need to abstract ourselves from the reality of the given experience. Asking why is generally in the service of a need to get power over the phenomenon, in line with Bacon's dictum, 'knowledge is power' and specifically, knowledge of nature is power over nature. Asking the question of what, on the other hand, is a way of participating in the phenomenon" (p.83). Italics his.

[13]May, Art, p.45. Italics his. May goes on from this characterization of personality to clarify the function of the counsellor or therapist. The four following functions correspond with the preceding characteristics. "It is the function of the counselor to lead the counselee to an acceptance of responsibility for the conduct and outcome of his life"(p.53). Italics his. "It is the function of the counselor to assist

awareness of the gaps in life and the recognition that he needs a symbolic representation of man to lend cohesiveness to his existence. Thus, May concludes that when one is drawn up and threatened by depersonalization his existence is fragmented by the lack of symbols to lend meaning and unity to his life.[14]

Symbols are vital to personal life for they explain and lend meaning to people's existence in both a backward- and a forward-reaching sense. To recognize this is to take personal note of May's challenge that "everyone constantly faces the threat of non-being if he lets himself recognize the fact."[15] Symbols employ and express the human's unique ability to see and to transcend himself in time.

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the counselee to find his real self, and then to help him to have courage to be this self" (p.61). Italics his. "It is the counselor's function to assist the counselee to a cheerful acceptance of his social responsibility, to give him courage which will release him from the compulsion of his inferiority feeling, and to help him to direct his striving toward socially constructive ends" (p.67). Italics his. "It is the counselor's function, while aiding the counselee to free himself from the morbid guilt feeling, to assist him courageously to accept and affirm the religious tension inherent in his nature" (p.74). Italics his.

[14]May, Symbolism:"A society furnishes means for its members to deal with excessive guilt, anxiety and despair in its symbols and myths. When no symbols have transcendent meaning, as in our day, the individual no longer has his specific aid to transcend his normal crises of life, such as chronic illness, loss of employment, war, death of loved ones and his own death and the concomitant anxiety and guilt. In such periods he has an infinitely harder time dealing with his impulses and instinctual needs and drives, a much harder time finding his own identity, and is prey thus to neurotic guilt and anxiety" (p.33). Italics his.

[15]May, Existence, p.89.

It is, however, the problem of our age that the person has surrendered to a high degree his symbol-forming ability. Needs and symbols are formed for him in conformist-oriented behaviour. This coincides with a diminution of self-consciousness, the individual's relation to himself. When centredness itself is lost or threatened, one may turn to psychotherapy which is "an obstinate attempt of two people to recover the wholeness of being human through the relationship between them."[16] Initially therapist and client represent the acknowledged want of freedom.

Therapy moves into the lack of freedom so that

> the progress of therapy can be gauged specifically in terms of the increase of the patient's capacity to experience that 'I am the one who has this world and can be aware of it and move in it.' The progress of therapy, then, can be measured in terms of the progress of 'consciousness of freedom.'[17]

Therapy seeks to confront neurotic anxiety and guilt so as to normalize them and foster the development of self-consciousness,[18] whereby "the conflicts are never the simple issue of

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[16]May, Existential Psychology, p.40.

[17]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII, p.43. Italics his. See May, Psychology, pp.174f.

[18]May, Journal of Religion and Health, I:"It is the task of the therapist, therefore, not only to help the patient become aware; but even more significantly to help him to transmute this awareness into consciousness. Awareness is his knowing that something is threatening from outside in his world - a condition that may, as in paranoids and their neurotic equivalents, be correlated with a good deal of acting-out behavior. But self-consciousness puts this awareness on a quite different level; it is the patient's seeing that he is the one who is threatened, that he is the being who stands in this world that threatens, he is the subject who has a world.

the individual versus society, but have taken on symbolic meaning which is of the greatest importance."[19] Thus, the goal of therapy is the enlarging of the individual's responsible freedom and this is "essential to the constructive confronting of the inescapable dilemmas of being human."[20]

Psychotherapy is a deliberate attempt in relationship to help the patient to be truly at the centre of his existence, to live in intentionality. This describes love with a unique stress on one's eros-investing identity, which in turn means the rebirth of feeling and the revitalization of both freedom and community. To note that others have come to like conclusions from other directions or to note that May and Frankl, for example, can be in general agreement about the function of therapy is not to undermine the importance of May's formulation of the human condition.[21] Indeed, there is

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And this gives him the possibility of in-sight, of 'inward sight,' of seeing the world and its problems in relation to himself. And thus it gives him the possibility of doing something about the problems" (p.38). Italics his.

[19]May, Psychology, p.106.

[20]May, Psychology, p.159.

[21]May's concept of psychotherapy might almost be given by dropping "logotherapy" from Frankl's statement in Man's Search For Meaning:"Logotherapy deviates from psychoanalysis insofar as it considers man as a being whose main concern consists in fulfilling a meaning and in actualizing values, rather than in the mere gratification and satisfaction of drives and instincts, the mere reconciliation of the conflicting claims of id, ego and superego, or mere adaptation and adjustment to the society and environment" (p.164).

a hint of an old-fashioned flavour to May's product, though his formulation is quite new and theologically vital. It remains that to be at one's centre implies the deep need to accept one's physical nature and the decision to move toward one's potentiality as the being who has a world.[22]

May's work is timely in that he identifies both the basic threat to undo man and the individual's search for an experience as opposed to an explanation of some external reality.

> It may well be true that if we can formulate a problem in inanimate nature thoroughly - that is, mathematically - we at the same time arrive at the solution; the formulation and the solution may be identical. But this is not true with people; here personal involvement, participation, and commitment are always necessary if the particular truth is to be real to that person.[23]

One must experience the meaning of his life in order to be responsible.

When a person encounters difficulties he first identifies the problem in awareness. The problem is then consciously confronted with the hope of integration (self-consciousness) lying beyond the encounter. This returns responsibility to the symbol-making being in that he regains his centre by insisting upon assuming personal responsibility as he imaginatively plays with the possibilities in a given situation.

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[22]May, Pastoral Psychology, VII:"Freud pointed out classically how people in Victorian society repressed sexual instincts, the goal being to fight one's physical nature as if one's body were an outlaw to be held continually at gun point. We would all now agree that such alienation from one's body is harmful both to physical and to mental health" (p.12).

[23]May, Psychology, p.150.

Goals are then formulated in terms of his own centre, rather than by means of the emptying power of technology, and he does not permit the formation of long-term goals without his own involvement.[24] For the most carefully undertaken efforts will meet with failure unless the client can commit himself and attempt to move into his own future in recognition of his intentionality.[25]

The effort is constantly toward seeing man as the relational being who is free to choose how he will encounter his fate. May's therapeutic work is persistently personal in orientation as the role of the therapist is clarified as enabling the individual to confront anxiety and to learn the act of valuing,[26] that is, discovering with the client and moving out with him along his experience of 'I can.' One learns how to hope and how to exist in faith - the leap whereby one goes beyond himself and becomes himself.

The overall effect of May's contributions is to restore man to his centre. This comes about as one is freed to experience the tragic element in life and to confront anxiety as the experience of potentiality veiled behind possible threat.

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[24]See May, Psychology, p.39.

[25]Wheelis, op. cit., 301, notes that "insight without action is impotent; action without insight is chaotic. Together they form a whole; separately they are nothing."

[26]See May, Psychology, pp.51f., where he clarifies the therapist's role as teacher of valuing rather than the giver of contents.

It remains that "the counselor must give people the courage to live."[27]

One may experience some difficulty as May relentlessly combines consciousness and unconsciousness and takes one towards one's being and centre. But this is precisely the difficulty of beginning to view life in an inclusive rather than an exclusive manner. A prime example of this was seen above on page seventy-nine where May refused to let hate and love stand as opposites to each other. Instead, he introduced apathy as the polar tension over against love and thereby he put the person back on the hook of personal responsibility.

We have struggled through the challenge that May poses.

> The studies of the results of therapy seem so often to be based on the externalistic question of how the individual 'adjusts' to our alienated society that their 'proofs' that therapy does or does not do any good strike one as being curiously irrelevant. In this confusion everyone tends to forget the real issue: that human beings do change, for good or ill. They are born, live, work, suffer travail, sometimes achieve a measure of love and meaning and die. Order could come out of the confusion if we kept our minds on the question, what does it mean to be human?[28]

We have followed through three principles of freedom[29]

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[27]May, Art, p.193.

[28]Rollo May, "The Frontiers of Being Human," Saturday Review, L, No. 20 (May 20, 1967), 37.

[29]These principles have been articulated in the second and third chapters of this thesis. They are repeated here for convenience. 1.) Freedom must be based on the self acting as a totality. 2.) Freedom always involves accepting social responsibility. 3.) Freedom requires the capacity to accept, bear and live constructively with anxiety. These are written in context in Pastoral Psychology, XIII, 44-46.

to arrive at a conclusion which is personally fulfilling and historically challenging.

> The free man is conscious of his right to have some part in the decisions of his social group or nation which affect him; he actualizes this consciousness by affirming the decisions, or if he disagrees, by registering his protest for the sake of a better decision next time. The free man has respect for rational authority, both that of history and that of his fellowmen who may have beliefs different from his own. The free man is responsible, in that he can think and act for the long-term welfare of the group. He has esteem for himself as an individual of worth and dignity - not the least of the sources of this dignity being his knowing himself to be a free man. He is able, if need be, to stand alone, like Thoreau - willing to be a minority of one when basic principles are at stake. And perhaps most important of all in our day, the free man is able to accept the anxiety which is inevitable in our shaken world and to turn this anxiety to constructive use as motivation toward greater 'consciousness of freedom.'[30]

Freedom remains and hopefully stands more clearly as a sine qua non of personality. From this feature of human personality comes the ability to hold various impulses and experiences in balance and to decide creatively for one possibility over against others.[31] Freedom is established as a dynamic process of becoming and reaffirms the individual's essential centredness.

We began by referring to the human condition and the heavy weight of fated-ness that seems to be crushing people

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[30]May, Psychology, pp.179f.

[31]May, Pastoral Psychology, XIII:"I would define mental health as the capacity to be aware of the gap between stimulus and response, together with the capacity to use this gap constructively, i.e., for planning, moving towards goals" (p.43). Mental health means an about-face from social and personal alienation towards freedom and fulfillment in community.

in this age. In our dramatic resources consciousness and fated-ness have been paired off successfully. Standing before his friends and mother, Oedipus was urged and implored to surrender his consciousness and to accept his fate without any question. Even heaven was called to the side of conformity.

We have seen the conclusion of that drama. However, we stand essentially at the point of encounter. The conversation between Oedipus and his mother, Jocasta, is one that we witness daily in our own experience.

> Oedipus Forget it all? I can't stop now.
> Not with all my birth clues in my hands!
>
> Jocasta For God's sake don't proceed.
> For your own life's sake.
> And I've been tortured long enough.[32]

We each occupy the shoes of Oedipus and freedom beckons to us.

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[32]Sophocles, The Oedipus Plays, p.64.

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